

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad**

Band (Jahr): **46 (2019)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **28.05.2024**

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Young Swiss Abroad: supporting, challenging and networking

Young Swiss Abroad form the foundation of the community of Swiss Abroad, particularly that of tomorrow. Their experience, their knowledge and their motivation are important and valuable. The Division of Relations with the Swiss Abroad of the Consular Directorate of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) commits itself to stronger networking. It wants to promote exchange within and between the generations and specifically highlight its information offer. Modern, networked and customer-oriented services are the focus. The examples presented here indicate some of the opportunities these networks offer.



In many places, the future of Swiss Clubs abroad is uncertain, even threatened. Increasingly showing an interest in the needs of the young generation is one way to counter this development. Today we are all required to join forces with young people to think creatively about what relations with and activities in Swiss Clubs abroad are desirable in the future. In doing so, let us be open to new and even unusual ideas.

JOHANNES MATYASSY, DIRECTOR
OF THE CONSULAR DIRECTORATE, FDFA



The Unione Giovani Svizzera, Italy

The *Unione Giovani Svizzera* is a valuable network in which experiences – whether in relation to education, work or politics – can be exchanged. The association organises events and participates in Young Swiss Citizen Celebrations. Many young members are also active in the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (YPSA). The YPSA, supported by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and in close cooperation with the Swiss Clubs, has set itself the objective to link up young Swiss Abroad worldwide and strengthen ties to the homeland. We now have more than 700 young members who are active in local clubs or groups.

Facebook: Unione Giovani Svizzera
Facebook: Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad

Celebration of Young Swiss Abroad of the Grand Est, France

The main purpose of this celebration was to raise awareness of Switzerland among younger children of mostly dual nationality and to promote ties between Swiss families residing in the consular district.

This event also provided the opportunity for parents to inform themselves about their rights and duties directly through contact with the staff of the Consulate General. Moreover, the presence of representatives of Swiss Clubs helped build bridges between modern-day families and clubs that have trouble acquiring new members.

In less than 48 hours after the invitations had been sent to 759 children between the ages of 5 and 11, the maximum number of participants had been reached. The well-organized event led to friendly interactions and a good mood all around, which together with the beautiful weather contributed to the success of this celebration that just begs to be repeated.



Networking as the key to success, Singapore

Networking is and will remain an important success factor at work. In my capacity as the President of the Swiss Association of Singapore, I regularly experience how important it is to build a good and broad network. Especially when moving abroad, it is important to establish personal and professional contacts as quickly as possible. New members of the Swiss Association often ask me for help finding a job in Singapore. In my opinion, networking is almost always the key. Open positions are increasingly disseminated within our own network and are often filled before they are officially advertised. This clearly shows how important it is to have and maintain a good network.

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Young Swiss Citizen Celebration in New York, USA

Plenty of information on rights, duties, democratic co-determination, training and studying awaited the 25 young Swiss Abroad who took part in the Young Swiss Citizen Celebration of the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York last autumn. During the celebration in the Big Apple, representatives of the consulate and of Swissnex talked about some of the interesting aspects of being citizens of Switzerland. How does one take part in a federal vote? How can Swiss universities be so affordable and yet world-class? How can one travel throughout Europe on a Swiss passport without a visa?

Such questions shaped the many stimulating discussions. Young Swiss Citizen Celebrations such as this one enable good networking amongst peers while strengthening ties to the Swiss homeland which is part of the young people's own identity. That is the general idea behind the Young Swiss Citizen Celebrations that have been taking place in New York for some years now.

Further information: www.youngswissabroad.ch – www.swissemigration.ch

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By the deadline for this edition, no new federal popular initiatives had been launched. The list of pending popular initiatives can be found on the website of the Federal Chancellery, www.bk.admin.ch under "Politische Rechte / Volkssinitiativen / Hängige Volksinitiativen".