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Convenient access to e-government services

E-government provides the Swiss Abroad with easy access to government services – regardless of time zone or the geographical distance from Switzerland.

In 2020, Switzerland's federal government, cantons and municipalities will adopt a new e-government strategy that will see the country's public authorities provide information and services primarily online (digital first).

Embracing a digital future

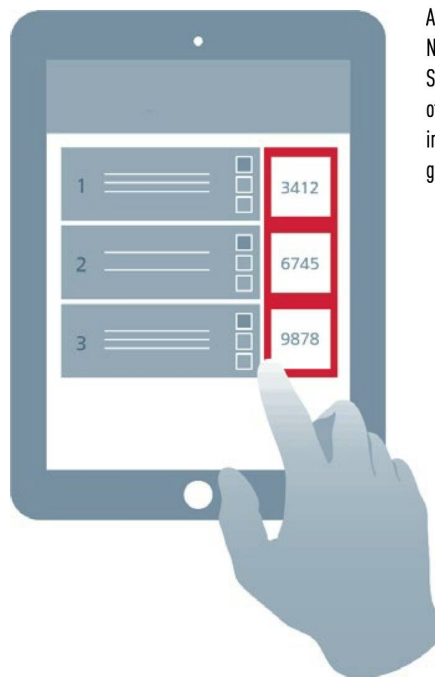
However, many digital services will only work if users can access them properly and securely. In view of this, Switzerland is preparing to introduce a government-recognised electronic identity (e-ID) scheme that will enable private individuals to identify themselves on the internet, manage their online business more easily and use e-government applications. A year ago, the Federal Council submitted its dispatch on the Federal Act on Electronic Identification Services (E-ID Act) to parliament. In its 2019 spring and summer sessions, parliament approved the division of responsibilities between public and private service providers as specified in the E-ID Act. Its final vote in favour came in the autumn session. The E-ID Act will become effective in 2021 at the earliest. As a result of e-IDs, public authorities will be able to offer digital services on an end-to-end basis. Consequently, we will no longer have to print out and sign the forms that we customarily fill out online and send by post along with the usual enclosures. Some individual cantons, for example, already offer the option of doing tax returns completely online. In the longer term, online tax returns will be possible in all cantons as well as at federal level.

Considerable confidence in e-government services

According to the 2019 National E-Government Study, around 66 per cent of the population and just under 75 per cent of businesses trust online government services with regard to personal privacy and data protection. However, demand for online government services generally outstrips supply at federal, cantonal and municipal level. For example, 68 per cent of those surveyed believe that e-voting should be made available to everyone, despite the fact that only two per cent of voters have been able to take advantage of e-voting so far.

E-voting currently unavailable

Until recently, cantons that wanted to offer e-voting could either use the Swiss Post platform or the e-voting solution developed by the canton of Geneva. However, Geneva decided to discontinue its system with immediate effect in June 2019, while Swiss Post announced in July 2019 that it would pull its existing system and focus instead on developing a new one. Switzerland is therefore currently bereft of e-voting (see also "Swiss Review" 5/2019). The Federal Council, for its part, decided in June 2019 to provisionally forgo introducing electronic voting as the third regular voting channel. It has postponed the partial revision that was scheduled for the Political Rights Act. The federal government expects the e-voting testing process to be reoriented by the end of 2020 in consultation with the cantons. Meanwhile, a cross-party committee is currently collecting signatures for



According to the 2019 National E-Government Study, e-voting is one of Switzerland's most in-demand online government services.

an initiative calling for an e-voting moratorium.

As part of the E-Government Switzerland strategic plan, the Confederation, cantons and municipalities remain committed to e-voting and want to continue expanding e-government infrastructure to take our country into the digital future. This means making interaction with public authorities easier and less time-consuming for people living both in and outside Switzerland.

eGOVERNMENT SWITZERLAND

Representing the Confederation, cantons and municipalities, E-Government Switzerland is a body that is working to expand e-government services. It manages, plans and coordinates joint e-government activities at the three government levels.
www.egovernment.swiss

Secure your pension by email

The Swiss Compensation Office (SCO) and the Disability Insurance Office for people living abroad (OAIE), which are responsible for the payment of old-age and survivors' insurance/disability pensions abroad, will now focus on digital interaction to facilitate the exchange of information with insured persons.



This man lives in a remote region of Mexico – and communicates with Swiss public authorities via encrypted email.

A certificate of life and marital status form is sent to all recipients of old-age and survivors' insurance/disability pensions resident abroad every year. It has to be returned within 90 days to ensure uninterrupted pension payment. If the certificate does not arrive within that timeframe, payment of the pension is halted by the system.

However, insured persons resident abroad often have to contend with complex situations. Take for example an insured Mr A, who lives in a remote region of Mexico. His nearest post office is several hours away. The postal delivery of this person's life certificate is delayed every year, and payment of his pension runs the risk of being interrupted. Consequently, in order to improve the quality of service for insured persons, as well as to facilitate

the administrative procedures, the SCO and OAIE are planning to expand the range of information that can be exchanged digitally with the insured persons and with the social security institutions.

A new secure email service

The SCO now offers a new service for sending and receiving encrypted emails. It will contact insured persons by this means as needed. Notifications of address changes and requests for information can now be sent confidentially via email.

Simplified exchanges between social security institutions

At the moment most exchanges between social security institutions in

European Union countries are paper-based. In the future, these will be replaced by electronic exchanges using the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information network (EESSI).

Duty to provide information

The new systems for exchanging data do not remove insured persons' obligation to report any changes in their situation: change of address, marital status, death, change in income, etc. (for more information, visit: www.ogy.de/renten).

Several communication channels

In countries with very long post delivery times, the SCO can always rely on local Swiss representations to forward correspondence to insured persons. The SCO can also be reached directly via the internet portal www.cdc.admin.ch (or short link: www.ogy.de/SAK). Our teams of professionals will be happy to provide any further information you may need. (CCO)

HELPLINE FDFA

☎ from Switzerland +41 800 24 7 365
 ☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33
 E-Mail: helpline@eda.admin.ch
 Skype: helpline-eda

Travel advice

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 ☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33
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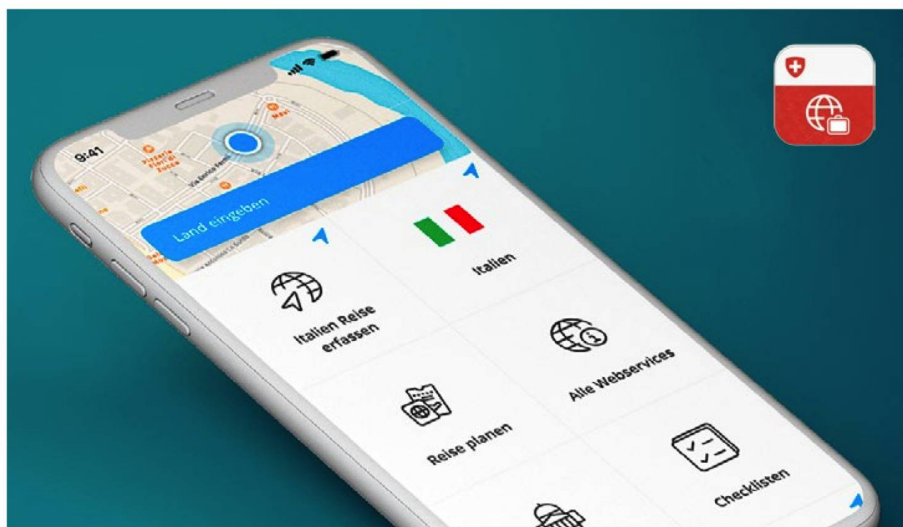
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Online registration for Swiss citizens travelling abroad
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Travel Admin app

An unforgettable trip starts with being well prepared. Travel Admin is the new app developed by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) to replace the itineris app. The Travel Admin app meets your needs with a simple layout and a fresh, appealing design. In addition to the integrated trip registration, you can update your current location at the touch of a button, so the FDFA can contact you more easily if there is an emergency situation at your destination. The app allows you to search and display on a map all Swiss representations abroad that provide services to Swiss citizens. You can create and manage your own travel checklists and consult

the FDFA's Travel Advice. The FDFA's comprehensive travel app also features information from private-sector partners. Travel Admin app is now available for download from the Apple and Google app stores. Bon voyage! (FDFA)



Federal votes

The Federal Council determines voting proposals at least four months before the voting date.

Everything you need to know about voting proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council, electronic voting, etc.) is available at www.admin.ch/votes or via the Federal Chancellery's VoteInfo app.

The Federal Council has decided not to hold a federal popular vote on 24 November 2019. The next voting date is 9 February 2020.

Popular initiatives

The following federal popular initiatives have already been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- Federal Popular Initiative "New funding for care – reduce health insurance premiums! (Care Funding Initiative)" (27.02.2021)
- Federal Popular Initiative "Say yes to tax-free OASI and invalidity pensions" (24.03.2021)

The list of pending popular initiatives is available in German at www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen



"Eine Welt"/"Un seul monde" now available online

Starting with the latest issue, the FDFA is now providing an online version of "Eine Welt"/"Un seul monde" alongside the print edition. Providing an online version has many advantages. It means the magazine is now available worldwide and articles can be found through search engines. The magazine can be read on different

devices, including smartphones and tablets, and readers can also send links to specific articles. It is also easier to find articles by topic or country in the menu or the archive. (FDFA)

www.eine-welt.ch

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