

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 6 (1979)  
**Heft:** 3

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## Dear Swiss compatriots abroad,

*With this issue of the Review, a long-cherished wish of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad and its Secretariat is being realized, not least thanks to the co-operation of a whole number of services of the Federal Administration and above all of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Numerous articles deal with the varied aspects of emigration, as well as the position of the Swiss living abroad and their relationship with the homeland. It is not a question of legal texts; nor could everything have been mentioned. If you want to have more detailed*

*information, we advise you to get in touch with the relevant offices and organizations. You will find their addresses in a coming issue. We invite all readers to carefully keep this issue. It contains a great many indications and tips which are particularly important for those who live outside Switzerland. It is the first time that a popular edition has been published of the most important information that every Swiss abroad should have at his disposal. We wish to thank all those who have contributed towards the publication of this issue.*

*Executive Committee of the Commission on Information to and from «Fifth Switzerland»*

## The Article in the Federal Constitution pertaining to the Swiss Abroad

Article 45bis was inserted in the Federal Constitution after it had been accepted in the federal plebiscite held on 16th October 1966 by 491 220 votes to 230 483 and by all the cantons.

<sup>1</sup> The Confederation is entitled to further the relations of the Swiss living abroad amongst themselves and with their homeland and to assist institutions set up to that effect.

<sup>2</sup> It may, taking into account the special situation of the Swiss living abroad, issue regulations determining their rights and duties, in particular with respect to the exercise of political rights, the fulfilling of military obligations and to assistance. The cantons shall be consulted beforehand.

This article represents a political testimony in favour of the Swiss abroad. For the first time, the existence of Swiss citizens abroad has duly and properly been anchored in the basic charter of the Confederation which thus offers the possibility to legislate with respect to Swiss living abroad, if necessary despite certain existing dispositions. The special situation of the Swiss compatriots living abroad, which is different from that of the Swiss at home, is taken into consideration, and the ties with their country of origin are strengthened.

The «Federal Palace» in Berne

