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## Contents

The Article in the Federal Constitution pertaining to the Swiss Abroad	2
<b>The Swiss Abroad and their Institutions</b>	
The Nouvelle Société Helvétique's Organization of the Swiss Abroad	3
The Assemblies of the Swiss Abroad	4
Further Private Organizations in the Service of the Swiss Abroad	4
<b>Federal Offices and the Swiss Abroad</b>	
The Service for Swiss Abroad in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	6
Other Federal Offices in the Service of Swiss Abroad	7
<b>Who is a Swiss Citizen Abroad?</b>	
The Swiss Abroad and the Regulations regarding Acquisition and Loss of Swiss Nationality	11
The Special Position of Dual Nationals	12
Diplomatic and Consular Protection of the Swiss Abroad	13
Registration of the Swiss Abroad	
<b>Applied Legislation in favour of the Swiss Abroad</b>	
Social Assistance and the Swiss Abroad	17
Federal Law on the Political Rights of the Swiss Abroad	17
The Swiss Abroad and Military Obligations	19
Swiss Citizens Abroad and their Rights in Personal and Family Matters	20
The Swiss Abroad and Taxation	22
<b>The Swiss Abroad and Possibilities for Foresight and Provision</b>	
Possibilities to Invest in Switzerland, and especially to Acquire Real Estate	23
The Swiss Abroad and OAI/DI	23
Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad	26
The Swiss Abroad and other Insurance Possibilities, especially against Sickness and Accident	27
Preparing to return to Switzerland	28
The Swiss Abroad and Unemployment Insurance	29
<b>Educational and Vocational Training Possibilities for the Swiss Abroad</b>	
The Swiss schools Abroad	31
Educational and vocational Training Possibilities in Switzerland	31
<b>The Swiss Abroad and Information</b>	
«echo» – the Up-to-date Periodical with Tradition	32
«Review»	32
Swiss Radio International	
Immediate, direct, world-wide	34

## 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

