

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

Artikel: Educational and vocational training possibilities for the Swiss abroad
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907899>

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Educational and Vocational Training Possibilities for the Swiss Abroad

The Swiss Schools Abroad

There are Swiss schools in the following countries and towns: Italy: Milan, Luino, Ponte S. Pietro (Bergamo), Genoa, Florence, Rome, Naples and Catania; Spain: Barcelona and Madrid; Ghana: Accra; Thailand: Bangkok; The Republic of Singapore; Singapore; Mexico: Mexico-City; Brazil: Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo; Chile: Santiago; Columbia: Bogota; Peru: Lima.

Some of the Swiss schools in Italy have been in existence already for more than 100 years, whilst the majority of these institutions, above all overseas, were created after the Second World War only.

All these 19 schools owe their origin to private initiative and are run by local school societies. The first aim is the tuition of the pupils in a Swiss spirit. From the point of view of encounter between nations, the Swiss schools are open also to pupils of the country of residence and of other nationalities. Most schools also teach a number of children of the country of residence, whose parents are unable to afford school fees. In virtue of their tasks as educational establishments in a Swiss sense and of passing on cultural values, the Swiss Confederation gave the Swiss schools abroad financial support for the first time in 1922, and since 1947 based on a special federal decree. Since 1976, a new federal law is in force regarding support of Swiss

schools abroad, which allows relatively generous financial assistance and, on the other hand, clearly defines the prerequisites for such contributions. This support, however, does not affect the private character of the schools, nor does it release the responsible Swiss communities from their own efforts.

On 1st January 1979, a total of 5580 pupils were being taught in the 19 schools, of whom 2000 Swiss children with Swiss fathers or mothers. 340 full time teachers were employed, of whom 220 were Swiss men or women.

The creation of new schools is hardly possible due to the modest financial assets of the Swiss communities carrying the schools and of the Confederation as the subsidizing party.

Educational and Vocational Training Possibilities in Switzerland

For various reasons, young compatriots turn more and more to schools and educational establishments in Switzerland for their tuition and training. There are, however, serious difficulties particularly in two fields: inadequate knowledge of Switzerland's official languages and insufficient standards in foreign matriculation certificates.

Lack of proficiency in one or two Swiss languages is of particular disadvantage on changing over to

a Swiss elementary or secondary school. These schools with relatively large classes and great demands put on teachers allow only in very few cases enough individual teaching to make up for missing knowledge.

Generally there is only one way out, by attending a private school, but that is usually an expensive, even a very costly matter. It is therefore highly advisable for every Swiss family abroad that at least one of the Swiss languages

should be cultivated and the children's performance at school well supervised, all in view of a possible move to Swiss schools later on.

Of equal importance is a secondary education which is as near as possible to that provided at Swiss schools, if future studies in Switzerland are considered a possibility. Especially for the study of medicine, the federal regulations are extremely stringent. The two Federal Insti-

tutes of Technology in Zurich and Lausanne, too, have special conditions for accepting students from abroad. In a great many cases, candidates have to sit additional examinations in certain subjects before being accepted. Not only the Swiss universities,

but also the various vocational training colleges of our country are very popular with young Swiss from abroad, for very often there are no comparable training establishments in their countries of residence. In some types of occupation, the training colleges are

popular to such an extent that they have a long waiting list. So for instance with some nursing colleges and hotel schools. Very early application, possibly several years in advance, is therefore essential.

The Swiss Abroad and Information

«echo» – the Up-to-Date Periodical with Tradition

«echo», the monthly magazine for Swiss abroad, is in its 59th year, and thus it is one of the oldest services of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique's Organization of the Swiss Abroad. Its editorial staff is at the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, and the paper is completely independent, both politically and financially.

«echo» appears eleven times **per annum**, and month after month, it brings reports – with descriptive and rich illustrations – on topical events in Switzerland, its institutions, culture, customs and history, as well as matters which affect Swiss living abroad personally. A column is devoted to sport, and crossword puzzles and competitions with prizes for children cater for pastime activi-

ties. Three or four times a year, the supplement «Der junge Welt-schweizer» treats subjects of particular interest to young Swiss all over the world.

«echo» is published in four languages, mainly in German and French, and with every text appears a synopsis in the other language. In every issue there are two or three contributions in Italian. Rhaeto-Romansh is rare, but is represented nevertheless every now and then.

«echo» readers appreciate the colourful cover, for it reminds them every time of their beautiful homeland.

«echo» subscriptions are relatively low – according to country 26 or 30 Francs a year, a reasonable amount at any time. A gift sub-

scription is a popular thing, available not only to Swiss who have relatives and friends in Switzerland, but also to Swiss abroad who would like to make a friendly gesture.

«echo» gift support subscriptions from 40 Francs onward enable needy Swiss compatriots abroad to receive the magazine gratuitously.

«Review»

The need to supply every Swiss abroad with information of general interest and official news from the Federal Administration and diplomatic and consular representations had been felt for a long time. For this reason, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique's Organization of the Swiss Abroad decided at its 47th Assembly to publish the «Review» in conjunction with the

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. The various organizations of the Swiss communities abroad and their already existing colony papers were to be considered in the scheme.

Structure

First, various decisions had to be made regarding form, format and

number of pages, in which financial considerations played no mean part. It was resolved that the new periodical should be sent to all Swiss abroad free of charge, a principle followed by the Swiss in Italy since 1968. Regarding the cover, it was modelled on the «Messager Suisse de France» which, in 1970, could look back on no fewer than 14