

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 9 (1982)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: Official communications

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>



Interview with the new Head of the Service of the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Minister Max Leippert

«Swiss Review» (Interviewer):

On 1st of August 1982 you succeeded Minister Maurice Jacard as Head of the Service of the Swiss Abroad. Will this entail any future changes?

Leippert:

I think we must distinguish between the aims of the Service of the Swiss Abroad and its various tasks. Subject to unforeseen circumstances, there will be hardly any changes worth mentioning in the aims of the Service of the Swiss Abroad. These consist in drawing up the Federal Council's policy towards the Swiss Abroad and in efforts to harmonize and coordinate the work of all the offices dealing with matters concerning the Swiss abroad.

The tasks, on the other hand, may change with time and circumstances and according to the development of the social, economic and political situation in Switzerland and the various host countries.

Interviewer:

What is the essence of the policy towards the Swiss Abroad?

Leippert:

That can be summed up in one sentence. It is the basic idea found in the Magna Carta of the Swiss abroad, that is to say, Article 45bis of the Federal Constitution. This states that the Confederation, taking account of the special situation of the Swiss living abroad, may enact regulations determining their rights and duties. Our fellow citizens abroad

live in different geographical, climatic, cultural, social, economic, political and legal conditions than we in Switzerland; account should be taken of these conditions in legislation, in administration and also in jurisdiction, within the limits of what is possible. This does not mean that the Swiss abroad should be privileged compared with the Swiss at home.

Interviewer:

Can you specify the individual tasks facing you?

Leippert:

The most important ones at the moment are the total revision of the Federal Constitution and of the constitutional articles concerning the Swiss abroad, the liberalization of the political rights of the Swiss abroad, and the revision of the civic rights legislation and of the voluntary Old Age Insurance and Disability Insurance schemes.

Interviewer:

Can you give examples where the situation of the Swiss abroad is to receive special consideration?

Leippert:

I shall be very pleased to, but I should like to be brief, since there is not much space at my disposal in the «Swiss Review». In the case of political rights, for example, we needed a special constitutional provision for our compatriots living abroad so as to be able to deviate, in implementing legislation, from the domicile prin-

ciple which normally applies in the Federal Constitution. To replace domicile, the law on the voting rights of the Swiss abroad introduced the so-called «sojourn principle». However, with the exception of officials and employees of the Confederation posted abroad, only those Swiss abroad who are actually staying in Switzerland at the time are thereby enabled to take part in federal elections and other federal ballots. Voting from abroad should be allowed so that all Swiss living abroad can exercise their voting rights. The preparatory work for a possible change in the current law is in progress. If all goes well, the Swiss abroad will be able to vote from abroad in a few years' time, probably by post. Bearing reciprocity in mind, however, this is possible only under the condition that the Federal Council is in a position to grant foreigners in Switzerland the same voting rights with respect of their home countries.

Interviewer:

Can you tell us about other problems?

Leippert:

An area where solutions adapted to the special circumstances of the Swiss abroad suggest themselves is the voluntary OAI and DI. Hitherto, principles governing the obligatory OAI/DI have to a great extent been applicable to this very useful institution. This gives rise to difficulties, especially on the contribution side: not only administrative ones affecting our em-

bassies and consulates, but also problems of the contribution burden borne by all those Swiss abroad living in countries with well developed social insurance systems to which they are compulsorily subject. Here, too, we must examine whether the principles of the obligatory OAI can henceforth be applied indiscriminately to the voluntarily insured Swiss abroad.

Finally, the civic rights legislation which, as you know, is now being revised, will have to find answers to similar questions. First, however, the alteration of the civic rights article in the Federal Constitution must be approved by the people and the cantons. One function of implementing the legislation which would have to be drafted if the results of the plebiscite were positive would be to establish criteria to prevent an undesirable increase in dual nationality arising from the acquisition of citizenship by the children of a Swiss woman married to their foreign father. The legislators would also have to decide whether, and on what conditions, the naturalization of the foreign spouse, irrespective of sex, could, if necessary, be facilitated. However, the referendum might be used against implementing this law. It will take therefore several years before the current revision of the civic rights legislation is complete.

None of these tasks can be performed in isolation and without the cooperation of all interested circles. The Federal Council and the federal administration therefore lay great stress on consulting, as far as possible, the cantonal governments and political parties, the institutions concerned, the societies and organizations etc. However, today more than ever before, the Swiss abroad and their organizations will need to contribute not only ideas but material support. This

has proved particularly true in the case of the Swiss schools abroad, where, for example, the contributions made by some Swiss colonies have left much to be desired. The old proverb «God helps those who help themselves» is now more relevant than ever. It has probably been best expressed in the unique mutual aid scheme of the Swiss abroad, the Solidarity Fund set up in 1958. The Confederation granted the Fund an unlimited deficit guarantee.

But that is not enough; as many Swiss abroad as possible must join if the Solidary Fund is to develop its full potential.

On that note I should like to end; may I express the hope that there will be excellent cooperation between the Swiss abroad and their organizations on the one hand and the offices of the Confederation, particularly the Service of the Swiss Abroad of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, on the other.

Federal Chancellery



Federal Chancellor Walter Buser
(Photo E. Rieben, Bern)

The Federal Chancellery is the central office of the Federal Council. It coordinates the running of affairs and prepares the sessions of the Federal Council. It supports the President of the Confederation in the administration of government business. It is responsible for contact with Parliament.

Administrative Secretariat

Guidelines of government policy, account of government activity and annual report, organization of federal administration.

Service for Government Affairs

Preparation and taking down the minutes of the Federal Council sessions, Chancellery and Secretariat, registration of parliamentary motions, bailiff service, legalization.

Language and Translation Service

Linguistic revision of texts, translations into all three official languages.

Legal Service

Federal elections and votes, examination of the validity of popular initiatives and referenda, petitions to the Federal Council, examination of general state and administrative issues, publication of laws.

Information Service

Informing the public on plans and decisions of the Federal Council, coordination of information activities of the departments, advising the Federal Council in its public relations work, accrediting parlia-

mentary journalists, issuing documents for civic education.

Parliament and Central Library

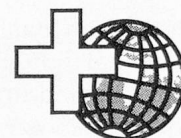
Scientific library for Parliament and the Federal Administration.

Office for Printed Matter and Materials

Central supply and control of printed matter, photography, film and microfilm, office machines, computers for all federal services.

Solidarity Fund of the Swiss abroad

Gutenbergstrasse 6, CH-3011 Berne



The Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad as a double provision for all Swiss abroad and dual citizens

Your joining – your advantage!

- **Because the Solidarity Fund offers all its members only advantages** – whether or not they live in politically stable or unstable countries in the world.
- **Because the Solidarity Fund offers double security:**
 - Securing loss of livelihood abroad in the event of war, internal unrest or general political coercive measures.
 - The accumulation of savings capital in Switzerland with advantageous conditions (no tax withheld).
- **Because, thanks to various risk categories,** the Solidarity Fund offers individual savings and insurance possibilities.
- **Because the Solidarity Fund gives every member the right to reimbursement of the paid annual contribu-**

tions or the paid single deposit, including interest and compound interest, regardless of whether lump sum compensation following loss of livelihood has already been paid.

- **Because the money paid into the Solidarity Fund is invested absolutely safely and without risk under the supervision of the Federal Finance Administration.**
- **Because the Solidarity Fund has an unlimited deficit guarantee from the Confederation in the event that there is too high a demand for compensation.**
- **And the Solidarity Fund is open to all registered Swiss and dual citizens abroad as well as wives who do not work and children who are minors.**

Why are you and your family not yet members of the Solidarity Fund?

The Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad – Your personal advantage.

Please send us detailed a documentation:

Mr./Mrs./Miss: _____

Street: _____

Postal code/place: _____

Send to: Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad, Gutenbergstr. 6, CH-3011 Bern