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Communications from the SSA

AJAS

The mobility of those engaged in full-time study is becoming reality – and what we see now is only a beginning. Student exchange programmes, both among Swiss universities and throughout Europe, are to be intensified. Switzerland seems to be slowly making up its mind on mutual recognition of university degrees. AJAS is also adapting to the new situation: the secretariat is opening up to the rest of Europe. The European Community requires highly-qualified specialists capable of working at the international level. To this end it is organising a number of training programmes, of which the following are the most important:

ERASMUS (see Official Communications, page 18).

Aim: mobility of students and university teachers (as was certainly the custom in the days of Erasmus of Rotterdam).

LINGUA

Aim: wider knowledge of foreign languages in order to improve communication between individuals.

COMETT (COMunity programme for Education and Training in Technology)

Aim: training in new advanced technologies through cooperation between universities and business.

It is gratifying that Switzerland is now participating in these programmes together with the other EFTA countries.

AJAS, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16

You must apply **before June 9, 1992**, but the camp is restricted to the first 62 applicants.

Application forms available from: *Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16*

Youth Exchange 1992

- Summer holidays in Switzerland
- A stay with a Swiss family
- Having a Swiss guest in your own home

● Trial apprenticeships and study courses

● Widening your horizon

You are eligible if you are aged between 14 and 20 and live in one of the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

If you feel attracted, please apply to:

Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16

In memory of the Home for the Swiss Abroad

Older Swiss Abroad will certainly still remember well the Home for the Swiss Abroad in Dürrenäsch, which finally closed its doors in 1979. It was in 1956 that the textile manufacturer and publisher, Herbert Bertschy-Ringier, was able to realise his life-long dream of providing a pied-à-terre which could house as many as 100 Swiss citizens from abroad at any one time.

Any Swiss living abroad seeking a period of peace and quiet in his old country was welcome at Dürrenäsch, and unwelcome questions were never asked about where he came from. The unique thing about this oasis of calm which was visited by so many Swiss citizens from all over the world was that guests could pay for their holidays simply by helping with the housework or in the kitchen.

A number of very comfortable houses were available for the guests. The farm which belonged to the home allowed it to provide itself with such essential commodities as meat, milk, vegetables, fruit, honey and cereals – which were originally made into bread at the home's own bakery. The man who always stood four-square behind the Home for the Swiss Abroad was its founder, Herbert Bertschy, who had travelled far and wide during the 1920s as representative of his family's textile firm and had come into contact with very many of his fellow-citizens in the most unlikely places. From 1939 until his retirement he worked as a publisher with the firm of Rin-

gier & Co., and from 1956 on he devoted all his free time to the Home for the Swiss Abroad, which he came to consider as his real life's work.

From the beginning the Agency for the Swiss Abroad of the "Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft" did all it could to spread the fame of the home, in particular through the columns of the "Echo", which was the predecessor of our Swiss Review. This meant that the home was always an exciting place of unexpected comings and goings. Both young and old were received with equal hospitality, and there was always a happy spirit. Children's camps and courses for those involved in running Swiss schools abroad were organised regularly. In addition, the home gained an excellent name over the years as a meeting-place for Swiss citizens living abroad when visiting their old homeland. SM

In March 1990 a short memoir of the life of Herbert Bertschy-Ringier was printed privately. This is not available for sale but may be found in most big Swiss libraries.

Multi-sport summer camp 1992



Just for once we are going to spend two fantastic holiday weeks at the Fiesch sports and holiday centre. The fabulous sporting and tourism equipment available there make it possible to provide an immensely varied camp programme. Swimming/bathing, ball games, dancing (rock 'n' roll) combined with lots of outdoor action (adventure programme/hiking/excursions) – to name just a few of our holiday activities.

This time it's just a little bit more expensive – but there's no wash-

ing up, no kitchen work, just a very little cleaning and lots more free time.

Do please join us!

Date/place: Sunday afternoon to Saturday morning, July 26 – August 8, 1992.

Sports and Holiday Centre, Fiesch Holiday Village, Canton Valais.

Price: Sfr. 600.–

Camp organiser: Edith Locher, youth service monitor.

Conditions: Age between 15 and 25. Mother or father must be a Swiss citizen.



70th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in St. Gall

Switzerland on the road to European integration

Switzerland is finally opening up fully to European integration, and this process undoubtedly represents an unrivalled challenge for the Swiss Abroad, as well as the body responsible for safeguarding their interests, the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad. As a result, the 70th Congress of the Swiss Abroad, which will be held in St. Gall on August 21-23, 1992, will have as its theme: "Switzerland and the Swiss Abroad faced with the European challenge".

The political landscape of Europe is subject to a permanent process of change. At present the strongest impetus for this stems from the European Community, which is trying to build up not only an economic union but also a political union.

Berne draws closer to Brussels

On the other hand the European Community's attitude to the EFTA states has finally been expressed in practical terms. After several years of negotiations a generally viable EEA treaty has finally emerged, although the present text cannot be put forward for final signature in view of a number of constitutional objections which have been raised by the European Court. In spite of this, the foreign policy commissions of the Swiss Federal Assembly have already started considering some of the clauses of the treaty.

Quite apart from the result of these deliberations on the EEA within both the Community and the Swiss parliament, the Federal Council has repeatedly stated its intention of applying to join the European Community in the medium term.

The Swiss Abroad will also have the vote

Switzerland's new attitude to the problems of European integration will affect our country's whole network of foreign relationships, as well as many of the facets of daily life within Switzerland. Its effects on the nearly 300,000 Swiss citizens who live in the other EEA countries will

be of the greatest possible significance.

As we have seen, the question of Switzerland's participation in the planned EEA will be the subject of a referendum, and the Swiss Abroad will be able to take part in this by postal vote.

The way we see it

It is clear from all this that the development of Swiss European policies is of the greatest possible importance not only for the people of Switzerland itself, but also for our fellow-citizens who live abroad. It is in view of this that the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad has decided that the coming congress in St. Gall should be devoted mainly to the subject "Switzerland and the Swiss Abroad faced with the European challenge". The plenary meetings will provide detailed information on all aspects of the EEA question and prospects for the success of Switzerland's European policies. They will also provide a forum for far-reaching discussions on questions directly relevant to the Swiss Abroad in relation to any future institutional forms which the relationship between Berne and Brussels may take.

In view of the colossal importance of this agenda we hope that many Swiss Abroad will participate in the St. Gall congress at the end of August. *SM*

The organising committee of the congress would be grateful if you could fill out the attached form with all due care. Please do not omit to give us precise details of your dates of arrival and departure so that we can make the necessary hotel reservations.

70th Congress of the Swiss Abroad

August 21-23, 1992, in St. Gall

Subject:

Switzerland and the Swiss Abroad faced with the European challenge.

(Please use block capitals)

Closing date for applications: **July 16, 1992**

Name/first name:

Address:

Telephone:

Telex:

Fax:

Name of any accompanying person(s):

Contact address in Switzerland:

Valid from:

Means of travel: Train Private car

I am 25 or under and am entitled to a 50% reduction for all events.

I am 25 or under and would like free accommodation at a hostel, to be organised by the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad.

Accommodation in St. Gall (please mark the category required)

**

Single room Sfr. 160.-/200.- Sfr. 115.-/160.- Sfr. 80.-/100.-
Double room Sfr. 190.-/270.- Sfr. 165.-/210.- Sfr. 125.-/140.-

Arrival date:

Departure date:

Prices are per night and per room, including breakfast, service and taxes. Accommodation in the desired category cannot be guaranteed, and applications will be dealt with in order of arrival. No reservations can be guaranteed after July 16, 1992. If you are unable to attend but fail to cancel reserved accommodation, you will be liable for full hotel and participation costs.

Admission tickets (all-inclusive tickets Sfr. 150.- each):

I wish to attend the following events (please indicate number of participants for each event):

- Official opening on Friday afternoon, August 21 (free)
- Gathering of young Swiss Abroad, Friday evening, August 21 (free for those aged 25 or under)
- Meeting for first-time visitors, Friday evening, August 21 (free)
- Plenary meeting and lunch, Saturday, August 22 (Sfr. 40.-)
- Dinner and entertainment, Saturday evening, August 22 (Sfr. 80.-)
- Excursion and lunch, Sunday, August 23 (Sfr. 80.-)

Date:

Signature:

The completed form should **arrive by July 16, 1992**, at the latest at the following address: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, P.O. Box, CH-3000 Berne 16, Tel: 41 31 44 66 25, Fax 41 31 44 21 58.