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Employment assistance and unemployment insurance

Help for returning Swiss Abroad

The present economic slump in many countries is leading more and more Swiss Abroad to think of returning to their old homeland. In particular, young Swiss Abroad – mostly with dual nationality – who in many cases no longer have close ties with Switzerland are finding the idea of coming here increasingly attractive.

At present, however, the situation in the Swiss job market is not at all rosy. And this means that the task of fitting into society can be very difficult, particularly in cases where our country is anyway somewhat strange. Those wishing to come here should not give up a job abroad until they are sure of a new one.

Herewith some information for those who still think of returning in spite of all the difficulties.

Help in finding a job

The Federal Office for Industry and Labour has published an **application form with explanatory leaflet** for Swiss Abroad wishing to seek jobs here. This can be obtained at any Swiss diplomatic post. It has important information for those wishing to return and is in German, French or Italian.

Application: The form should be sent to the Federal Office for Industry and

Labour which processes 300–400 such job demands per year.

Cantons and municipalities: All candidacies are sent on to the cantonal and municipal authorities where applicants plan to reside. It is here that the necessary information and opportunities to assist are available.

Publication: At the same time the application appears in the list of "Swiss Abroad Seeking Jobs", published every two months. This is sent to about 700 companies, employers and business associations.

Unemployment insurance

After Swiss Abroad arrive back – but in no case while they are still abroad – Swiss unemployment insurance also becomes relevant.

Claims: In the event of return but after a **waiting period now fixed at five days**, an unemployment benefit

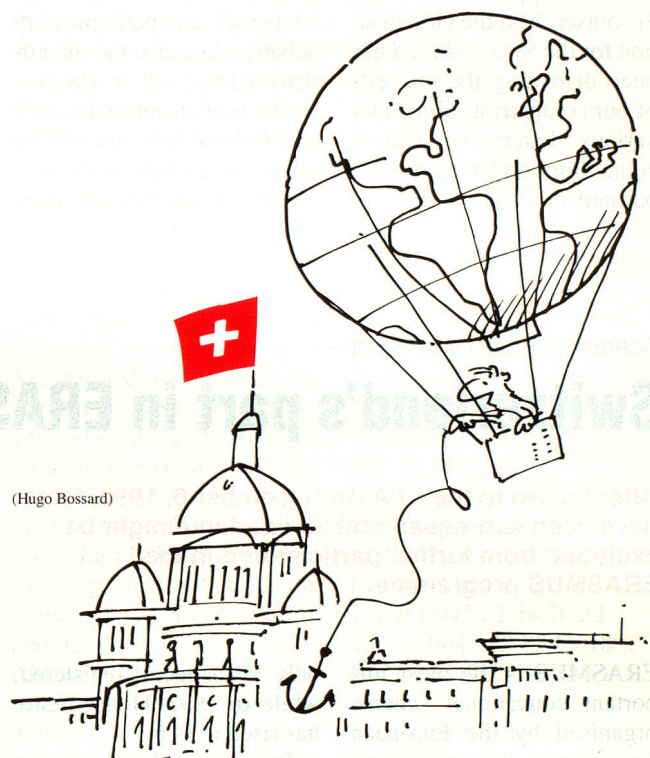
claim may be made – even when no contributions have ever been paid. But there are two **conditions**:

1. Applicants must have been abroad for one year;
2. They must have been **in employment** abroad for at least six months within the previous two years; those who have been self-employed receive no benefits.

Training: Those who have trained abroad for over one

Austria, Germany, France and Liechtenstein. On the basis of special agreements, periods of contribution in these countries are taken into full account. Those concerned receive the same treatment as Swiss residents, i.e. they are subject to **no waiting period** and in some conditions may draw **higher daily allowances**.

Cross-frontier workers: Special arrangements apply to those residing in neighbouring countries who work here. They pay contributions in Switzerland. If they are totally unemployed they receive benefits based on the



(Hugo Bossard)

Unemployment insurance

We have recently been informed that in many cases returning Swiss Abroad laying claim to unemployment benefit have provided **insufficient evidence** for their periods of work or training while abroad. This has led to trouble and delay which has been painful to all concerned.

This means that the following is **important**:

Provide **sufficient and credible evidence** for your period of work or training abroad, e.g. wage certificates, work testimonials, study certificates, examination diplomas, etc. These should cover the period of **two years** which immediately precedes your registration with the relevant Swiss labour office.

Within this period you must show evidence of:

- a) A period of **employment** of at least **6 months**, or
- b) A period of **training** of at least **12 months**.

year within the previous two years are covered even if they have not paid contributions.

Application: Those wishing to claim a daily allowance must **register** for a job at the labour office of their place of residence **immediately** upon arrival. From then on they must comply with the **checking rules** (stamping). Claims and waiting periods start the day you register. If this is not done within a year, all claims lapse.

International agreements: Preferential treatment is given to those who return from

rules of their country of residence. In the event of partial unemployment or employer insolvency they come under Swiss law.

Paul Andermatt ■

Adresses:

Federal Office of Industry and Labour
Emigration and Trainee Section, or
Unemployment Insurance Division
CH-3003 Berne



Abolition of the optional pension scheme

Achievement in jeopardy

In the context of the austerity measures at present being undertaken to reduce the budget deficit, the Federal Council has included the abolition of the optional old-age and disability pension scheme for the Swiss Abroad in a new package of proposals to parliament.

Abolition of this scheme would mean that from the moment the new set of regulations came into operation membership of the scheme would be frozen. The Federal Department for Foreign Affairs has opposed this from the outset. And the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad has been defending the interests of our compatriots abroad by various letters to federal councillors and members of parliament.

The way forward

Meeting separately, the National Council and the Council of States must now consider the proposals. Individual components of the package may be subject to change or indeed even rejected in the course of the parliamentary debates. As amended the **entire package** will then be passed by parliament in the form of a **federal law** and will be subject **as a whole** to the possibility of an optional referendum.

This would not give voters the possibility of expressing their opinion on the individual measures, since the package would have to be accepted or rejected as a whole.

The parliamentary debates will probably be completed in the summer of 1994. This means that if there is no resort to referendum the earliest moment for the legislative changes contained in the package of measures would probably be in the first quarter of 1995. If there were to be a referendum, the date would probably be shifted to the summer of 1995 at the earliest. In the event of a negative decision by voters,

none of the measures proposed would come into force.

Representing Swiss Abroad interests

Throughout this procedure, the Service for the Swiss Abroad and the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad will exhaust every opportunity to prevent the abolition of the optional pension scheme.

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Current popular initiatives

The following popular initiatives are still open for signature:

For media freedom without media monopoly – until February 18, 1994.
Peter Weigelt, P.O. Box 217, CH-8029 Zurich.

Swiss grass (to legalise soft drugs) – until April 27, 1994.
Roland Fink, P.O. Box 323, CH-9004 St. Gall.

For the protection of humans against reproduction technology – until May 24, 1994.

Guido Appius, General-Guisan-Strasse 77, CH-4054 Basle.

A Switzerland without a tax substitute for military service – until November 11, 1994

Régis de Battista, 15, rue des Pavillons, CH-1205 Geneva.

For a reasonable drug policy – until November 18, 1994

Beat Kraushaar, P.O. Box 137, CH-8026 Zurich.

For reasonable food prices and ecological farms – until December 1, 1994

Herbert Karch, P.O. Box, CH-4601 Olten.

For fair representation of women in the federal authorities – until March 21, 1995.

Jacqueline Gottschalk, P.O. Box 632, CH-3000 Berne 25.

Academic mobility in Europe

Switzerland's part in ERASMUS

After the No to the EEA on December 6, 1992, fears have been expressed that Switzerland might be excluded from further participation in the ERASMUS programme.

ERASMUS is the most important educational scheme organised by the European Community. Its main objective is to promote student mobility.

The programme was described in some detail in the Official News of Swiss Review 1/92. This programme is now finding ever more approval in Switzerland: during the academic year 1992/93

only 390 students registered, while in 1993/94 the figure has risen to 986.

But Switzerland's No to the EEA could lead to changes in our country's future participation in ERASMUS.

After the EEA No

Swiss participation in ERASMUS was not to be governed by the EEA Treaty directly but by a separate agreement between Switzerland and the EC, which remains in force – at least until the end of the 1994/95 academic year (June 1995). This means that full participation by Swiss universities is still possible, and

at present nothing at all has changed.

But Switzerland's membership of the ERASMUS Mixed Advisory Committee is no longer possible, meaning that our country will have nothing to say in the talks between EEA states due in 1994 on extending and improving the programme. So ours will be the only country whose participation depends on a bilateral agreement with the EC.

For the rest, it is not yet certain whether a new agreement on cooperation can be concluded within the negotiations on extending the scheme. According to the Bureau ERASMUS Switzerland, however, it is probable that the EEA States will in fact want further Swiss participation in this research and cooperation programme.

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For further information please contact:
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