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Trainee agreements

Professional experience abroad

Economic networks are becoming increasingly global, and national frontiers are losing much of their significance. In these circumstances, many companies consider it important that their staff should have experience abroad. Trainee agreements can contribute to this.

Today, all countries protect their own workers against foreign competition by making employment of foreigners subject to authorisation.

Work and residence permits are normally granted only when a work contract has been signed and when the future employer can show that he has tried un-

Roland Flükiger*

successfully to find a candidate at home for the post in question ("the need to show evidence"). In the last few years, the global economic recession has led to a tightening of such regulations.

21 agreements

But Switzerland takes the view that further training and learning new languages are needed even at a time of high unemployment. So it has concluded reciprocal agreements with 21 countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA. The assiduous counter will see that this comes to only 18 countries; agreements with Italy, Portugal and Russia have been signed but are not yet in force or are not ready for implementation.

*Emigration and Trainee Section of the Federal Office for Industry and Labour

The trainee

Trainees in these agreements are persons between 18 and in most cases 30 (21 to 30 for the USA), who have completed a professional training course lasting at

least two years or can prove two years practical work in a specific profession. The one chosen is immaterial.

But the applicant must still find a post in his particular profession. He then receives a work and residence permit out of the quota stipulated. This is valid for one year and may be extended for a maximum of six months. In contrast to other types of permit, the labour market authority does not have to consider the job situation in the country concerned, so that "the need to show evidence" does not apply.

Trainees must be paid wages according to the work they perform. These must be

sufficient to cover living costs. The expression "customary local rates for the profession" is often used: a foreign worker should never be paid less than his local colleagues.

How to apply

A person wishing to take up residence abroad as a trainee should first look for a job himself. But in today's context of high unemployment, this has become very difficult. The labour authority of the partner country cannot take an active part in finding a post but can provide tips on how to go about it and can assist the efforts of prospec-



(Hugo Bossard)

tive trainees by "supporting measures". It is important always to mention the trainee agreement with the country in question, since this does help in finding a post, at least indirectly.

Does this apply to Swiss Abroad?

The agreements apply to all citizens of contracting states. This means that Swiss Abroad may also obtain trainee permits for work and residence in third countries. Just as for candidates resident in Switzerland, applications by Swiss Abroad must be channelled through the Federal Office for Industry and

The handbook "Advisor to the Swiss Abroad" also discusses these trainee agreements in some detail. See order form on page 10.

Labour, from which application forms and all other information may be obtained. Address: Federal Office for Industry and Labour, Emigration and Trainee Section, CH-3003 Berne

Current popular initiatives

The following popular initiatives are still open for signature:

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.

For rewarding energy saving and against energy waste (Energy-environment initiative) – until March 28, 1995.

Gallus Cadonau, P.O. Box 2272, CH-8033 Zurich.

For a 'solar centime' (Solar initiative) – until March 28, 1995.

Gallus Cadonau, P.O. Box 2272, CH-8033 Zurich.



Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad

Security across frontiers

What happens if Swiss Abroad suddenly lose their livelihood and find themselves without resources? It is no easy matter to build up a new existence abroad, and even in Switzerland the present situation is by no means rosy. So the financial help to start again which is guaranteed to members of the Fund is more than welcome.



Building destroyed by mortar fire in Sarajevo: many Swiss Abroad living in ex-Yugoslavia have lost their means of livelihood; very few were insured!

To think in good time about what could happen and to behave as if it already had – that was the guiding idea when the Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad was set up in 1958. Its aim is to ensure our compatriots against loss of livelihood all over the world.

Concrete help

Deep down, Swiss Abroad are always aware of the danger that they could lose their livelihood from one day to

the next as a result of political or warlike events. To provide a solid foundation for such cases, the Fund offers insurance which may extend to Sfr. 100,000 per person. This means that a family of four persons could be covered by a respectable safety net amounting to Sfr. 400,000. From its foundation until the end of 1993, the Fund has helped 560 Swiss Abroad in financial difficulty by paying compensation amounting to Sfr. 8,268 million. In a further 62 cases, benefits of about half a million francs have been paid from a special assistance fund. Most affected were Swiss living in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Zaire and Tunisia. At present, the worst European countries are former East Germany and ex-Yugoslavia.

Attractive arrangements

Within the last year, 450 Swiss Abroad have discovered the incomparable advantages of livelihood insurance through the Fund and have become members. Why the unbroken attraction of a self-help scheme which has now become traditional? Dramatic events worldwide lead Swiss Abroad to examine their own positions more critically. So many countries today are subject to unrest, revolt, revolution, war and currency crisis, not to speak of enmity against foreigners. And the economic situation at home is still marked by persistent recession, with

more than 180,000 unemployed, so that the chances of Swiss Abroad building up a new livelihood in Switzerland are not exactly ideal.

Dangerous times

The Gulf war and the bloody events in ex-Yugoslavia have brought many Swiss Abroad up against the problem of insufficient livelihood insurance. Present times show that the risk of losing everything is never completely absent. The insurance system created by the Fund is unique. The possibility of choosing between three risk categories enables members to work out their own individualised insurance. The

The voluntary pension scheme

The National Council has rejected the abolition of the voluntary old-age and disability pension scheme and returned the proposal to the Federal Council for reassessment. At going to print, the Council of States had not yet reached a decision.

scheme makes it possible to combine livelihood insurance with a profitable savings account, and the Fund also enables its members to join the Swiss health insurance system on favourable terms should this become desirable.

Additional information from: THE FUND, Gutenbergstrasse 6, CH-3001 Berne

Have you consulted him yet? – The Advisor to the Swiss Abroad!

Long planned and coveted – he has finally appeared: the practical handbook to answer all the most important questions of the Swiss Abroad. Resulting from cooperative work between the Service for the Swiss Abroad, the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad and numerous federal offices and institutions, the new advisor is light and reader-friendly, 130 pages long and available in German, French and Italian.

The new Advisor may be obtained entirely free of charge. But you must fill in the form below and send a sticky address label to the following address:

Service for the Swiss Abroad
Bundesgasse 18, CH-3003 Berne

Order Form

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Mr./Mrs./Family: _____

Name: _____

First name: _____

Full address: _____

Country: _____

Desired Language: _____