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Revision of unemployment insurance

New daily allowance system

On January 1, 1997, the second stage of the revised Federal Law on Unemployment Insurance and the revised Ordinance on Unemployment Insurance entered into force. The provisions introduce a new daily allowance system and in part associate unemployment benefits with an obligation to take part in job market measures (employment programmes, further training, courses, etc.)

The new legislation provides for a new system of benefits and puts an accent on the reintegration of the unemployed. A wide range of job market measures is intended to reach this objective. Deliberate unemployment will be more severely sanctioned than in the past.

The revised ordinance provides for participation in financing optional early retirement with the intention of making jobs available for unemployed persons.

Unemployed persons must seek new jobs actively. The advisory service has been reorganised by the setting up of regional placement centres. The revision represents a genuine compromise between trades unions and employers.

Main points of the revision

Even for specialists the revision of the unemployment system is highly complex. Its main points may be described very briefly as follows:

- higher wage levels subject to contributions and higher contribution rates, introduction of waiting days for insured persons not required to contribute, reduced lump-sum rates, a new reasonableness provision, new provisions regarding short time and bad weather compensation, promotion of further training and self-employment.
- a new daily allowance system dependent on age

(150 days until completion of the fiftieth year of age; 250 from fifty; 400 from sixty; 520 for certain categories of disability insurance pension beneficiaries) and special daily allowances (right of insured persons to temporary employment combined with an obligation laid on cantonal authorities to provide 25,000 jobs) and encouragement of early retirement.

Significance for the Swiss Abroad

The above changes are of significance for Swiss Abroad returning to Switzerland.

In particular, Swiss Abroad are specifically affected with respect to the introduction of special waiting periods. A special waiting period of five days is laid down in their case. This means that together with the general waiting period of five days, the total period remains unchanged at 10 days.

However, persons who are exempt from fulfilling the contribution period as a result of training (those under 25 who are without maintenance obligations and professional diplomas) are subject to a special waiting period of 120 days. This regulation may, of course, affect Swiss Abroad.

Rights to benefits for Swiss Abroad

In the event of return or entry into Switzerland for the first

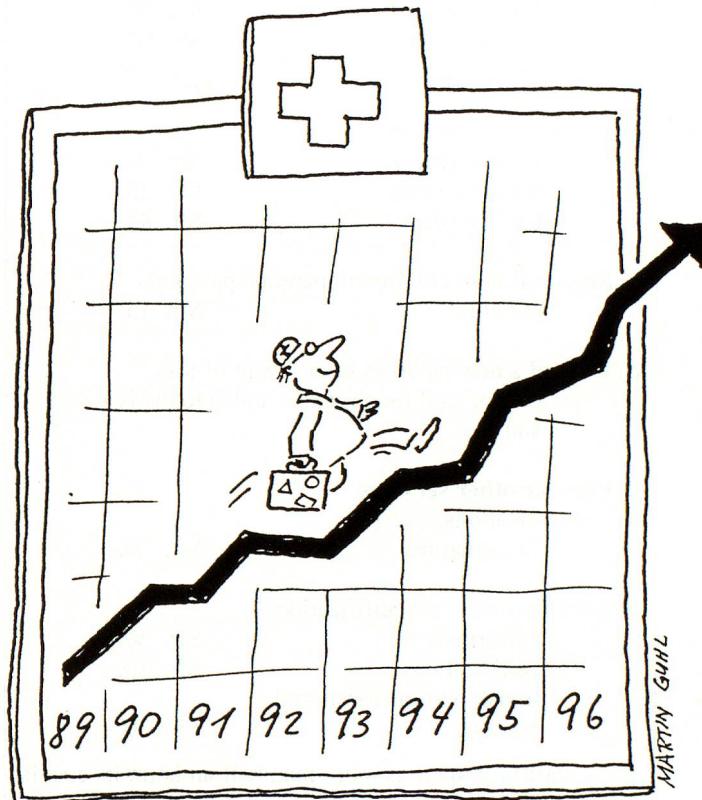
time, Swiss Abroad are insured against unemployment as soon as they take up permanent residence. They are exempt from contributions if they return to Switzerland after a period abroad lasting more than one year and have been in employment abroad for at least six complete months within the last two years. Such insurance protec-

tion is, however, limited to one year.

A Swiss Abroad in such circumstances will be required to show evidence of his employment abroad by showing a certificate from his employer including the length of his employment. However, a Swiss Abroad will be treated in the same way as a domestic unemployed person if his employ-

1996 Swiss Abroad statistics

A further increase



At the end of June of this year, 541,302 Swiss citizens were registered at our embassies and consulates. This represents an increase of 13,507 on the end of June 1995 (as against 13,265 the year before).

374,069 Swiss Abroad (or 69.11%) are dual nationals and 70% live in the countries of the European Union.

According to the Federal Chancellery, on June 9 1996, 65,534 of our compatriots abroad were registered with municipalities, entitling them to vote in elections and referendums. This amounts to about 15% of the 410,760 potential voters amongst the Swiss Abroad.

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ment has been with a Swiss firm which has made contributions on his wages to the Swiss unemployment insurance scheme.

Unemployed Swiss Abroad in these circumstances must report in person to the municipal office of their place of residence immediately upon

arrival. Depending upon the regulations of the respective cantonal authority, they must then report, also in person, at least twice a month to the responsible administrative body for advisory and checking purposes. A claim to unemployment insurance benefits as a returning Swiss

Abroad must be made within one year of arrival in Switzerland. For all other purposes, Swiss Abroad are subject to the same conditions on claims as domestic unemployed persons.

For questions of a general nature, please contact the Federal Office for Industry

and Labour, Unemployment Insurance Division, Bundesgasse 8, CH-3003 Berne; for questions regarding your individual case, please contact the office of the cantonal authority or the regional placement centre responsible for you.

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Swiss diplomatic posts

Changes in fees

On September 30, 1996, the Federal Council decided to change the fee structure of Switzerland's diplomatic and consular posts with effect from December 1, 1996. Here is an extract from the new list.

1. Passport fees:

a) Issue of a passport	
for one year	Sfr. 50.–
for three years	Sfr. 60.–
for five years	Sfr. 70.–
b) Renewal of a passport	
for one year	Sfr. 25.–
for three years	Sfr. 35.–
for five years	Sfr. 45.–
c) Registration of children in parents' passports	
per child	Sfr. 15.–
d) Issue of a new passport in the event of loss	
cost of staff time spent is added to the issue/renewal fee	

2. Fees for other services

a) Authentications	
of signatures	Sfr. 30.–

b) Confirmations and certifications

confirmations	Sfr. 30.–
certifications	Sfr. 30.–
transit permits for mortal remains	Sfr. 30.–

If the staff time spent is more than half an hour, its cost is added.

c) Deposits

personal effects and property	
per year	Sfr. 125.–
official or private documents	
per year	Sfr. 60.–

 temporary safekeeping of identity cards, credit cards, etc. Sfr. 30.–

3. Cost of staff time

 fee per half hour Sfr. 60.–

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Initiatives in brief

Constructive referendum

The Social Democratic Party (SP) and the Greens, together with a number of peace, development and so-

cial policy organisations, have launched an initiative entitled "More rights for the people thanks to the referendum with counter-proposal (constructive referendum)".

This has the following aims:

- 50,000 persons entitled to vote, or eight cantons, should have the right – alongside the existing right to call for a referendum, which would still exist – to make a concrete counter-proposal and to demand a referendum upon it.

• A referendum on the counter-proposal could be required only if at least 5% of members of the National Council or the Council of States voted in favour of it.

• Voters should be able to state whether they agree with the federal law or generally binding federal decision, or with the counter-proposal. In the event of contradictory counter-proposals, contingency referendums should be held.

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Current popular initiatives

The following popular initiatives are still open for signature:

Moderation in immigration!

until March 12, 1997

The Swiss Democrats, Bernhard Hess, P.O. Box 8116, CH-3001 Berne

Save on the military and defence in general – for more peace and future-oriented workplaces (redistribution initiative)

until March 26, 1997

Peter Hug, Flurstrasse 1a, CH-3014 Berne

More rights for the people thanks to the referendum with counter-proposal (constructive referendum)

until March 26, 1997

Jürgen Schulz, P.O. Box 7271, CH-3001 Berne

Deregulation initiative: more freedom – fewer laws

until June 5, 1997

Ernst Cincera, Former National Councillor, P.O. Box 8494, CH-8050 Zürich

For financing costly and longlasting infrastructure programmes

until October 16, 1997

Arnold Schlaepfer, 18 Avenue Cardinal-Mermillod, CH-1227 Carouge

Yes to fair rents

until October 30, 1997

Swiss Tenants' Association, Jean-Nils de Dardel, P.O. Box 3055, CH-1211 Geneva 3.

For free choice of doctor and hospital

until May 26, 1998

Dr. Bernhard Gasser, lawyer, St. Alban-Vorstadt 110, CH-4052 Basle

Optional state pension schemes (AHV/IV)

The 50-year age limit

According to the regulations of the optional Old-Age, Survivors' and Disability pension schemes, it is possible to join up to one's 51st birthday.

(The right to make exceptions to this rule is reserved.)