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Spring session of the Council for the Swiss Abroad in Berne

To facilitate mobility

No stop to subsidies for Swiss schools in Europe, careful reform instead of dismantlement of the optional AHV/IV. Alongside these demands, the Council for the Swiss Abroad, at its spring session, also declared itself in favour of a quick agreement between Switzerland and the European Union.

The Swiss Abroad attribute a central role to the worldwide presence of our country, Jean-Jacques Cevy, president of the Organisation for the Swiss abroad (OSA), told the Council. It would therefore go right against the grain to cease supporting Swiss schools abroad, which are an important corner-stone of our presence abroad, as well as to deprive Swiss Abroad

ment between Switzerland and the European Union, particularly in the field of free movement of persons. For many Swiss who already live in EU countries or who may wish to do so in future, relaxation in this field would help matters greatly.

The president reminded those present that a majority of members of the 1992 Congress of the Swiss Abroad

and not a threat for our country.

New Swiss associations

Throughout the world there are now more than 700 Swiss associations and other institutions recognised by the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad. The Council was again able to welcome new foreign groups. In addition, it decided to maintain the entry criteria for associations, while introducing a new category of 'Associated Group'. This means that associations may now be welcomed if they fulfil only part of these criteria but at the same time take an active part in the way desired by the OSA.

Competition winners

The winners of the competition organised by the Friends of the OSA were announced at the council's meeting. Those named as life members in 1997 took part automatically.

- One week for two at San Diego: Anne Meili, Austria
- One week for two at Scottsdale: Hanspeter Brutschy, Austria
- Participation free of charge for two at the 1998 congress of the Swiss Abroad: Max Beutler, Spain
- A weekend for two at Antwerp: Rudolf Schaffner, Switzerland
- A weekend for two at Torquay: Lukas Novotny, USA
- 1 gold vreneli: Rita Barbosa, Spain

RL



Friends of the OSA competition: President Walter E. Häfliger (right), with prize winner Hanspeter Brutschy (left) and prize donor Max Hächler.

of mobility by putting further restrictions on their joining the Swiss AHV/IV.

It is true that the Federal Council, said Cevy, has rejected a new proposal by the Federal Social Insurance Office on reform of the optional AHV/IV, but the OSA will still be facing tough decisions on the two subjects of training and social security.

Free movement of persons

Referring to the bilateral negotiations, at present blocked by the problem of surface travel, Cevy emphasised the importance of a quick agree-

ment had been in favour of Swiss membership of the EEA, mainly for the above reason. He pleaded that free movement of persons should be seen as an opportunity

AJAS

Education and training in Switzerland

Thinking of studying in Switzerland? AJAS, the association for the promotion of education for young Swiss Abroad can provide information on:

- university studies
- vocational training
- Specialised higher education (Fachhochschulen)
- language and integration courses
- accommodation
- grants.

The annual report for 1997 provides information on AJAS activities. It can be ordered from:

AJAS, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16

Jean Heer dead

Jean Heer, journalist and later press-spokesman for Nestlé group, has died at the age of 82. Heer was Vice-President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad from 1963 to 1988.

Congress '98: encounters in Aargau

This year's Swiss Abroad congress is to be held in Baden and Lenzburg on August 21-23. The meeting will be a special occasion for Swiss Abroad to meet each other and Switzerland in this federal jubilee year. Information and registration at:
*Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad
 Alpenstrasse 26
 CH-3000 Berne 16
 Fax +41 31 351 61 50
 E-mail: post_aso@aso.ch*

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Summer camps '98

Once again the Youth Service of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad is organising two summer camps including sports and cultural programmes for Swiss Abroad between the ages of 15 and 25, in Baden, Canton Aargau, from July 19 to August 1 and from August 2 to August 15. A week's extension and participation in the Swiss Abroad Congress can be arranged. Information and registration at:

*Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad
 Alpenstr. 26, CH-3000 Berne 16
 Tel: +41 31 351 61 00
 Fax: +41 31 351 61 50
 E-mail: post-aso@asop.ch*

P. S: Three Lucerne Rotary Clubs are organising a youth camp in central Switzerland to mark the jubilee year from 3/4 to 18/19 July. There are no fees for attending!