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The 76th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Aargau

A plea for mobility

600 compatriots from 45 countries came together in Aargau. They discussed mobility, migration and the significance of the "Fifth Switzerland" for our country.

“Swiss Abroad are an extremely important factor for the Swiss presence abroad” stated Jean-Jacques Cevey, President of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, in his concluding remarks. In consequence, Switzerland has every interest in promoting international mobility for its citizens. It must ensure the creation of framework conditions which enable them to go abroad and return without the hurdles in the fields of social security, health insurance or training being too high.

It is also necessary to know more about the so-called “Fifth Switzerland” in order to create sound foundations for Swiss Abroad policy and to be able to use effectively the immense potential of citizens abroad. In

advance of this, historian Georg Kreis and the director of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Rudolf Wyder, drew attention to gaps in Swiss emigration research. “At the end of the day”, said Cevey, “we must all increasingly recognise again the valuable experience and the great enrichment which a stay abroad can bring to us”.

The new vice-president of the ASO, Jacques-Simon Eggly, and Mathis Cabiallavetta, chairman of the Board of Directors of UBS, plea-

ded for an increased opening up of Switzerland. And Manuela Aguiar, a Portuguese member of the Council of Europe, described what European countries do for their fellow citizens abroad.

At the end of the Congress, Cevey, who had transferred his office to Georg Stucky, was honored for his work and greeted with a standing ovation. Next year's congress will be held in Lausanne on August 6th to 8th, with the possibility of taking part in the “Fête des Vignerons” (see page 15). ■



Jean-Jacques Cevey (left) and federal councillor Arnold Koller. (Photo: SSA)

Swiss schools: no revision

Federal Councillor Arnold Koller represented the Swiss government at the Congress. To the enthusiastic applause of those present, he stated that the Federal Council had decided to change nothing in the policy of subsidising Swiss schools abroad. This means that Swiss schools in Europe will also continue to be supported.

Winter camps 98/99: skiing, snow and fun

The camp for 8 to 14 year-olds will take place from December 26th 1998 to January 2nd 1999 in Splügen GR or Engelberg OW. 15 to 25 year-olds will meet from December 27th 1998 to January 5th 1999 in Grächen VS, or from April 2nd to 11th 1999 in Grimentz VS.

New: winter sports holidays in Grindelwald BE for 20 to 35 year-olds from March 7th to 21st 1999 (one or two weeks according to preference).

Information and registration at the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16 Tel. +41 31 351 61 00 Fax +41 31 351 61 50 E-mail: post_aso(aso.ch) ■

Autumn session of the Council for the Swiss Abroad in Lenzburg

For need-oriented voluntary AHV/IV

A reform must take account of the legitimate requirements of the Swiss Abroad. The Council for the Swiss Abroad demanded this from the current revision of the voluntary AHV/IV. The new president of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad is Georg Stucky.

In a committed debate it quickly became clear that the Federal Council's proposal for the reform of the voluntary AHV/IV (see Swiss Review 4/98) did not satisfy a large majority of Council members on a number of points. Concrete examples from various countries made it clear that particularly the planned abolition in the so-called agreement states would bring nu-

merous compatriots into difficulty. Three out of four contributors today live in such countries, a majority being women.

In consequence, the ASR's demand, passed unanimously, is clear. Whoever cannot insure himself adequately in his country of residence should continue to be able to join the Swiss AHV/IV, this also applying to the agreement states and without pre-

vious insurance time in the mandatory AHV/IV being required.

In the interest of the international mobility of Swiss citizens the Council called on the authorities to work out a need-oriented solution. It criticised the fact that the figures contained in the Federal Council's proposal would not stand close examination. In addition, it was persistently hidden that such a reform would lead to extra expenditure to the tune of millions over decades and would not result in savings.

Zug National Councillor Georg Stucky was elected to

the post of new president of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad in succession to Jean-Jacques Cevey. He has been a member of the Council for the Swiss Abroad since 1992, and since that time has been vice-president of the OSA. The new vice-president is Geneva National Councillor Jacques-Simon Eggly.

With “Suisse avenir” (France), the Swiss-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (Brazil) and the Asociacion Suiza de Nicaragua, the ASR could again take on three new foreign groups.

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