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Revision of the optional AHV

Swiss Abroad call for amendments

The Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA) is not satisfied with the Federal Council's proposals for the reform of the optional old age and survivors' insurance and disability insurance (AHV/IV). Amendments are called for, in order that Swiss nationals can continue to enjoy international freedom of movement without losing their social insurance coverage.

The OSA supports a reform of the optional AHV/IV in principle. However, the draft legislation recently approved by the Federal Council does not adequately address the needs of the mobile members of the Swiss population. In the view of the OSA the Federal Council's bill does not take sufficient account of the results of the public hearing process; too little notice has been taken of the objections and suggestions for improvement lodged by cantons, parties and other interested institutions.

Furthermore, the OSA decries the lack of statistical evidence. The alleged deficit of the optional insurance scheme is not proven; instead of the promised savings, the reform proposal as it now stands would bring substantial extra costs in its wake, emphasises the advocate of the interests of the Fifth Switzerland.

Social benefits abroad too

The OSA is committed to promoting the continued entitlement of Swiss nationals resident abroad to sufficient social benefits. Despite social security agreements, by no means all Swiss Abroad have the possibility to make adequate provision for themselves in their host countries. In particular, Swiss Abroad not in gainful employment often have no alternative to insurance coverage in Switzerland. This is why more

than 50,000 of our compatriots abroad currently contribute to the optional AHV/IV scheme. In the OSA's view,

this insurance option will continue to be essential in the future in order to secure the unrestricted international mobility of Swiss.

Corrections to the revision bill

The OSA is therefore calling for an amendment of the revision bill on two counts. Firstly, Swiss Abroad should be able to continue contribut-

ing to the optional AHV/IV scheme, irrespective of the existence of a social security agreement, if their host country offers insufficient provision. Secondly, membership of the optional AHV/IV scheme should not be dependent on coverage for five consecutive years immediately prior to the new law; instead, the criterion should be the effective insurance requirement. ■

Friends of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

Canvassing for a good cause

The aim of the Friends of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad is to ensure the long-term financing of the OSA and thereby intensify its role as advocate of the interests of the Fifth Switzerland. The Federal Council's about-turn last year on the issue of Swiss schools abroad and the (to date) successful campaign against the abolition of optional AHV/IV demonstrate the value of the OSA's efforts. The increase in the Friends' membership figures not only serves the cause of the Fifth Switzerland but also attests to the interest of our compatriots abroad in the activities of the OSA. The Friends have once again decided to hold a competition to attract new members. Attractive prizes are on offer:

- Flight for two to Hong Kong (from any Cathay Pacific destination) with 3 nights at the Peninsula Hotel (offered by Cathay Pacific Airlines and the Peninsula Hotel)
- Dinner for two and an overnight stay at the Rhine Hotel Fischerzunft, Schaffhausen (offered by André Jaeger, proprietor)

- 1 gold vreneli (20-franc gold coin, offered by Elisabeth Michel)
- 1 20-gram gold bar (offered by Walter E. Haefliger)

The competition is open to members of the Friends and persons who join by 31 July

1999. The prizes will be awarded to members who recruit the most new life-members by that date. The winners will be announced at the autumn session of the Council of the Swiss Abroad on 6 August 1999. ■

Application Form

I/We hereby apply for life membership of the Friends of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad. I/We wish to pay the once-only membership fee of CHF 500.– (minimum)

by immediate cash transfer to the Friends' Post Office Giro Account No. 30-10580-7

through debit to my/our Eurocard/Mastercard/Visacard (please underline as appropriate)

Card No.: _____ Valid until: _____

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address, Country: _____

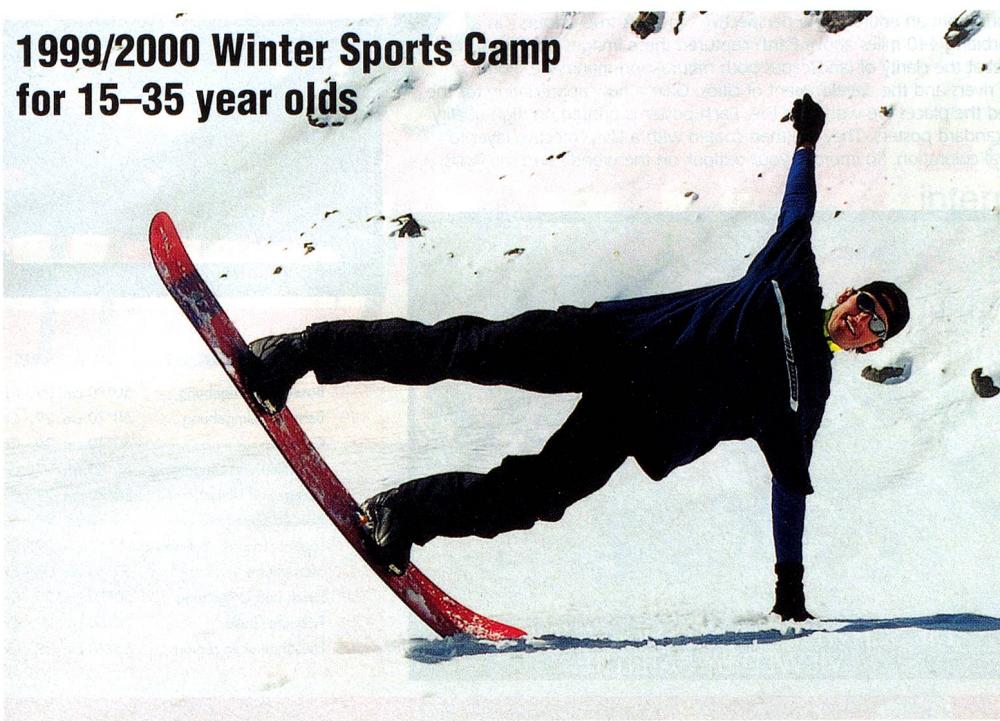
Introduced by: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Please complete and send by 31 July 1999 (date of postage) to the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16, Fax +41 31 351 61 50. Many thanks for your interest, and good luck!



1999/2000 Winter Sports Camp for 15–35 year olds



Place, date: Grächen/VS, 27.12.1999–5.1. 2000 (extension possible to 8.1.) and 15.4.–24.4. 2000; Costs: CHF 700.– (extra costs for extension: CHF 250.–). Open to: young Swiss Abroad aged between 15 and 25. Ability to ski and snowboard not required. Beginners also welcome.

Place, date: Grindelwald/BE, 11.3.–18.3. 2000 and 18.3.–25.3. 2000 (one- or two-week stay according to preference); Costs: 1 week CHF 750.–, 2 weeks CHF 1350.–. Open to: young Swiss Abroad aged between 20 and 35.

Further information and registration:

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

Winter Sports Camp 1999/2000 for 8–14 year olds

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad is also organising an attractive programme of events for this winter. Details:

Place, date: Splügen/GR or Engelberg/OW; 26.12.1999–1.1. 2000 (extension possible

for Engelberg: 1.1.–8.1. 2000); Costs: CHF 550.– (extra costs for extension

week: CHF 350.–). Open to: young Swiss Abroad aged between 8 and 14. No speci-

AJAS

Planning to train or study in Switzerland?

AJAS, the Association for the Promotion of the Education of Young Swiss Abroad, has been instrumental for 36 years in representing the rights and interests of young Swiss Abroad before the Swiss authorities, and mediates with cantonal authorities on educational matters.

AJAS supports and advises young Swiss Abroad throughout the world who wish to take up vocational training in Switzerland. Both AJAS staff members will gladly advise you on the various possibilities, and provide support and assistance on matters concerning an educational stay in Switzerland.

We provide information on:

- vocational and academic studies
- university studies
- language stays
- preparatory courses for a

university education in Switzerland

- practical courses/internships
- accommodation
- financing (grants and supplementary benefits)

Before you decide on a study period in Switzerland, consider the following important points:

- Remember that other living conditions await you in terms of costs, climate, culture etc.
- A working knowledge of

at least one national language (preferably German or French) is essential.

- Education comes under the responsibility of the cantons.
- It is advisable to find out in advance about accommodation in Switzerland.

Further information available from:

AJAS
Alpenstrasse 26
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Tel. +41 31 351 61 40
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Internet: <http://www.aso.ch>

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