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Successful Swiss Solidarity Day

"Children as victims of war" is a topic that profoundly touches many people in Switzerland, as witnessed by the results of the Swiss Solidarity national appeal day. Between 6 a.m. and midnight, some 30,000 donors called in and pledged a total of CHF 3.5 million. Based on past experience, this amount will be clearly exceeded once payments are in.

The largest single donation was CHF 40,000, the smallest CHF 1.00. Grandmothers, Swiss nationals living abroad, alpine schools, prison inmates and balloon pilots were among the thousands who pledged donations.

For the first time, thirteen private radio stations in German-speaking Switzerland and several in French-speaking Switzerland took part in the Swiss Solidarity appeal. Added to this, a great many print media supported the appeal with whole-page articles and free advertisements. Several well-known personalities urged viewers and listeners to donate, including Foreign Minister Calmy-Rey, ex-Federal Councillor Ruth Dreifuss, singer Henri Dès, architect Mario Botta and comedian Massimo

Rocchi. National Council President Yves Christen offered to give the donor of the highest amount a judo lesson, and Erika Hess offered one day's ski instruction to a school class during their ski week.

Swiss Solidarity uses the donated cash to fund specific projects run by their partner relief agencies. On the appeal day, radio and TV reports presented sixteen of these programmes running in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Palestine. An estimated 12 million children are believed to be directly affected by the consequences of war and armed conflict, and over 300,000 suffer abuse as child soldiers. Many of them will now receive aid thanks to the appeal.

Swiss Solidarity thanks all donors for their solidarity and support for a world with more hope and less violence towards children.

com

Translated from German

Celebrate Easter with other young people



Suddenly, national differences are not an issue.



Unforgettable holidays in Switzerland.

There are still some places available for the OSA Easter camp for young Swiss Abroad to be held in the Fiesch valley between 4 and 12 April. Come along and enjoy the springtime snow in the Aletsch region.

Log onto www.aso.ch (Youth) to register for this camp. We look forward to a multicultural Easter week with the accent on entertainment and fun. The Fiescheralp ski region is well-known for its excellent slopes for all levels of skier. This year we look forward to welcoming a group from New York, who are certain to add their own ideas to an already variety-filled programme of events.

If you are unable to make it to Switzerland in the spring, we also offer a varied and entertaining programme of leisure activities and study opportunities in summer. The new brochure is fresh off the press and we will be happy to send you a copy.

As usual, information and details on the above arrangements are available from:
JD
Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA)
Youth Service
Alpenstr. 26, CH-3000 Berne 16
Tel. ++41 (0)31 356 61 00
Fax ++41 (0)31 356 61 01
youth@aso.ch, www.aso.ch

Translated from German

AJAS alumni sought

To make things a little easier for young Swiss Abroad while they are studying in Switzerland, we want to set up an alumni association. The idea is to provide young people studying in Switzerland with the opportunity to exchange information with those who have already completed the programme and, by so doing, forge important contacts. If you have studied in Switzerland and/or received assistance from the AJAS, please contact us (if possible by e-mail). We look forward to a good response.

E-mail: ajas@aso.ch

Address: AJAS, Alpenstrasse 26

3000 Berne 16

Tel. 0041 31 356 61 04

Fax 0041 31 356 61 01

Translated from German

Kids discover Switzerland

Young Swiss Abroad aged between eight and fourteen years old are invited to join the two-week camps organised by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad on dates between 3 July and 28 August 2004. There are still some places available.

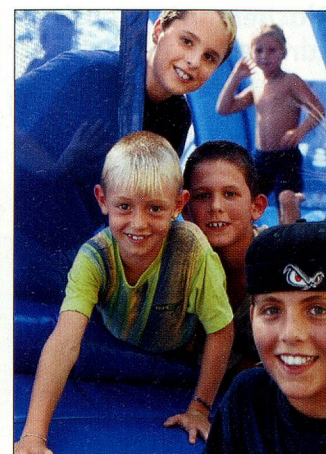
This summer, kids can discover the Melchtal (Obwalden), Unterwasser (Toggenburg), St. Cergue

(above Nyon), L'Auberson (near St. Croix/VD), Cerentino (Maggia valley) and Eriz (Emmental).

For details on the individual holiday camps as well as the registration form, visit www.aso.ch (SIAS Section). Applications will be processed in order of receipt. Please do not hesitate to contact the SIAS team if you require further information. SIAS

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Translated from German



CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Winterthur, 20–22 August 2004

Technological innovation: the acid test for Switzerland

In an age of globalisation and the information society, the cards of international competition are being reshuffled. Switzerland, which for long was among the most technologically innovative of countries, is increasingly beset by tougher competition. What strategy should the country adopt to defend its leading position and create solid foundations for future growth? The 82nd Congress of the Swiss Abroad, to be held in Winterthur between 20 and 22 August 2004, will be addressing this topic.

Over the past few decades, Switzerland has carved out a leading position in the field of innovation. The major potentials offered by Swiss education and research continue to be one of the country's strongest suits in the competitive international market. But being the first to discover something new is no longer enough. The priority now is on being the first to market the applications. This type of innovativeness makes the difference on international markets. So Switzerland is faced with a dual challenge. On the one hand, it must defend its leading

position in the field of research, and on the other hand it must shorten time to market i.e. the time between scientific discovery or invention, and market launch.

How does Switzerland aim to tackle these challenges and promote innovative capabilities? How important is international collaboration in the field of science? How can economics, education and research be better harmonised and how can Switzerland promote entrepreneurialism and a risk culture? Which sectors of the economy will drive future growth? A number of companies are already showing the way.

All these questions will be discussed at the congress in Winterthur, which will be attended by well-known personalities from Switzerland and abroad. In keeping with tradition, the congress will close with an address by a member of the Federal Council.

On request we will be happy to send you additional information on the congress. Please complete the form below.

This year children aged between 8 and 14 will be able to ac-

company parents who are attending the congress at very favourable conditions.

Between the morning of Friday, 20 August, and the afternoon of Saturday, 21 August, these children can join young Swiss Abroad attending a holiday camp run by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (accommodation included). The camp programme includes workshops on the subject of innovation, as well as trips to the city of Winterthur and surrounding region.

Added to this, a seminar for teenagers and young adults aged between 16 and 25 will once more be held the week before the congress. The programme covers study opportunities in Switzerland, a visit to the Technorama and universities, and active participation in the congress. CG

Translated from German

Please send me documentation on the Congress of the Swiss Abroad.
(Block capitals please!)

Surname _____		First name _____	
Street/no. _____			
Postcode _____		Place _____	
Country _____			
Tel. _____		Fax _____	
E-mail _____			

Send the completed form by **15 June 2004** to the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, «Congress», Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16, E-mail: congress@aso.ch