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New on swisskids: Swiss treats

SWISSKIDS



What's the favourite food of Swiss kids? How do you make an authentic Lucerne gingerbread? The answer to these and lots of other questions is served up in swisskids, the website for young Swiss Abroad, in October and November.

And don't forget: Prof. Dr Emmi Taler is also on hand to answer all your questions about

Switzerland. You can find penpals, enter a competition to win great prizes, and lots more. To access swisskids, log onto www.revue.ch. Guten Appetit!

Anna Bähler

New Council for the Swiss Abroad

Between now and next summer, a new Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA) must be appointed and the election process is now in progress. The CSA is the officially recognised voice of the Fifth Switzerland. The militia organ consists of some 170 delegates from all over the world.

The Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA) advocates the interests of all Swiss abroad vis-à-vis government authorities and the public in Switzerland. As such, it acts as a form of parliament and is therefore frequently referred to in the media as the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland". It has been responsible for a number of important reforms: for example, the enshrinement of a Swiss Abroad clause in the Federal Constitution (Art. 40), retention of the voluntary AHV/IV, the solidarity fund to provide support to needy Swiss Abroad, citizens' rights reforms, the provision of information to Swiss Abroad via the "Swiss Review", promotion of the education

of young Swiss Abroad, and the introduction of postal voting. Thanks to the high calibre of the Council's work in Switzerland, public awareness of the interests of Swiss citizens abroad has continually been raised over the past few years.

The CSA convenes twice a year in Switzerland for a full-day session, to consult on important Swiss Abroad policy issues and formulate statements on current affairs from the Fifth Switzerland's standpoint. The Council always meets in the spring and in the course of the Congress of the Swiss Abroad held annually in late summer. Between sessions, day-to-day business is dealt with by the Executive Board and the OSA office.

Seats are allocated according to the size of Swiss communities in individual countries. The CSA consists of 129 members from abroad and some 40 from Switzerland. The latter represent Swiss institutions which address the concerns of our compatriots abroad and liaise with the federal assembly.

ASO

Conference of Presidents and School Directors of the Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA)

Schools counteract government cuts

The government's cost cuts are threatening the existence of some Swiss schools abroad. The responsible bodies are aiming to address this situation by introducing educational and managerial improvements. This was the main topic of discussion at this year's Conference of Presidents and School Directors held between 5 and 7 July in Lucerne.

The 17 officially recognised Swiss schools abroad, with a total pupil roll of 6500, are non-profit-making private institutions which rely on government support in order to maintain a high quality of education and preserve their Swiss character. The government's 2003 cost reduction programme entails a massive gradual reduction of subsidies between now and 2007. This begs the question of whether the schools can continue to perform their legal teaching mandate on such reduced support. The Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA) invited parliamentary representatives, patron cantons and the media to this year's

Conference of Presidents and School Directors. On 6 July Anton Schwingruber, Lucerne's Director of Education, welcomed conference participants and their guests to the State Council Chamber. Among the guest speakers were ex-State Councillor and Vice President of the ETH Council, Ernst Buschor (CVP/ZH).

The main topics of discussion were financial management and computer aided learning. Longer-term projects were also addressed with a view to improving the market positioning of Swiss schools abroad. The annual CSSA congress also provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on educational and managerial topics. The congress was attended by 16 school directors and nine presidents.

Additional information is available at www.schweizerschulen.ch

How it works

All registered Swiss Abroad of full age are entitled to declare themselves as candidates for membership of the CSA. They must also have a right to vote in the club or association of which they are a member.

- Delegates from abroad are elected by the OSA-recognised Swiss clubs or their umbrella organisations. Candidatures must be registered with the particular club or organisation (for details, see Regional Section).
- Swiss Abroad living in countries with no recognised Swiss associations must register their candidature directly with the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Switzerland). Such candidates, as well as Swiss-based members, are directly elected by the Council for the Swiss Abroad.

The OSA provides the associations with information on seat allocation, the election procedure and election competences.

Impressions from our summer camps

This year, as in previous years, lots of young Swiss Abroad took advantage of the Youth Service's wide range of packages. While these young people are still nursing fond memories of their Swiss summer, the OSA is already planning its winter programme.

Some 130 young people attended the summer camps in the Jura near Solothurn. In keeping with tradition, there was lots of sports on offer. In addition, the groups visited Solothurn, Berne and Lucerne, to get to know some Swiss cities. A balanced programme of accompanying events and evening activities offered a wealth of cultural, artistic and creative entertainment. As is often the case, participants went away with a lasting reminder of their summer vacation in the form of new-found friendships with other young Swiss Abroad. In the following section, young people give their own impressions of these summer camps. The quotes are taken from diaries of the summer camp in Gänsbrunn (see also www.aso.ch):

"Oggi, con il nostro gruppo di sport, siamo andati in una piscina all'aperto...finalmente dopo tanto tempo ne abbiamo avuto la possibilità! il tempo era bellissimo c'era tantissimo sole(nel pomeriggio, perchè di mattina era abbastanza freddino)e quindi abbiamo potuto fare il bagno senza problemi!!!"

"After that we went into our groups, my group, ball sports, went to play soccer. It was my first time playing a real game of it and it was great."

"Despues de un par de horas volvimos al campamento y despues de habernos reunido nos fuimos a museos muy interesantes, como museos de ceramica y tanques de gasolina."



Kneading dough for bread at the summer camp in Melchtal.

"Nach dem Lunch teilten wir uns in zwei Gruppen auf. Die Faulen sind wieder nach Gänsbrunn zurückgekehrt und die Todesmutigen machten sich auf den Weg, um mit der 'echten' Wanderung zu beginnen. Sie werden heute Nacht in selbstgebauten Zelten übernachten und erst morgen früh zurückkehren."

„Nous avons visité une ville voisine de Gänsbrunn : Solothurn. La ville était remplie de superbes églises et de gens qui marchaient tout en parlant suisse!!!

Le jeu dans la ville était très amusant et ludique, nous avons appris beaucoup a propos de l'histoire de cette cité merveilleusement moyenâgeuse et historique."

"Tänään aamulla kaiken sekamelskan jälkeen päädyimme vihdoin vaelluspolulle. Koko matka oli ylämäkeä ja moni lihas meni maitohapoille saakka."

"I had a wonderful time!!!"

So people, if you're not sure to come next year or not, I say come!! It's really fun!!!"

Youth Service winter packages: register now!

We also offer great winter arrangements. Plan your stay in Switzerland now. Learn German or French in our language courses. We'll find you a nice host family, or you can visit universities and companies and find out about study opportunities in Switzerland.

For all winter sports enthusiasts or those who want to become one, we offer three great winter sports camps.

New Year's ski camp in Sedrun (GR)

(age 15–25)
27.12.04 – 05.01.05

Winter sports week in Wengen (BE)

(age 18–35)
05.03.05 – 12.03.05

Easter sports camp in Unterwasser (SG)

(age 14–25)
23.03.05 – 03.04.05

For further information on the arrangements, check out www.aso.ch or order the new brochure from

Organisation for the Swiss Abroad,
Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26
3000 Berne 16
Tel: ++41 (0)31 356 61 00
youth@aso.ch

Federal Youth Session

(31.10.04 – 07.11.04)

Once more, young Swiss Abroad aged between 14 and 21 are invited and encouraged to take part in the Youth Session. This year's topic is "HEALTHvetia". Young parliamentarians will debate on healthcare policy: a subject to which you, as a young Swiss Abroad, can certainly contribute. A unique opportunity to take a peek behind the scenes of Swiss politics. Interested? Contact us for more information!