

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 32 (2005)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: DFA information

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Standardised visual identity for the Federal Administration

In the spring of 2005 the Federal Council presented the new Federal Administration logo. The changes will cost some CHF 25 million and be fully implemented within the Federal Administration by the end of 2006.

The Federal Administration's new standardised logo features the Swiss cross and wording "Swiss Confederation" in the

four national languages, German, French, Italian and Romansh. By the end of next year the standardised visual identity will feature on all printed and electronic products. Additional language versions as well as the name of departments, federal offices or services will not form part of the standardised logo.

The new identity is the result of a competition which was won by a joint team comprising the CI Programm working group of Zurich and "Definitive Design" of Berne. This team will collaborate with the Federal Chancellery to draw up guidelines for the Confederation's future image.

The new logo will be adopted by individual departments and offices gradually up to the end of 2006.

The external cost of implementing this standard visual identity is estimated to be in the region of CHF 9 million, in addition to an internal cost of CHF 16 million; at the same time, its introduction will enable recurring annual savings of some CHF 7 million.

By launching a new image, the Federal Council is aiming to enhance the transparency of government services, cut costs through standardisation, promote a sense of solidarity among government employees, and simplify cooperation between individual administrative units. The Federal Chancellery was also commissioned to identify inconsistencies in the titles of organisational units and draw up proposals for changes with the departments and offices in question. English titles such as "swiss-mint" (the official Mint of the Swiss Confederation) will be abolished, as well as titles that bear no clear relation to the Federal Administration.

BDK

Savings income subject to tax since 1 July 2005

The agreement on the taxation of savings income between Switzerland and the European Union came into force on 1 July, 2005. The agreement governs tax retention on interest payments made by a paying agent located in Switzerland.

Since 1 July, 2005, interest income from non-Swiss assets¹ has, as a rule, been subject to tax provided the recipient of these interest payments is resident in an EU member state. The agreement therefore applies also to Swiss Abroad who receive income, via Swiss paying agents, from the interest on non-Swiss financial assets.

The rate for these deductions i.e. the withholding tax, will be initially 15 percent until 30 June, 2008, rising to 20 percent from 1 July, 2008, and 35 percent from 1 July, 2011.

The deductions are calculated on the basis of gross income from



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INITIATIVES

No new initiatives have been submitted since the last issue. You can download signature forms for current initiatives from www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis10.html

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INITIATIVE: NO NOISE POLLUTION FROM FIGHTER JETS

The Helvetia Nostra Association and the Franz Weber Charitable Foundation have launched the federal people's initiative entitled «Against Fighter Jet Noise in Tourist Regions». The initiative calls for a ban during peacetime on military exercises involving fighter jets in recreational areas frequented by tourists. The people's initiative would entail an amendment to the Swiss federal constitution: Article 74a (noise protection) would need to be incorporated in the Constitution.

The aim of the initiative is to protect Swiss recreational areas against noise from aircraft involved in military exercises. In particular, however, it is also directed against the Swiss airforce's plans to increase flights in the Bernese Oberland. According to the wording of the initiative, the quality of life for people and animals in affected tourist regions must be upheld. Moreover, Switzerland must remain an attractive holiday destination and, in so doing, contribute to Swiss tourism.

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VOTING

Federal Referendum of 25 September 2005

Federal decree of 17 December, 2004, on inclusion of the new EU member states in the agreement on free movement of people, and the revision of the supporting measures.

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Passport Info

Travel to the USA without a visa? No problem – with the Passport 03!

Remember: According to US travel regulations, you can still travel to the USA after 26 October, 2005, if you have the latest Model 03 Swiss passport with date of issue prior to 26 October 2005.

The passport can be easily ordered from the Swiss representation which is responsible for you. Do this as soon as possible but no later than the end of August. If you apply too late and the USA keeps to its deadlines, you will have to apply for a visa if you intend to travel to or transit the USA after 26 October 2005.

Hotline: +41 800 820 008

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interest, but taxes and deduction on the same interest payment other than the withholding tax defined in the agreement on taxation of savings income can be offset with the amount of the withholding tax. Switzerland forwards 75 percent of the revenues from this system to the interest recipient's country of residence, while the remaining 25 percent go to the Swiss tax authority (revenue sharing). Paying agents are Swiss bank institutes and asset managers, as well as companies which manage and charge interest on financial assets.

Instead of the system of tax retention, interest recipients can opt for a voluntary declaration of their interest income. The paying agent forwards this declaration to the Federal Tax Administration in Berne, which passes it on to the tax authority of the EU country in which the interest recipient resides.

For more information on interest taxation, go to www.estv.admin.ch, ("FDF Key Topics"), www.europa.admin.ch ("Bilateral Agreements II").

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Registration centres in place for biometric Swiss passport

On 17 May, 2005, the Federal Department of Justice and Police defined the registration centres for the biometric Swiss passport. In all, 16 centres will be operated during the five-year pilot project: eight in Switzerland and eight abroad. Passports with biometric data will be issued only from September 2006.

The registration centres are located across Switzerland in the cantons of Aargau, Berne, Basle City, Graubünden, St. Gallen, Ticino, Zurich and Vaud and cover all the country's language regions.

The following eight Swiss representations were designated

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centres for recording biometric data for Swiss Abroad: Paris, Frankfurt, London, New York, Toronto, Sao Paulo, Hong Kong and Sydney.

The biometric data required for such passports can be registered at any of these centres, irrespective of the applicant's place of residence. Swiss Abroad can therefore also register their biometric data at cantonal registration centres while visiting Switzerland. As far as submitting an application for a biometric passport and the related identity checks are concerned, the existing regulations are still in force. In principle, such matters remain the responsibility of the representation with which a person is registered.

Order Passport 03 early

In the last issue of Swiss Review we reported that the procedure for issuing the current Swiss passport (Model 03) remains

unchanged. Swiss Abroad travelling to the USA should note that, according to US government regulations, holders of a machine-readable Model 03 passport issued before 26 October 2005 can travel to or transit the USA without a visa even after this date. So apply for a new passport in good time!

You will find more information about the Swiss passport in issues 1/05, 2/05 and 3/05 of the Swiss Review (www.revue.ch) and at www.fedpol.ch under "Focus". The Federal Office of Police has set up a hotline for enquiries on this topic. The line is open between 09.00 and 12.00 and between 14.00 and 17.00 (Swiss time) on +41 800 820 008.

Binding information on travel to the USA is available only at www.unitedstatesvisas.gov, www.dhs.gov/us-visit or from your nearest US representation.

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¹ As a rule, Swiss withholding tax is levied on Swiss capital investments.