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2005 Swiss Abroad statistics have been published

The "Fifth Switzerland" is growing steadily. For the very first time, more than 100,000 voters exercised their political rights.

634,216 Swiss nationals were registered with Swiss embassies and consulates at the end of December 2005. Compared with December 2004, the number of Swiss citizens living abroad has increased by 11,159 or 1.8 percent. The Swiss emigrant community has grown by around 180,000 since 1990. 451,534 Swiss abroad (71.2 percent) have dual citizenship.

Their preferred countries of residence are those in the European Union (383,548 or just about 60.5 percent, see table). France is home to the largest group of Swiss emigrants (169,437) while other large colonies can be found in Germany (71,115), Italy (46,327), the UK (26,441), Spain (22,041) and Austria (13,207).

Outside of Europe, the greatest concentration of Swiss Abroad is in the USA (71,773). Statistics also show that women account for around 59 percent or 283,105 of Swiss nationals living abroad, while the men number 201,999 (41.65 percent). 145,504 (23 percent) are under the age of 18.

Of the 485,104 Swiss abroad eligible to vote, 105,212 (21.69 percent) have registered at Swiss representations to exercise their voting and electoral rights. This is a striking increase of around 10,000 (more than 10 percent) compared to the end of 2004. To view these

Swiss citizens in EU countries

France:	169,437
Germany:	71,115
Italy:	46,327
United Kingdom:	26,441
Spain:	22,041
Austria:	13,207
Netherlands:	6,856
Belgium:	6,787
Sweden:	4,435
Greece:	3,145
Denmark:	2,801
Portugal:	2,767
Hungary:	1,651
Finland:	1,423
Ireland:	1,339
Czech Republic:	1,091
Luxembourg:	956
Poland:	563
Cyprus:	433
Slovenia:	289
Slovak Republic:	210
Malta:	149
Estonia:	35
Lithuania:	23
Latvia:	27
Total:	383,548

statistics, go to www.eda.admin.ch/asd under the heading "Publikationen".

Voting made easy!

Before the referendum or election date, your political constituency will send your election documentation in the official language requested. These consist in principle of:

- explanations provided by the Federal Council concerning the individual referendum proposals,
- depending on the applicable cantonal law, a neutral official ballot envelope from the constituency,
- an official reply envelope,
- election ballots for the individual proposals.

Please note that certain cantons provide special envelopes.

If the reply envelope is also to be used as proof of your eligibility to vote, it must be signed before you return it.

If the reply envelope is not to be used as proof of your eligibility to vote, your constituency will send you a separate voter's ID in addition to the reply envelope. Include this in the reply envelope and mail it back to your constituency together with your completed ballot.

Different cantons and municipalities have different voting arrangements:

- If you received an official neutral ballot envelope from your constituency, insert your ballot in the official ballot envelope, seal this in the official reply envelope and return it;
- If you did not receive an official neutral ballot envelope from your constituency, insert your ballot directly in the reply envelope, seal it and mail it to your constituency;
- In some cantons you can use a neutral envelope if your municipality does not provide an official neutral ballot envelope. If expressly required, label this envelope "Ballot Envelope" ("Stimmkuvert"). Seal this in the official reply envelope and mail it back to your constituency.

Voting arrangements are governed by cantonal law; there are 26 different sets of rules! We therefore recommend that you read through the instructions provided by your constituency very carefully so that you can make sure your vote counts in full. If you have any questions on election procedures, please contact your constituency directly.

If you change your address, please report this to the local Swiss representation (embassy or consulate) where you are registered.

Biometric information in Swiss passports as of September 2006

In addition to the Swiss Model 03 passport, an electronically-readable passport ("Model 06") will be issued from September 2006 at the earliest. It will cost CHF 250 and will be valid for only five years.

Passports with electronically-readable information ("Model 06") will be issued as part of a federal pilot project with a maximum duration of five years. Externally it will be virtually indistinguishable from the Model 03 passport. The only difference will be an internationally recognised symbol for electronically-readable data located on the front cover – and the fact that the cover itself will be thicker and harder, due to a chip embedded in the page which contains all the information printed in the passport, including a photograph of the passport holder in a conventional digital file format (jpeg). Providing that the required electronic key is present, special scanners will be able to read this information at a short distance.

You need a Model 06 passport if you wish to visit or transit the USA after 26 October 2006 (the biometric deadline) and do not yet have a Model 03 model issued before this date. If you do not yet have a Model 03 passport but still want to apply for one before the deadline, we advise that you do so as soon as possible.

Swiss Abroad must submit applications to their local Swiss representation (embassy or consulate) for both these and the electronically-readable Model 06 passport which will be issued from September 2006 at the earliest. In future, the first part of the fee – CHF 200 – will be payable at your Swiss representation. In order to obtain a Model 06 passport, you must then visit one of the eight biometric data registration centres located

Swiss Abroad around the world

Europe: 395,397

Oceania: 27,229

Africa: 18,017

America: 163,122

Asia: 30,451



These devices will be able to read the new electronic passport „Pass 06“.

abroad (or in Switzerland). Outside Switzerland, you must do this at least one and at most 30 working days after submitting your application. Swiss representations that serve as registration centres abroad are located in Paris, Frankfurt, London, Toronto, Sao Paulo, Hong Kong, Sydney and Mexico City (upon re-evaluation it was decided to replace the centre designated for New York by one in Mexico City; see issue 4/05 of the "Swiss Review" for more information about registration centres).

If you are registered at one of these representations, please contact them in good time before going to register your biometric data. There you will be photographed and the remaining CHF 50 of the passport fee will be due for payment. Your Model 06 passport will be sent to you 60 days later or you can pick it up from your representation.

Important passport and ID card information: The data in your ID is based on the data recorded in the Swiss civil registers

(e.g. register of births, marriages, etc.), so before submitting an application for a new ID, make sure that all changes in your civil status (e.g. name change as a result of a marriage) are or have been reported in good time to your local Swiss representation. It could take several months for entries in Swiss civil registers to be updated and this may cause a considerable delay in the issuance of your ID.

The Federal Office of Police which is responsible for this task is planning to publish a leaflet with all the important information about the "electronically-readable Model 06 passport." This will probably be available as of April and can be ordered free of charge from:

Federal Office for Construction and Logistics (BBL), Publications, CH-3003 Berne
Fax: +41 (0)31 325 50 58
www.bbl.admin.ch/bundespublikationen.

Additional information about the Model 06 passport is available at:

– schweizerpass@fedpol.admin.ch
– www.schweizerpass.ch
– Hotline: +41 800 820 008

Promoting Swiss economic growth

The initiative committee "For an end to obstructionist policy – more growth for Switzerland" of the FDP in the canton of Zurich has launched a people's initiative entitled "Associations' right of appeal: For an end to obstructionist policy – more growth for Switzerland!"

The people's initiative calls for incorporation in the Swiss federal constitution of a new article 30a governing associations' right

of appeal, whereby associations would be prohibited from appealing on matters related to the environment and zoning if decisions have already been reached on such issues by referendum or parliament.

The idea behind prohibiting association's rights to appeal is to stimulate Swiss economic growth and both create and protect jobs.

You still have time until 16 May 2006 to sign this initiative.

PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

The following people's initiatives have been submitted since the last issue:

- "For sensible financing of the healthcare policy"; until 24 July 2007
- "Tax non-renewable energy, not work"; until 24 July 2007
- "Against animal cruelty and for better legal rights for animals (animal protection lawyers' initiative)" until 31 July 2007

Signature forms for pending initiatives can be downloaded from www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis10.html

VOTING:

- Federal Referendum of 21 May 2006
Federal decision of 16 December 2005 on the amendment of the constitutional articles governing education
- Forthcoming referenda 2006: 24 September/26 November

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