

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 33 (2006)
Heft: 6

Rubrik: Official DFA information

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"Swiss Review" is sent free of charge to all adults who register with a Swiss representation abroad. As a result, households with several adults receive several copies of the magazine, which has a significant effect on our costs.

"Swiss Review" currently has a circulation of more than

390,000. It appears six times a year in German, French, English and Spanish. Our compatriotes in Italy receive the "Gazzetta Svizzera" in the form of a newspaper.

"Swiss Review" provides information on important political events and developments in Switzerland. Two pages of each copy are devoted to official DFA information. These pages contain important explanations about legislation as well as rights and obligations that directly concern and affect Swiss

nationals living abroad. They also provide data on federal referenda and elections.

"Swiss Review" is produced by the Swiss Abroad Secretariat of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, a part of the Service for the Swiss Abroad of the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs. The Swiss Confederation funds most of the cost of editing, printing and postage.

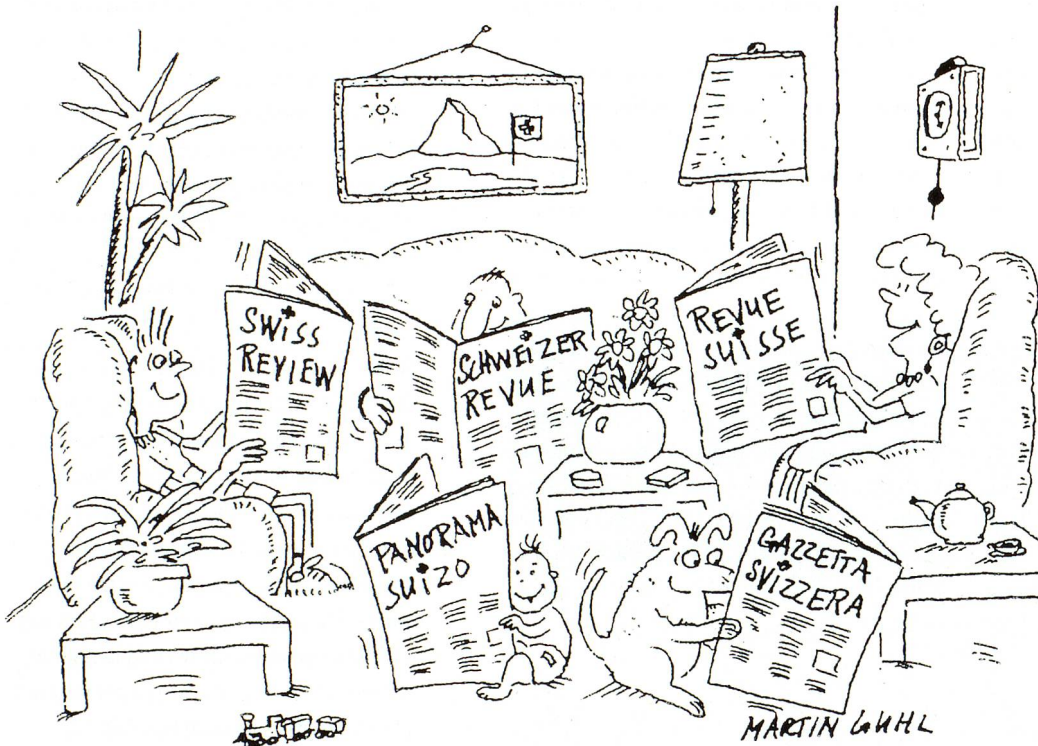
The Swiss expatriate community is growing steadily year by year (2005: 634,216;

2004: 623,057). The circulation of "Swiss Review" has now grown to more than 390,000 copies. While this may be an encouraging statistic, it also entails higher costs. We therefore ask you to renounce personal copies if other people in your household already receive the "Swiss Review". This will help cut down on postage costs.

A suggestion for keen readers: This magazine has been online since 2003 and can be viewed at www.revue.ch. All regional articles will also be available electronically from January 2007.

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Pensions to rise

At the end of September 2006, the Federal Council decided to increase old-age, survivor's and disability (AHV/IV) pensions from 1 January 2007 to take account of economic developments. The thresholds for occupational pension schemes will also be adapted.

The AHV and IV pensions are adapted to changes in the wage and price indices – the so-called "mixed index" – every two years. The last pensions increase came into effect on 1 January 2005. The price index and wage index both rose by 1.0 percent in 2005, and forecasters predict the price index will go up by 1.3 percent and the wage index by 1.7 percent by December 2006. It is this development that has prompted a 2.8 percent

increase in the AHV and IV pensions.

The minimum monthly pension will rise by CHF 30 from CHF 1075 to CHF 1105. The maximum monthly pension will rise by CHF 60 from CHF 2150 to CHF 2210. These adjustments will result in additional expenditure of around CHF 1094 million.

The AHV and IV pensions are not the only things that will rise. Economic developments have also prompted a change to the thresholds for occupational pension schemes. The coordination deduction for occupational schemes will rise to CHF 23,205 from its present level of CHF 22,575, while the entry level for obligatory occupational pension contributions (minimum annual wage) will be increased to CHF 19,890. These changes will also come into force on 1 January 2007.

For more information, visit www.bsv.admin.ch

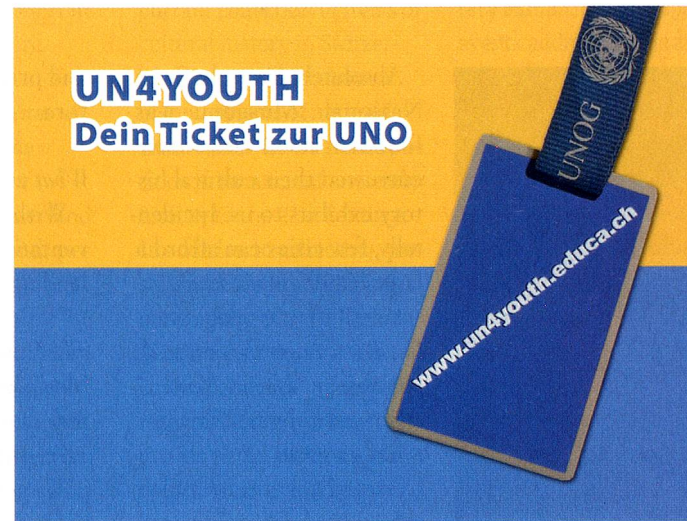
UN4YOUth: Promoting interest in the UN among young people

The DFA has produced an online manual entitled "UN4YOUth" together with a variety of partners. Targeted primarily at young people, teachers and youth organisations, the aim of the manual is to get youngsters interested in all aspects of the United Nations.

UN4YOUth is an online tool that provides a wide range of ideas and activities to get young people interested in the UN. The online handbook is designed for teaching staff, youth workers, associations,

and anyone who is interested in the UN and would like to learn more about the organisation. A variety of Internet links helps interested parties access information and find out more about the subject.

The Web site shows users how they can get involved



themselves. It also provides links to teaching materials, case studies, workshops and training courses, documentation centres and sources, networks and official sources. Topics covered include the structure and organisation of the UN and the many areas in which it operates: human rights, peace and security, development, the environment, and health. Young people who access the site can learn more about the UN and how to take action themselves.

The online UN4YOUth manual was initiated by the DFA in association with the Swiss National Youth Council (SAJV), the Swiss education server (educa.ch), the United Nations Association Switzerland and the World Federation of United Nations Associations. Ever since Switzerland joined the UN, the Federal Council has sought to involve the population in actively shaping the country's UN policies. With this in mind, the DFA supports UN-related activ-

PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

No new initiatives have been launched since the last issue.

■ Signature forms for current initiatives can be downloaded from www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis_1_3_1_1.html.

VOTING

Date of next referendum in 2007:

11 March 2007

ities in schools and for young people.

The online manual can be found at the following address: www.un4youth.educa.ch

For sensible funding of health-care policy

In 2005, an inter-party initiative committee launched a federal people's initiative entitled "For sensible funding of healthcare policy" (see Issue 2/06).

The initiative calls for an amendment to Article 117 of the Swiss Federal Constitution with the aim of lowering health

insurance premiums. It wants the Swiss health insurance scheme to be funded both by insurance contributions and from federal sources. The federal part would be covered by net revenues from tobacco and alcohol tax and the tax on casino operators.

The Swiss health insurance scheme is currently financed by a combination of per-capita premiums with individual reductions and contributions from public-sector budgets. Special taxes are not envisaged for funding purposes.

However, the initiative wants to change the system in precisely this direction. It calls for federal contributions to the Swiss health insurance scheme to be covered according to the causation principle, by drawing on revenues from tobacco and alcohol tax and the tax on casinos. This would mean that these revenues would no longer flow into the old-age and survivor's pension scheme, as is currently the case.

The initiative can be signed until 24 July 2007.

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