

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 35 (2008)
Heft: 1

Rubrik: OSA news

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"Switzerland without borders" is the theme of the 86th Congress of the Swiss Abroad

The 86th Congress is fast approaching. This year we will be meeting in Fribourg from 22 to 24 August. "Switzerland without borders" – this year's theme at the most important meeting of Swiss abroad – is very apt for the cosmopolitan host canton.

The Congress will tackle issues concerning Schengen and the free movement of people in the light of the prospective European policy agenda (extension of free movement of people to Rumania and Bulgaria, the future of free movement of people, joining the Schengen area).

There are many issues that concern us in this respect. Are we heading for a future without national borders? What would happen to Switzerland? What about our security? What effect would withdrawing from the agreement on free movement of people have? These



Congress venue Fribourg

and many other political, economic and ethical issues will be addressed at the next Congress. It is important that the experiences of Swiss people abroad are taken into account. After all, they have followed similar debates in their countries of residence and have first-hand experience of the consequences of opening up borders.

Federal Councillor Leuenberger will be guest of honour

The Congress will officially open on the evening of Friday 22 August at the Forum Fribourg following the meeting of the Council of the Swiss

Abroad. The plenary session will take place on Saturday. Various well-known figures from Switzerland and abroad will discuss the opportunities and risks of free movement of people. As before, one of the highlights of this year's event will be the attendance of a member of the Federal Council. We are pleased that Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger will be joining us.

Plenty to warm the soul

There will be lots of interesting things going on at this year's Congress thanks to the OSA. There will be a visit by Swiss

children from Latin America and a photographic exhibition on the theme of "Borders". Workshops involving various experiments should also be well worth a visit.

Sunday's programme will also be good for the soul. It includes an ecumenical church service followed by a tour of Fribourg's picturesque Old Town.

Many details have yet to be finalised. You can find out much more by filling in the form below to order the Congress information pack. Rest assured you can rely on the OSA Congress to feed the mind, warm the soul and of course tickle the palate. For more information visit www.aso.ch.

More money for Swiss schools abroad

Swiss schools abroad can continue to provide their valuable service. The Council of States followed the lead of the National Council on the review of the federal budget, approving a CHF 20 million federal subsidy for Swiss schools abroad.

This increase from CHF 16.1 million to CHF 20 million will help raise quality standards in the 17 official Swiss schools abroad. A requirement analysis conducted by the Federal Commission for the Promotion of the Education of Young Swiss Abroad estimated that CHF 20 million in state funding was needed to maintain quality standards in the schools and to finance their growth.

The budget is seen as a "rational decision" rather than as a "Christmas present." "Good Swiss schools abroad convey an excellent image of our country," said Derrick Widmer, Chairman of the

86TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD, 22 TO 24 AUGUST 2008

Please send me the information pack on the 86th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Fribourg (please use block capitals).

Last name: _____ First name: _____

Street/no.: _____

Postcode/city: _____

Country: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Please complete and return the form to the following address by 30 May 2008. Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Congress, Alpenstrasse 26, CH – 3006 Berne. For organisational reasons, the registration deadline for the Congress is the end of June. The registration form is included in the Congress information pack that can be ordered using the form above. The Congress information pack can also be ordered by e-mail from congress@aso.ch. Please remember to give your full postal address.



Impressions of the 2007 Easter camp in Fiesch:

Committee of Swiss Schools Abroad. Experience has shown that pupils who attend these schools retain strong ties with Switzerland for the rest of their lives. Irene Spicher, the Committee's Managing Director, added: "To finance their growth, the schools have already had to make some significant sacrifices. Further cut-backs would have threatened their very existence."

A warm welcome to Switzerland

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) offers young Swiss abroad some interesting opportunities for getting to know Switzerland. The new summer brochure, packed with holiday and educational programmes for young people, has just come out. Also, there are still places available for the Easter camp in the Valais. We would be happy to provide you with more information.

Switzerland was blessed with an abundant early snowfall this year. The pistes in the ski resorts are in excellent condition and the OSA ski and snowboarding instructors can't wait to teach you the latest techniques in winter sports.

The Easter camp for young people aged 14 and above will be held in the sports and holiday centre in Fiesch. Young Swiss people from all over the world will meet in the home town of the reigning world skiing champion, Daniel Albrecht, from 22 March to 29 March 2008. This is a fantastic opportunity to spend sun-filled days on snowy peaks and to enjoy the famous alpine panorama of the Aletsch region with views of Switzerland's largest glacier and the Matterhorn. The place where you will be staying in Fiesch offers lots of alternatives to winter sports. An indoor pool, climbing walls, an indoor sports hall and outdoor facilities are there for your enjoyment.

OSA's study programmes allow you to find out all about Switzerland.

The Swiss education system is explained, and there is an opportunity to visit Switzerland's best schools and universities to make valuable contacts.

And there's lots more going on besides for young people. Visit our website at www.aso.ch and select the programme that best meets your needs. We look forward to your visit.

As usual, information and details on the above arrangements are available from the



An après-ski fondue party

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

Youth Service

Tel.: ++41 (0)31 356 61 00

youth@aso.ch

www.aso.ch

2008 summer camp

Young Swiss abroad aged 8 to 14 are invited to join our two-week summer camps between July and August 2008.

There are still some free places available for our summer camps. As before, between 30 and 50 kids from around the world will attend each camp.

The parents' contribution of CHF 900 covers all the costs of the stay.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad would like all Swiss children living abroad to

have the opportunity to take advantage of our arrangements at least once. It has therefore set up a special fund for subsidised contributions. An application form can be requested when registering.

More information on the holiday camps and the application form are available at www.aso.ch (under "Offers for Children and Young People"). Registrations are dealt with on a first-come, first-served basis. Please register your child as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Our services:

- Legal Department
- Youth Service
- Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS)
- Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA)
- Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

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