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More and more Swiss living abroad

THE NUMBER OF SWISS PEOPLE LIVING ABROAD increased by 3.6% last year from 645,010 to 668,107. These figures come from the latest statistics on the Swiss abroad issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs. The highest growth rate is in Asia (10.4%), followed by Africa (4.8%) and Oceania (3.1%). Of the countries with the largest Swiss populations (more than 10,000), Israel comes out on top with a growth rate of 9.5%, followed by Austria (4.5%), Germany (3.6%), Canada (3.6%) and Great Britain (3.5%). Of the middle-ranking countries in terms of numbers of Swiss residents (500 to 10,000), the United Arab Emirates (24%, 276 people), Singapore (20.7%, 352 people) and Serbia (20%, 176 people) recorded particularly high growth rates, followed by Lebanon (13.2%), Turkey (12.3%), Morocco (11.3%), Croatia (10.4%), Thailand (9.7%), India (9.1%), the Dominican Republic (8.3%) and China (7.9%).

Most of the Swiss abroad, however, live in countries within the European Union: France (176,723), Germany (75,008), Italy (47,953), Great Britain (28,288), Spain (23,324) and Austria (13,984).

Outside of Europe, most Swiss abroad reside in the USA (73,978), Canada (37,684), Australia (22,004), Argentina (15,372), Brazil (14,374), Israel (13,151) and South Africa (9,078).

A few more facts and figures: 57.9% of Swiss adults abroad are women (296,621) and 151,714 (22.8%) are under 18 years of age.

119,429 Swiss citizens abroad are entered in an electoral register and regularly take part in Swiss elections. That is 7.4% more than in 2006.

The reasons why Swiss people move abroad are not recorded in the statistics. However, the increasing mobility is doubtless mainly to do with the globalised economy and the free movement of people within the European Union. Many Swiss move abroad for personal reasons, such as marriage to a foreigner.



Heinz Eckert

Another surprising announcement from Parliament is that the new Swiss army knife will be manufactured in Switzerland after all. As reported in "Swiss Review" 5/2007, WTO regulations state that the order should be put out to tender internationally, and the new knife could conceivably have been produced in China. This prospect came in for strong public criticism – from the Swiss abroad as well – and even led to a petition. The federal procurement department has now opted against an international invitation process and will only invite bids from Swiss companies. The Swiss army aims to order 75,000 of the new knives at a total cost of CHF 1.4 million. In addition to a high-grade, lockable steel blade with a serrated edge, the new knife will be equipped with tools such as a Phillips screwdriver and a wood saw. It will also be easy to maintain. It will be carried in a belt-bag in future. The new design has not yet been finalised. We look forward to it with great anticipation.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The leap, 1955, photograph by Theo Frey.

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Cover photo: Euro 2008 – Diego Benaglio in goal for the Swiss national football team

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