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87TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD IN LUCERNE, 7 TO 9 AUGUST 2009

The Swiss abroad – a great asset for our country?

In what ways are Swiss people abroad, who make up 10% of the Swiss population, an asset for our nation? Do they offer Switzerland added value in terms of image, kudos and global networking? And do our compatriots abroad see themselves as ambassadors for Switzerland and its values? All these questions will be addressed at the 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad taking place at the congress centre of the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne from 7 to 9 August 2009 under the title "The Swiss abroad – a great asset for our country?"

Almost 700,000 of our fellow citizens live abroad, and 120,000 of them are enrolled on a Swiss electoral register. While their political importance is slowly but surely being recognised by the political parties, the contribution they make economically, socially, culturally and in terms of image is still largely overlooked. These Swiss citizens are not just "ambassadors" for our values abroad, they also provide extraordinary "networking" opportunities. In today's globalised world where people, their economic activities and political systems are increasingly interdependent, don't the Swiss abroad represent a great asset for our country? Should we not make better use of their skills and knowledge? Are the government and the Swiss population in general

aware of this potential? And what are the views of our compatriots abroad?

This congress aims to highlight and illustrate the ways in which the Swiss Diaspora provides added value for Switzerland and why this potential should receive more recognition and be harnessed to greater effect by public authorities and companies. Experts – Swiss people living in Switzerland and abroad – will share their knowledge and personal experiences relating to this subject at the congress.

The 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad will take place in the beautiful city of Lucerne and has plenty to offer the heart, mind and taste buds.

Prominent speakers will hold short talks, each followed by a round table session, examining the reality and myths concerning the contribution made to our country by Swiss people abroad.

A visit to the Swiss Museum of Transport will allow congress participants to discover a series of accomplishments that were achieved thanks to Swiss people spending time abroad. Finally, on the Sunday, there will also be an opportunity to visit the city of Lucerne and its surrounding area.

Further information on the congress and the registration form will be available on our homepage from the beginning of 2009 at: www.aso.ch/en/offers/congress-of-the-swiss-abroad/2009

Be our guest in Switzerland!

Young Swiss people abroad enjoy rewarding study trips and holidays in Switzerland. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) offers attractive and affordable programmes for young people from all over the world. Contact us for advice and book your place now. OSA extends a warm welcome to you.

A holiday in Switzerland provides a great opportunity to enjoy nature. Switzerland's winter sports resorts offer you many different ways of moving across the snow. Switzerland's breathtaking alpine scenery also attracts scores of tourists during the summer. As a holiday destination, Switzerland provides a wide range of opportunities to enjoy sport – you can try your hand at trekking, mountain sports, mountain biking, water sports, ball sports and much more besides in our programmes.

You will make friends with young Swiss people of the same age from all over the world and together you will enjoy a sporty holiday in a relaxed environment. At the OSA camps, you will also learn about topical and important aspects of Swiss culture, geography, history, politics and society. Make the most of this opportunity.

Take advantage of the forthcoming offers:

Easter camp in Langwies 5 to 13 April 2009

Young Swiss people from all over the world will meet up to enjoy winter sports in Arosa. Arosa's alpine panorama invites us to spend sun-

87TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD FROM 7 TO 9 AUGUST 2009 AT THE SWISS MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT IN LUCERNE

I am interested in attending the next Congress of the Swiss Abroad. **Please send me the registration documents** for the 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad (7 to 9 August 2009 in Lucerne) in spring 2009 to the following address:

First name / Surname:

Address:

Country / Postcode / Town:

E-mail:

Please write clearly in block capitals and send the completed form to: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), Communications Department, Congress Organisation, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne

To save time and postage, you can also contact us directly by e-mail: communication@aso.ch

The Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be held in **German and French only** (with simultaneous interpretation) for organisational and financial reasons.

The latest information on the forthcoming congress will also be updated regularly at www.aso.ch/de/angebote. It is well worth visiting our website from time to time!

filled days on snow-covered mountains. OSA's skiing and snowboard instructors are looking forward to teaching you the latest winter sports techniques. OSA also provides lots of alternatives to snow sports at the residence in Langwies.

Summer camp 2009 in Leukerbad 19 to 31 July 2009 and 2 to 14 August 2009

We offer two 13-day camps both for 60 participants during the summer. We help you practise a sport of your choice at these OSA camps. Fully trained and experienced instructors are there to assist you. Fun and adventure are guaranteed. In addition to sport, we also take a close look at a typically Swiss topic. Come and join us for an active and creative way to discover Switzerland!

Educational programmes

Take advantage of OSA's educational programmes to develop your knowledge of Switzerland.

Our "Training in Switzerland" programme aims to provide you with an insight into educational opportunities in Switzerland. You will visit Swiss universities and we will advise you on your options for studying or training in Switzerland.

Language courses

OSA's language courses are aimed at young people who have little or no knowledge of a Swiss national language. The two-week courses focus heavily on developing conversational skills. We aim to increase your motivation to tackle a new language and develop in-depth knowledge. Studying a language should be fun. The teachers will do

their utmost to fulfil your wishes.

Youth seminar

OSA is organising a youth seminar in Lucerne before the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. Enjoy a fascinating, educational week at one of the world's most famous tourist destinations.

*OSA Youth Service
Tel.: +41 31 356 61 00
E-mail: youth@aso.ch*

Summer camp 2009

Swiss children abroad aged between 8 and 14 can attend our two-week holiday camps in July and August 2009.

A few places are still available on our summer camps. The same as every year, there will be between 30 and 50 children from all over the world at each camp.

The parental contribution of CHF 900 covers all the costs of the stay.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad would like all Swiss children abroad to have at least one opportunity to enjoy our programme. This is why a fund for reduced contributions has been set up. An application form can be requested with your registration.

Further details on the individual holiday camps and the registration form can be found at www.aso.ch (under "Offers for Children and Young People"). Registrations are processed in the order in which they arrive.

Please register your child as quickly as possible. And do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad

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The National Council says yes to representation of the Swiss abroad in Parliament

The National Council has approved the Sommaruga parliamentary initiative, which calls for direct representation of the Swiss abroad in the Federal Assembly. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) welcomes this decision as a clear indication of recognition for the important contribution made by Swiss citizens abroad to Switzerland's interests.

The parliamentary initiative put forward by National Councillor Carlo Sommaruga (SP/GE) in June 2007 calls for the creation of a legal basis for direct representation of the Swiss abroad, initially in the Council of States and then also in the National Council. The National Council has approved the initiative and has instructed its Political Institutions Committee to draw up a bill. The almost 700,000 Swiss expatriates are a great asset for Switzerland. Around 120,000 of them are enrolled on a Swiss electoral register and therefore take an active part in political life in their country of origin.

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) welcomes the decision, which expresses Parliament's acknowledgement of the contribution that Swiss citizens abroad make in helping the country to thrive. The decision also underlines the National Council's recognition of the growing political importance of the Fifth Switzerland. OSA understands that a solution may involve the creation of an implementation law for Article 40 of the Federal Constitution. This could establish the framework for the Swiss Confederation's policy on the Swiss abroad and govern political representation, including the role of the Council of the Swiss Abroad as the representative body of the Fifth Switzerland.

OSA is keen to emphasise the fact that Switzerland has a strong interest in improving its relationship with its citizens abroad. Strengthening communication is vital for enabling Switzerland to reap more benefits from the experiences and networks of its nationals abroad. The "Swiss abroad" parliamentary group now led by Council of States member Filippo Lombardi (CVP/TI) will have a key role to play in this. It already has more than 100 members from the National Council and Council of States.

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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Re-election of the CSA for the 2009–2013 term of office

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) is the representative body for Swiss people living abroad. It represents the interests of all Swiss expatriates in political circles in Switzerland. The CSA therefore plays a key role in protecting the interests of the 700,000 Swiss citizens abroad. The delegates of the CSA are to be newly elected for the 2009 to 2013 term of office. An international appeal is being made to any Swiss abroad who would like to sit as a delegate on the CSA. This body is made up of representatives from the Swiss communities abroad and Swiss people living at home. Recognised by the authorities as the official mouthpiece of the Swiss abroad, the CSA represents the interests of our compatriots abroad and adopts positions on political issues that are of importance to them. It is the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland", the legislative body of OSA and it meets twice a year in Switzerland.

Who can be elected to the CSA? All registered Swiss citizens abroad who submit their candidacy to the specialised organisation or a Swiss association in their country of residence.

Where do candidacies have to be submitted? Candidacies must be submitted to the specialised organisation of the country of residence or to a Swiss association recognised by OSA.

What must a candidacy contain? Each candidate must send a curriculum vitae to the organisation responsible (see below).

How long does a term of office last? Members are elected for four years. Re-election is possible.

Who elects the members of the CSA? The specialised organisations of the Swiss associations and institutions (in a country or group of countries) recognised by OSA are responsible for the election of the members of the CSA based abroad. Where there is no recognised specialised organisation, the CSA can assign this responsibility to one or more associations abroad or assume responsibility itself.

Who organises the elections? The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) provides Swiss people all over the world with information about forthcoming elections. However, it is the specialised organisations and the associations of the Swiss abroad recognised by OSA in each country that are responsible for actually organising the elections. The specialised organisations and the associations of the Swiss abroad recognised by OSA receive information direct from OSA concerning the organisation of elections.

When will the elections take place? Between October 2008 and summer 2009. The newly elected council will hold its constitutive meeting on 7 August 2009 in Lucerne.

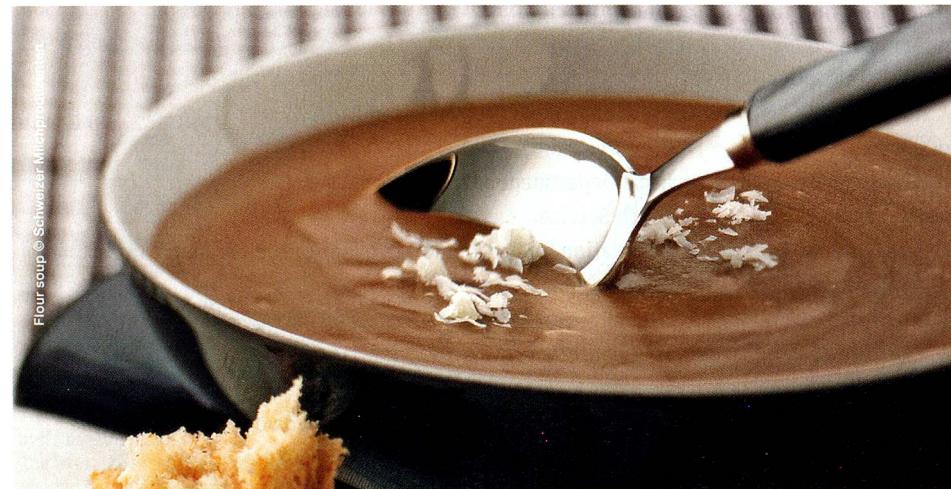
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The Basel carnival and the flour soup.

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