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OSA advice

QUESTION:

I am a Swiss citizen living abroad outside the European Union and EFTA. What are my rights with regard to unemployment insurance should I return to Switzerland?

ANSWER:

The law on unemployment insurance has just been revised, and the amendments will enter into force on 1 April 2011. The aim of this revision was to make savings with a view to restructuring unemployment insurance, and a series of measures to this end were adopted. As far as the Swiss abroad are concerned, the main amendment affects the duration of benefits, which falls from 260 to 90 days of allowance at the most. This means that Swiss citizens returning from countries that are not members of the EU or EFTA are entitled to receive unemployment benefits for 90 workdays. The conditions that have to be met for entitlement to unemployment insurance benefits are as follows: the citizen is returning to Switzerland after a stay of more than a year in a country outside the EU and EFTA; the citizen has been in paid employment abroad for a period of at least 12 months over the last two years; the citizen claims the right to benefits from the commune of domicile or the regional employment office within one year after returning to Switzerland; the citizen is able to present an attestation from the employer abroad indicating the duration of employment. The benefits amount to 70% or 80% of the insured income, which is calculated on the basis of fixed rates depending on the level of professional training.

Persons who have worked abroad for companies that have their registered office in Switzerland and who have therefore contributed to unemployment insurance are subject to the regulations that govern benefits for persons working in Switzerland. They will therefore, in principle, be entitled to benefits for a longer period.

Persons returning to Switzerland after a stay in an EU/EFTA state are subject to different regulations owing to the coordination of social security systems included in the agreement on the free movement of persons. In principle, it is the last country of employment that is responsible for paying unemployment insurance benefits unless proof of having worked in Switzerland as an employee for 12 months over the pre-

vious two years prior to registration as unemployed can be produced.

For further information in German:
www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch/dateien/Broschuere/b_ausland.pdf
www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch/dateien/Broschuere/b_arbeitslos.pdf

Correction: An error was made in the October 2010 edition of "Swiss Review", in the "OSA advice" section. The representations abroad can neither certify the document concerned nor certify the signature on attestations issued by cantonal traffic departments. In the case of documents issued by cantonal authorities, authentication has to be obtained from the cantonal chancellery. If this has been provided, the Swiss representation responsible can re-certify the stamp and signature of the cantonal chancellery.

Young people meet in Switzerland

OSA is offering a wide range of holidays and educational visits to Switzerland this summer. We provide the opportunity for young people to establish relationships with Switzerland, Swiss people and Swiss living abroad all over the world.

This year, OSA is expecting around 150 young people at its summer camps alone where activity holidays are organised with participants from over 40 countries. Young people will take part in various sporting and creative activities at the camps in the Flumserberg region. We will assist the municipality of Saas Balen with conservation work at a charitable camp in Valais. The adventure trip project in the Bernese Oberland will provide young people with the opportunity to learn to cook, navigate, canoe, build a place to sleep and many other skills, and to apply these skills directly at the camp.

Details

Charitable summer camp in Saas Balen
 3/7 – 9/7/2011
Summer camp 1 Flumserberg
 16/7 – 29/7/2011
Summer camp 2 Flumserberg
 30/7 – 12/8/2011
Adventure trip in the Bernese Oberland
 2/8 – 12/8/2011

Discover Switzerland

OSA has created a new project for Swiss from abroad this year. We will put together two-week programmes for participants

that they can complete on their own or with a guide. Visitors can take trips all over Switzerland focusing on particular areas of touristic interest, such as water, history or architecture. OSA will set a task for each trip that will bring Swiss from abroad closer to the diversity of their homeland. The young people will stay with host families, bringing them into direct contact with everyday life in Switzerland.

Educational holidays

On two-week language courses, Swiss from abroad have the opportunity to learn German or French. Our "Training in Switzerland" programme is aimed at young people who want to find out more about attending schools, universities or other educational institutions in Switzerland.

This is just some of what OSA offers. Young people will find all the latest information at www.aso.ch under the "Offers" section.

Interview with a young Swiss abroad

29-year-old James Schuler grew up in Peru. He recently completed his training at the Ecole Hôtelière in Lausanne.

AJAS: Why did you decide to come to Switzerland for your studies?

JAMES: There were three important reasons: first of all, many diplomas issued in Peru are not fully recognised abroad. This would narrow my possibilities for finding a



James Schuler

job outside Peru. Secondly, the subject I took, Hotel Management, is only offered in Peru by a few private universities that are extremely expensive and I could not afford them. And the third reason is that Switzerland is considered one of the best countries in the world for studying Hotel Management.

Did the image you had of Switzerland before coming here correspond to the reality?

It was my first trip to Europe and I came here without a plan, which was not so clever. I brought some money which I thought was going to last for a month. But after a week it was all gone! I underestimated how expensive life in Switzerland can be. Apart from that, Switzerland is as people stereotype it: kind people, big mountains, blue lakes, cows, watches, cheese, etc ...

Today you know that you should have prepared better before travelling to Switzerland. What advice could you give to young people who, like you, desire to study in Switzerland?

I recommend to all of you that you are well prepared mentally and economically before coming here. Plan where you are going to stay, where you are going to study, and how you are going to finance your studies and your lifestyle.

What is it that you miss most from home?

The same as all the Swiss abroad who live here: family, friends and food. But now I also enjoy Swiss food!

Do you think you have changed since coming to Switzerland?

Sure I have! I have learned to be independent, to plan and organise, and I have become a less individualistic person.

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Lynn Allemann from South Africa, Andreas Christ and Ellen Schäffel from Germany (from left to right)

From the height of summer to the depths of winter – halfway around the world for Juskila

Lynn Allemann spent 12 hours on an aeroplane so she could cheerfully stand before me in Lenk one Monday morning in early January. At home in South Africa, temperatures were around 30°C – Lynn is on her summer holidays.

Those of us who are half-frozen can only dream of warm sunshine. The opening event of the 70th Juskila ski camp is highly impressive but hands and feet soon get extremely cold with temperatures well below zero. Everyone is, of course, excited to see the wrestling champion, Kilian Wenger, ski cross world champion, Mike Schmid, and former Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi, who has agreed to act as patron for the 70 Swiss abroad who are attending this year's Juskila free of charge. Normally only 20 Swiss abroad are able to take part in this winter sports week, but the number has been increased to 70 this year to mark the anniversary.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad carried out the draw for places and handled the organisation on behalf of Swiss Ski. It also organises ten other camps – in five languages – for Swiss children living abroad aged 8 to 14. Expertise and enthusiasm go hand in hand to ensure success.

The young Swiss abroad come from countries on all five continents: Germany, France, Ireland, Sweden, Spain, Hungary, UK, Italy, Rumania, USA, Canada, Australia, Mexico, Tunisia and even South Africa, like Lynn. She is particularly looking forward to making new friends, but she is a bit down at the moment after falling over a lot during the morning's snowboarding lessons. But she will definitely return home an accomplished snowboarder at the end of the camp, dreaming about snow and the slopes on her twelve-hour return flight.

The young Swiss abroad in her group are incredibly grateful, according to group leader Sabine Kamm, "even more grateful than the 330 Swiss youngsters". But everyone is, of course, enjoying the snow and having fun being part of the group.

25 JANUARY 2011, SIMONE RINER

PRO JUVENTUTE PEN PALS

Making new friendships

Friends are important. The Pro Juventute Pen Pal initiative allows children and young people to form friendships, find out about foreign countries and cultures, and discover more about what life is like for people of the same age abroad. Lots of young people still like writing and receiving real letters even though today almost all communication is via the Internet, e-mail and SMS. Pro Juventute arranges pen pals for children and young people aged 10 to 18 in over 30 countries. The languages of correspondence are German, French, Italian and English. Are you interested? Register online at: www.projuventute.ch