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OSA advice

I have to get a life certificate endorsed for my old-age and survivors' insurance pension. Where can I do that?

As a general rule, anyone who receives an old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) or invalidity insurance (IV) pension is obliged to sign a so-called life certificate every year and have this endorsed by an official authority. This proves that the pension recipient is still alive and is still entitled to the pension. The life certificate is one of various measures used by the Swiss Compensation Office (SAK) to prevent abuse of the system.

The bodies from which endorsement can be obtained are determined by the Swiss Compensation Office in Geneva and differ depending on the country. In geographically smaller countries where travel to the Swiss consulate is deemed reasonable, only the Swiss representation can usually issue such endorsements. In other countries, local authorities or local lawyers of the country of residence can also issue an endorsement.

If you visit Switzerland, you can also have the life certificate endorsed by one of the compensation offices in Switzerland (visitor service).

Communal administrations in Switzerland can also endorse a life certificate but are not obliged to do so. It is therefore advisable to call them beforehand to find out whether this service is provided.

Swiss Compensation Office:

www.zas.admin.ch

Addresses of the compensation offices:

<http://www.ausgleichskasse.ch/portal/index.asp>

SARAH MASTANTUONI, Head of the Legal Department

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law and specifically in areas that concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

Walther Hofer passes away



Walther Hofer, honorary president of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, passed away in Berne on 1 June aged 92. Hofer was president of OSA from 1983 to 1992. He made a lasting impression on the organisation and the perception of the Swiss diaspora by establishing OSA's independence as a foundation under federal supervision and ensuring the prominent presence of the Swiss abroad at the Swiss confederation's 700th anniversary celebrations.

As a member of the Bernese BGB/SVP, Hofer was a National Councillor from 1963 to 1979 where he established a reputation for himself as a foreign policy expert. His work at the Council of Europe won him international recognition. One of his roles there was as President of the Committee on Non-Represented Nations.

Walther Hofer was a Professor of Modern General History at the University of Berne from 1960 to 1988. He had previously worked at the Freie Universität Berlin and Columbia University in New York. He leaves behind an extensive oeuvre of published academic work on politics and contemporary history specialising in National Socialism and the Second World War.

RUDOLF WYDER

Contacts around the world

Young Swiss people abroad can enjoy group holidays or an educational visit, take part in ski camps or summer camps and attend language courses in Switzerland. The offers of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) enable them to establish contacts all over the world.

Victor from Mexico, Rebecca from Egypt and Sophia from France have been meeting up at OSA summer camps for years. This year they were in Prêles together. "We regularly exchange emails and follow each other on Facebook, so we always know what the others are doing. We talk about films, music, celebrities and news from around the world or we simply chat," explains Victor. "We are already looking forward to our next get-together in Switzerland. And there are always new faces, which is what makes OSA's offers so interesting," says Rebecca. Sophia remarks: "You meet people from all over the world. To begin with, the red passport is the only thing you have in common but you soon realise that there's much more to it than that."

Over 200 young people from all over the world took advantage of OSA's offers for young people this summer. The Swiss



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abroad who have chosen an educational visit or the "Discover Switzerland" project will be arriving in the autumn. We at OSA put together a programme for the young people involved that is tailored to their wishes and requirements. Staying with a Swiss host family is always an extremely valuable experience for our visitors.

A group of young Swiss abroad will meet for the Federal Youth Session Seminar from 12 to 18 September 2013. A session is held in the Federal Palace every year where young people can express their views and make their requests to decision-makers in Switzerland. Swiss abroad have been able to participate in this session for many years now. OSA prepares participants for the session as it is a unique opportunity to take a look behind the scenes of Swiss politics. There are still places available for the Youth Session Seminar.

OSA is now taking bookings for the winter sports camp from 26.12.2013 to 4.1.2014 in Lenz / Lenzerheide. The ski resort in the mountains of Grisons is very popular with young Swiss abroad. This camp enjoys a legendary status for those who like to spend New Year in the snow.

The winter language courses take place between 7 and 18 January 2014. The Swiss abroad practise a national language and get to know Switzerland. We at OSA hope many of you will register.

*As usual, further information can be found at www.aso.ch or obtained from Organisation of the Swiss Abroad Youth Service
Tel.: +41 (0)31 351 61 00
youth@aso.ch*

Winter camp for 8 to 14 year olds

Whether they are skiers or snowboarders, beginners or at an advanced level, Swiss children living abroad aged 8 to 14 will have a great time at our winter camp.

Winter camp Sedrun (Grisons)

Date: Thursday, 26 December 2013 to Saturday, 4 January 2014

No. of participants: 48

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: Approx. CHF 150

Registration deadline: 30 October 2013

Registration

Precise details on the winter camps and the registration form will be available from 15 September 2013 at www.sjas.ch. Depending on personal circumstances reduced contribution rates may be offered. The form required for this can be requested using the registration form. We are also happy to post you our information brochure on request.

For more information: Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (SĴAS)

Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01

email: sjas@aso.ch

JUSKILA camp at Lenk free of charge

The youth ski camp will take place from 2 to 9 January 2014. Twenty Swiss children living abroad, 13 and 14 years old, can attend free of charge.

The Swiss Ski association organises a ski camp at Lenk every year for 600 Swiss children born in 1999 and 2000, including twenty Swiss children living abroad. To take part in the Juskila trip, Swiss children living abroad must be able to communicate in at least one of the three Swiss national languages (German, French or Italian). A draw will take place to choose the winners. Only the camp itself is covered (winter sports coaching, food and accommodation). Parents will be responsible for organising and financing travel to and from the camp. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the draw at the end of October.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE DRAW FOR JUSKILA (2 TO 9 JAN. 2014)

Please complete in clear print.

First name: _____ Surname: _____

No., street: _____ Town/city, postcode: _____

Country: _____ Date of birth: _____

Name of parent(s)/guardian(s): _____

Female Male Telephone: _____

Commune of origin in Switzerland (see Passport/ID): _____

Email address of parent(s)/guardian(s): _____

Type of sport Alpine skiing Cross-country skiing Snowboarding

Please tick just one box. The choice of sport cannot be changed after the draw.

Language of child German French Italian

Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s): _____

Signature of child: _____

Please send the form, together with a **copy of the Swiss passport** of a parent/guardian or the child, by 15 October 2013 (date of receipt) to: **Foundation for Young Swiss abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND. For more information: Foundation for Young Swiss abroad (SĴAS); Tel +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01, email: sjas@aso.ch, www.sjas.ch**