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## OSA advice

*We intend to return to Switzerland in the foreseeable future and to take up residence there again. What is the situation with regard to paying customs duty on our goods?*

When entering Switzerland, household effects (household items, clothing, paintings, valuables, etc.) can be brought in duty-free if you are transferring your place of residence to Switzerland. This is subject to the requirement that the imported items have been used by you personally for at least six months and that you continue to use them after they have been brought into Switzerland.

Household effects also include cars, motor boats and aeroplanes. However, the duty-free importation of vehicles is subject to the condition that they continue to be used for at least a year after import. If a vehicle is sold before the end of this period, the customs duty must be paid retrospectively.

The customs exemption on household effects has to be applied for from the customs office with a special form. A detailed list of the imported items must be attached. You do not have to attend in person during the customs clearance process. This process can also be carried out by a third party, such as a forwarding agent.

Pets are a special case. Individual provisions apply here, for example, with regard to veterinary inspections, vaccinations and the prevention of epidemic diseases. Species protection regulations also apply to plants and animals. You will find full details and information sheets online.

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Website of the Swiss Customs Administration:

[www.ezv.admin.ch](http://www.ezv.admin.ch) > Information individuals > Personal property or Animals and plants in the menu on the left

OSA's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law, in particular in the areas that concern the Swiss Abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

### Information on the right to participate in votes and elections

The Swiss Abroad can participate in elections and referenda in Switzerland provided they are registered on an electoral roll in Switzerland. Swiss citizens are not automatically enrolled when they register with a consulate or embassy abroad. They must explicitly request the right to vote. Swiss abroad are usually registered on the electoral roll at the commune where they last resided in Switzerland. This enrolment must be renewed regularly – at least every four years – with the commune (not the representation abroad). This does not take place automatically. Some communes regularly ask their eligible voters abroad to do this, while others do not. The forms for enrolment and renewal can be found at: [www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch) > Documentation > Publications > Swiss Abroad > Leaflets "Political rights"

Direct link: <http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/doc/publi/ptrali/merkbl.html>

## Educational opportunities in Switzerland

The Formation in Switzerland department at [educationsuisse](http://educationsuisse.ch) once again received more enquiries this year than in the previous one. The option of returning to their native country for vocational training is increasingly attractive for young Swiss Abroad, especially for those from countries with weak economies.

The majority still set their sights on taking a university degree as this holds great prestige and presents good career opportunities in many countries of residence of the Swiss Abroad. However, there is also increasing interest in courses at universities of applied sciences and in the so-called dual system (apprenticeship in a company as well as educational courses).

Switzerland's educational landscape is very diverse and has changed over recent years. It is not always easy for parents who have lived abroad for many years and their children to find their way through this wide range of options.



### Traditional universities, universities of applied sciences and apprenticeships?

We are often asked what the main differences are between traditional universities, universities of applied sciences and apprenticeships. Whereas courses at traditional universities are highly academic or theory-oriented, the universities of applied sciences are more focussed on application and qualifying for a profession. However, the universities of applied sciences are also structured according to the Bologna system with bachelor and master degrees. They offer a wide range of courses in the specialist disciplines of engineering, economics, design, healthcare, social work and art, and they train sought-after specialists, men and women, as engineers, architects, computer scientists, translators, designers and care service professionals. The doctorate level (dissertation) is nevertheless currently restricted to traditional universities.

The dual vocational training system with an apprenticeship is often said to be one of the strengths of the Swiss economy. It does in fact play a significant role by integrating young people and making them marketable. The transition from an apprenticeship to working life is often easier than from education. Well-qualified professionals make a major contribution to boosting innovation, productivity and quality of

work. After an apprenticeship, young people immediately find themselves thrown into the world of work. They nevertheless still have many opportunities to undertake further training and to advance their careers, whether with a vocational school-leaving qualification, at a higher technical college or at other institutions of further education.

The Swiss education system boasts outstanding flexibility and generally enables open access to the various educational offerings.

Further information can be found on our website at [www.educationsuisse.ch](http://www.educationsuisse.ch), which now covers the topic of education and training in Switzerland.



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## The offers for young people this winter

*The Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) has organised a wide range of sporting and educational offers for the coming months.*

### New Year ski camp in Sedrun from 27 December 2014 to 5 January 2015

A highly varied programme awaits you in the mountains of Grisons. In addition to skiing or snowboarding lessons in small groups and a diverse fringe programme (snowblading, ski racing, hiking by torchlight, ball sports, climbing, ice skating, dancing, swimming and workshops, etc.), which will provide you with physical challenges, there is also time to make and enjoy new friendships. Start 2015 in the company of other young Swiss Abroad in the Swiss mountains! You will be looked after by a well-trained and highly motivated team of leaders.

### Language course in Berne from 5 to 16 January 2015

Four lessons of language teaching in the morning, joint activities in the afternoon and a welcoming host family. We will inspire you to learn German as one of the four national languages.

### Sports holiday camp on the Belalp from 14 to 22 February 2015

Take part in the first sports holiday camp in sun-kissed Valais. You will experience the wonderful winter landscape on the Belalp with sport and fun galore.

In addition to skiing and snowboarding lessons, a diverse indoor sports programme awaits you at the Olympica sport and wellness hotel with climbing, badminton, ball sports, swimming and aerobics. You will also take part in outdoor activities, such as snowshoeing, airboarding, tobogganing, ice skating and much more besides. You cannot miss the opportunity to visit probably the most famous of Swiss mountains, the Matterhorn in Zermatt. Our highly motivated team of leaders are waiting for you!

### Easter camp in Davos from 4 to 12 April 2015

Surrounded by mountains and 300 kilometres of piste spread across 85 runs, Davos-Klosters is one of the largest snow sport regions in the Alps. The alpine town is a spa and conference venue and also has plenty to offer culturally. This camp presents a unique opportunity to get to know this winter sports resort better and to see out the ski and snowboarding season. The OSA team provides skiing and snowboarding lessons as well as a diverse and enjoyable fringe programme.

### Educational offers

We will provide you with an insight into the Swiss educational landscape, tailored to your wishes. In cooperation with *educationsuisse – Formation in Switzerland*, you will acquire a better understanding of Switzerland's education system. You will receive the opportunity to obtain advice on your future educational path and we organise «taster days» at educational institutions. We also aim to provide contact with students in the specialist fields of interest to you.

*Further information on the offers can be found on our websites at [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) and [www.swisscommunity.org](http://www.swisscommunity.org).*

## Services provided by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and partner institutions

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), a foundation governed by private law, is a centre of expertise for safeguarding the interests of Swiss citizens living abroad. Besides the publication of "Swiss Review", it provides various services for Swiss citizens abroad in collaboration with its partner organisations.

■ **Legal advice.** Free advice on emigrating abroad and returning to Switzerland.

[www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) – "Consultation" section

■ **Network.** The website [SwissCommunity.org](http://SwissCommunity.org) provides the opportunity to network with Swiss citizens all over the world.

[www.swisscommunity.org](http://www.swisscommunity.org)

■ **Offers for children and young people.** Organisation of holiday camps and language courses, etc. for young

Swiss abroad seeking a better understanding of their native country.

[www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) > Offers

■ **Advice on education and training in Switzerland.** Young Swiss Abroad wishing to train or study in Switzerland receive support and guidance in selecting training and educational opportunities and making grant applications.

[www.educationsuisse.ch](http://www.educationsuisse.ch)



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## Young citizens' festivities with the President of the Swiss Confederation

On 22 October 2014, Swiss Abroad also took part for the first time in the young citizens' festivities in Berne at the invitation of Swiss President Didier Burkhalter. The Swiss Abroad now of full age were informed by the mayor Alexander Tschäppät and the Swiss President about their political rights but also about their associated obligations as Swiss citizens.

In the week before, at a seminar for young citizens, the emphasis had been placed on political participation and Swiss



history. In addition to workshops with the Umbrella Organisation of Swiss Youth Parliaments (DSJ) and the Swiss National Youth Council (SNYC), there was also time for excursions. They visited the Rütli, the "birthplace of Switzerland", the Museum of the Swiss Charters of Confederation in Schwyz and the Area for the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen. There were, of course, also cultural trips, including visits to Cailler, Switzerland's oldest chocolate manufacturer, and the H.R. Giger Museum and a culinary stopover at the exhibition cheese dairy in Gruyère.

The young adults were also given an insight into what a possible course of education in Switzerland might be like and what requirements they would have to meet. Those who took part in this richly varied week were able to gain a closer understanding of their second home country, both politically and culturally.

## Summer camps for 8 to 14-year-olds

Are you between 8 and 14 years of age? Would you like to spend 14 days in Switzerland and get to know your homeland better? Then sign up for one of the holiday camps organised by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) that are held during July and August.

Interacting with participants from other countries beyond linguistic, cultural and national boundaries is a unique opportunity to make new friendships and enjoy unforgettable experiences.

### Camp language

Participants come from all over the world and speak different languages (E, G, F, S, I). The team of leaders conduct the programmes in English, German and French. The camp language is not dictated by the language spoken in the camp's location.

### Costs

The costs are set out in the list below. The camp fees can be reduced in certain circumstances. An application form may be requested with the registration form.

### Travel/meeting point

The meeting point is around lunchtime at Zurich airport. Travel to Zurich airport and the return journey home from there are organised and paid for by parents.

### Registration

Full details of the individual holiday camps and the registration form will be available from January 2015 at [www.sjas.ch](http://www.sjas.ch). We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request. The registration deadline is 15 March 2015.

### Summer camps in 2015 – Overview of dates, camp locations and age groups

Sat 27 June to Fri 10 July 2015:  
Reckingen (VS) for 36 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900

Sat 27 June to Fri 10 July 2015:  
Aurigeno (TI) for 40 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900

Wed 1 to Fri 10 July 2015:  
Swiss Trip for 24 children aged 12 to 16, price: CHF 950

Sat 11 to Fri 24 July 2015:  
Eggberge (UR) for 36 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900

Sat 11 to Fri 24 July 2015:  
La Punt (GR) for 48 children aged 8 to 14, price: CHF 900

Sat 25 July to Fri 7 August 2015:  
Diemtigtal (BE) for 36 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900

Sat 25 July to Fri 7 August 2015:  
Charmey (FR) for 42 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900

Sat 8 to Fri 21 August 2015:  
Prêles (BE) for 42 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900

Sat 8 to Fri 21 August 2015:  
Sailing boat trip on Lake Geneva (VD) for 40 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 950

*Please contact our office for further information:*

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