

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 42 (2015)
Heft: 3

Rubrik: OSA news

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OSA advice

The news has just shown a Swiss citizen returning from abroad who was able to vote twice in the recent popular vote. How has this come about?

It is quite true that a Swiss citizen returning from abroad received two lots of voting papers for the ballot held on 8 March 2015: they were sent to his address abroad and then to his new address following his move back to Switzerland, after the voting papers had already been received abroad. In this regard, it should be noted that Swiss citizens living abroad must inform the Swiss office (embassy or consulate) where they are registered of any change of address. When people return to the country after the voting papers have been sent abroad, it can happen that the papers are received twice. However, it is illegal and an offence punishable under criminal law to vote twice on the same matter. This constitutes electoral fraud under article 282 of the Swiss Criminal Code. People who receive voting papers twice therefore only have the right to vote once. A criminal offence is otherwise committed.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE OSA

The OSA's Legal Department provides general information on Swiss law in the areas which specifically concern the Swiss Abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law or intervene in disputes between private parties.

The Congress of the Swiss Abroad focuses on democracy

The Swiss Abroad will meet for their annual congress from 14 to 16 August 2015. It is being held in Geneva at the CICG international conference centre this year.



The electoral turnout in Switzerland has increased slightly over recent years – after reaching a low point in 1995 with a 42 % turnout – but over half of the electorate still does not vote. Why is that? What motivates people to vote? This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad tackles this and other issues. Its theme is "Educating citizens – a guarantee of a vibrant democracy".

In view of the federal elections in the autumn, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad wishes to highlight the importance of political participation through its choice of theme. This is a fundamental requirement for a vibrant democracy.

Prominent speakers will share their views on the theme of the congress. They will include Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, head of the Federal Department of the En-

vironment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC), Hans Stöckli, member of the Council of States for the canton of Berne and President of the New Helvetic Society, Manon Schick, Director General of Amnesty International Switzerland and Arthur Honegger, foreign affairs correspondent for the Swiss TV station SRF.

*Further information and the registration form are available on our website:
german: www.aso-kongress.ch / french: www.ose-congres.ch*



Arthur Honegger



Hans Stöckli



Manon Schick

Meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

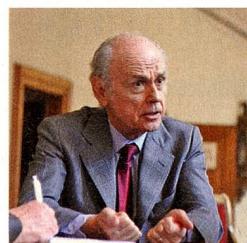
At its spring meeting the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) primarily focussed on the parliamentary elections of 18 October.

An election manifesto setting out demands concerning the Swiss community abroad was the main item on the agenda at the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) on 21 March 2015. The eight-point manifesto exclusively contains issues that have concerned the Swiss Abroad for years. A key matter is nationwide electronic voting (e-voting) to make it easier to exercise political rights.

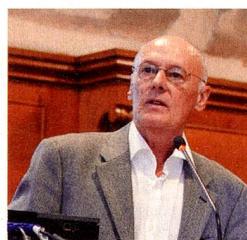
By 64 votes to 2, the Council adopted the response of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad as part of the consultation process on the amendment to the Foreign Nationals Act required for the implementation of the initiative on mass immigration. The response expressly called for the free movement of persons with the EU to be continued. Suspension of the free movement of persons would have direct implications for the almost 450,000 Swiss Abroad living in the European Union. The Council of the Swiss Abroad previously adopted a resolution on the free movement of persons in 2011.

Once again the question as to whether the CSA should be directly elected in future instead of by the Swiss societies provoked a fierce debate. No decision was reached on this matter.

(BE)



Jacques-Simon Eggly



Remo Gysin

Jacques-Simon Eggly steps down

The President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) has announced that he will be stepping down from office at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Geneva in August. Eggly has been head of OSA since 2007. The OSA Executive Board has proposed the current Vice-President, Remo Gysin, as his successor. The Council of the Swiss Abroad is responsible for the appointment.

The banks and the Swiss Abroad

The Swiss Abroad's increasingly difficult relationship with the Swiss banks, in particular over the closure of bank accounts without providing justification, was also an issue addressed by the CSA on this occasion. However, several banks have indicated their willingness to the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) to provide Swiss citizens abroad with bank accounts under certain conditions. OSA's Legal Department will publish a summary of the banking institutions and the conditions in the next issue of "Swiss Review" (to be published on 22 July 2015).

Registration as Swiss nationals abroad entitled to vote

The form to register or renew an entry in the electoral roll can also be found at:

www.fdfa.admin.ch > Services and publications > Services for Swiss nationals abroad > Political rights

To The Swiss diplomatic mission with which you are registered. (Please complete legibly in block letters)

From Surname: _____ First name (s): _____

Maiden name: _____

Date of birth: _____ Place of birth: _____

Civil status: _____ since: _____ Place(s) of citizenship: _____ Canton (s) of citizenship: _____

Father's surname and first name: _____ Mother's surname and first name: _____

Full address abroad: _____

I wish to vote in the municipality: _____ Postcode: _____ Place: _____ Canton: _____

Because I hold the right of citizenship in this municipality Because I lived there from _____ (year) to _____ (year)

Choice of language: _____ German French Italian Romansh

Under the Swiss Federal Act of 19 December 1975 and the Ordinance of 16 October 1991 on the Political Rights of the Swiss Abroad, I wish to exercise voting rights in elections and referenda in federal matters and to sign federal popular initiatives and motions for referenda.

Place: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____

Well prepared for education

The school and academic year is coming to an end. Final examinations are approaching, perhaps followed by a degree award ceremony. Many students can then enjoy the long summer holidays. Swiss Abroad who have completed their studies in Switzerland will return to their families abroad or perhaps stay in Switzerland to earn some money and gain their first professional experience through a holiday job or an internship.

Most pupils who are now completing their mandatory education or leaving grammar school know which educational path they will pursue. The 2015/16 academic year begins in August for trainees and in September for students. There are still a few months to prepare for this new chapter.

Leaving the country where they have grown up to come to Switzerland for education or training is a big step for young Swiss Abroad. Even if they have built up a network of strong connections with their homeland, they have to get used to a new environment, different customs and new people, and they will face new challenges. A long way from their family, this is not always easy. They have to find accommodation and deal with administrative matters like insurance policies and healthcare schemes. Grant applications also have to be prepared in good time. Language barriers some-

times have to be overcome. The many summer language courses available are a great help here. If they are well prepared, there is nothing stopping anyone from enjoying a successful year of education or training in Switzerland.

RUTH VON GUNTEN,
HEAD OF THE EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND
DEPARTMENT



The website www.educationsuisse.ch provides information about education and training in Switzerland. The staff at the educationsuisse - Education in Switzerland department would be pleased to provide you with further information.

Youth session from 24 to 30 August 2015

This year's youth session will take place during the summer owing to the parliamentary elections. 200 young people can take part – several places are reserved for the Swiss Abroad. Before the youth session begins, we provide participants with an insight into the procedures of Swiss politics, the political processes and the opportunities for political participation as well as preparing them for what is involved in the youth session at our workshops.

Full information can be found at www.swisscommunity.org or www.aso.ch.

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 - "Consultation" section
- **Network.** The website [SwissCommunity.org](http://www.swisscommunity.org) provides the opportunity to network with Swiss citizens all over the world. 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 > 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

Free participation in ski camp for youngsters

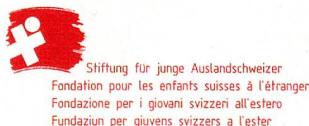
600 children aged 13 and 14 will enjoy a winter sports week at Lenk in the Bernese Oberland free of charge from 2 to 9 January 2016. The 600 participants will also include 75 Swiss Abroad.

600 girls and boys from all over Switzerland will travel to Lenk in Simmental by special train on 2 January 2016. For the 75th time Swiss Ski and its partners are holding Switzerland's largest winter sports camp. This time it is the turn of children born in 2001 and 2002.

Swiss children abroad wishing to take part in the ski camp for young people (Juskila) should be able to speak German, French or Italian. A draw will be held for the camp places. The prize includes participation in the camp, winter sports lessons, food and accommodation. Parents are nevertheless responsible for organising and funding the outbound and return journeys. The winners of the 75 places for the Swiss Abroad will be announced at the end of September.

The registration form for the young people's ski camp will be included in the next issue of "Swiss Review".

Anyone interested can request advance registrations and information from the following address:
Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)
 Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND
 Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01
 Email: info@fysa.ch, www.fysa.ch



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