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The Swiss schools abroad

The 17 Swiss schools abroad officially recognised by the Swiss Confederation are spread across nine countries on three continents. In all, around 7,800 pupils – including some 1,800 Swiss children – attend these Swiss educational establishments in Italy, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Thailand and Singapore. They are taught by about 300 Swiss teachers as well as numerous local teaching staff. The Swiss Federal Government supports these schools financially and the sponsor cantons provide advice on educational and administrative issues. The schools were established in locations with larger Swiss populations and/or where Swiss companies operated. The schools in Italy, for example, were founded back in the 19th century. More were opened in other countries over the course of the 20th century. A new school in Beijing is planning to open its doors in the summer of 2017.

The Berne-based association *educationsuisse* is the umbrella organisation of the Swiss schools abroad, rep-

resenting their interests to the general public, companies and the authorities in Switzerland. *educationsuisse* also undertakes a number of administrative, financial management and HR tasks on behalf of these schools and organises the annual conference of the Swiss schools abroad.

In addition, *educationsuisse* supports and advises young Swiss citizens abroad and pupils at Swiss schools abroad who would like to study or undergo vocational training in Switzerland.

Information about the Swiss schools abroad and the advice on offer can be found at: www.educationsuisse.ch.

RUTH VON GUNTEN, EDUCATIONSUISSE



The Youth Service's winter offers

- New Year ski and snowboarding camp in Valbella (GR) for people aged 15 to 20 (27/12/2016 to 6/1/2017)
- New Year ski and snowboarding camp in Grächen (VS) for people aged 18 and over (27/12/2016 to 6/1/2017)
- German language course in Berne from 9/1/2017 to 20/1/2017
- Discover Switzerland: an individualised leisure programme in Switzerland
- Springboard: support with planning and starting education and training in Switzerland

For further information and to register, go to www.aso.ch or www.swisscommunity.org.

Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
 youth@aso.ch
 +41 (0) 31 356 61 00
www.facebook.com/ASOyouth

OSA advice

I am a Swiss citizen abroad living in a country outside the EU/EFTA. What are my rights in terms of unemployment insurance if I return to Switzerland?

People returning to Switzerland from a non-EU/non-EFTA country are entitled to 90 working days of unemployment benefit. The specific requirements for this entitlement to unemployment benefit are: return to Switzerland after a stay of over a year in a non-EU/non-EFTA state; the period of employment as an employee abroad within the last two years amounts to at least 12 months; confirmation of the period of employment from the employer can be presented.

The benefits amount to 80 % of your flat rate, which is 153, 127, 102 or 40 Swiss francs a day depending upon education and age. These amounts are reduced by half if you are exempt from meeting the contribution period requirement owing to school education, retraining, further training or following a vocational apprenticeship, are under 25 years of age and do not have any child maintenance obligations.

People who have worked for a company with its head office in Switzerland during their stay abroad and have therefore paid Swiss unemployment insurance contributions are treated in the same way as those who work in Switzerland. They are generally covered by a longer eligibility period.

People returning to Switzerland from an EU/EFTA state are subject to different provisions due to the coordination of the social security systems as part of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons. The last country of employment is generally responsible for the payment of unemployment benefit unless you can prove that you worked in Switzerland for at least 12 months in the two years prior to registration for unemployment insurance.

Further information:
www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch/publikationen/broschueren



Winter camp for children aged 8 to 14

There are still some places left on our New Year ski camp in Sedrun/GR!

Date: Saturday, 28 December 2016 to Monday, 6 January 2017

Number of participants: 42

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: approx. CHF 150

Registration

Full details of the winter camps and the registration form can be found at <http://sjas.ch/en/camps>. Reduced contribution rates will be granted in justified cases. The required form can be requested on the registration form. We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request. The winter camp in Sedrun is the only FYSA offer in the 2016/17 winter season.

FYSA centenary competition

Design a postcard to mark 100 years of the FYSA for a chance to win a free place at a camp in the summer of 2017.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad will be 100 years old in 2017. To mark this jubilee, the FYSA is holding a picture competition:

1. Are you aged between 8 and 14?
2. Then draw a picture on the topic of "100 years of the FYSA" (maximum size: A4) and send it by post, enclosing a copy of your ID card or passport, to:

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)
Alpenstrasse 26
3006 Berne
SWITZERLAND

3. The deadline for entries is 8 January 2017.
4. Following internal preselection, the ten best drawings will be published on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/sjas.fese/) from 9 January 2017 onwards.
5. Our followers on Facebook will then have until 31 January 2017 to "like" their favourite drawing.
6. The drawing that gets the most likes will win the competition. The entrant will be notified by email.

So, get out your coloured pencils and pens and draw yourself two unforgettable weeks in one of our jubilee summer camps in 2017. Good luck!

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OSA centenary: major celebration in Berne

The festivities marking the 100th anniversary of the OSA reached their climax on 5–7 August in Berne. Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter congratulated the OSA on the Bundesplatz, the Council of the Swiss Abroad held a meeting in the Federal Palace, and a plenary session discussed the topic “Switzerland: a part of the world”.

MARKO LEHTINEN

In the highlight of this jubilee year, numerous spectators and 170 invited young Swiss people from abroad gathered on the Bundesplatz in Berne on Friday 5 August to hear Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter praise the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and watch him cut a cake together with OSA President Remo Gysin to mark the start of the jubilee party. “Young Swiss Abroad: our world needs you!” Burkhalter told the young people assembled in front of the podium. The festivities having thus been duly opened, the square was given over to a series of activities focusing on 100 years of the OSA as well as free concerts that continued well into the evening.

The centenary celebrations were held under the motto “Switzerland:

a part of the world”. How important are the Swiss Abroad in today’s globalised world? What are their needs? How can the OSA support the mobility of the 762,000 Swiss men and women living and working abroad? What visions does the organisation have for the future? These questions were also raised at the plenary session at the Kultur Casino in Berne on 6 August. Six speakers addressed the topics of migration, mobility and networking and their significance for the Swiss diaspora. The young people also heard a speech from their peers in the shape of Davide Wüthrich and Wanja Kaufmann from the Swiss Abroad Youth Parliament, before OSA Directors Ariane Rustichelli and Sarah Mastantuoni finished with a presentation of the biggest challenges facing the OSA.



“Ecoutez les jeunes!” (Listen to the young people!) Remo Gysin said at the end of the event, bringing to a close the festivities that had been opened by Federal Councillor Burkhalter.

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter speaks to the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad on the Bundesplatz on 5 August.

Photo: OSA

Electronic voting for the diaspora

In addition to the festivities on the Bundesplatz, the Council of the Swiss Abroad also held a meeting on 5 August. In honour of the centenary, this took place in the splendid National Council chamber of the Federal Palace. Eighty-one council members with voting rights chose Christian Zeugin to succeed the outgoing chairman of the “Swiss Review” commission, Richard Bauer. National Councillor Laurent Wehrli was also elected to replace Christa Markwalder, who is stepping down as the domestic member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad. The Council also recognised the Confederation of Oregon Swiss Inc. in the USA as a Swiss association.

Following a brief discussion, the CSA approved a resolution on PostFinance AG, which had cancelled without warning the credit cards of customers living



abroad. The resolution called on the OSA Executive Board to urge the Federal Council, and especially Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, to intervene in order to convince PostFinance to reverse this move as soon as possible.

Not surprisingly, given that the Council of the Swiss Abroad is due for re-election next year, proposed amendments to the voting procedures for delegates triggered a lively debate. In the end, the OSA Board

recommended that all Swiss Abroad who are on the electoral roll be allowed to vote. The delegates approved this recommendation by a large margin.

The assembled Swiss Abroad also reached a broad consensus following a short podium discussion on electronic voting held within the framework of the meeting in the chamber of the National Council. Although electronic voting has long been permitted in Geneva, for example, it is still not possible in more than 20 cantons, thus also affecting the Swiss Abroad from those cantons. Appealing to the cantons, podium member and OSA Co-Director Ariane Rustichelli said the OSA had been “shocked”, therefore, that nine cantons had scrapped e-voting shortly before the 2015 elections. She said every single canton had a duty to ensure that all the Swiss Abroad could benefit from e-voting. The result of the vote was greeted with widespread applause.

LEH