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The “Parliament” of the Swiss Abroad will meet on 14 March 2020 in Bern

In keeping with tradition, the next meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) will be held on Saturday 14 March 2020 at the Town Hall in Berne. The meeting will be open to the public and a live feed will be available on the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) website, www.aso.ch, along with the agenda, which will be published approximately three weeks in advance.

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), representative body of the “Fifth Switzerland”, is made up of 140 delegates, of which 120 represent the community of the Swiss Abroad. The remaining 20 are individuals living in Switzerland, with a background in politics, economics, social advocacy or culture. They are all committed to representing their 760,000 fellow citizens living abroad.

The CSA meets twice per year to discuss subjects directly impacting the Swiss Abroad and to thereby protect their interests. The spring meeting will be held in March in Bern, and the autumn meeting will be held in August as part of the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. The delegates are appointed on a voluntary basis for a period of four years (2017–2021). They are elected by the communities of Swiss Abroad. During their meetings, the CSA may adopt resolutions and recommendations aimed at authorities, institutions or public opinion. (JF)



The Parliament of the “Fifth Switzerland” sits regularly in Bern. In this image: a debate during a meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad in March 2018. Photo: Marc Lettau

What challenges does our democracy face?

Annual Congress of the Swiss Abroad

Immigration, data protection, digital challenges, and exercising our political rights: how is the Swiss democratic system meeting today's challenges? Where does it need to change? How can we guarantee respect of the basic democratic rights in Switzerland, unique in the world?

Such are the questions, amongst many others, that speakers will be asked to answer or debate at our 2020 congress on the weekend of 22–23 August. Save the date now and join us in Lugano! (JF)

What is the procedure for setting up a new Swiss society?

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) aims to foster good relations among the Swiss Abroad and to strengthen their ties with Switzerland. The OSA is supported by its recognised Swiss societies abroad. However, what does a society need to do to obtain recognition from the OSA? It must meet all the following requirements:

- The purpose of the society is to foster good relations among the Swiss Abroad and to strengthen their ties to their home country.
- More than 50 per cent of the active members are Swiss citizens.
- The majority of the board of directors are Swiss citizens.
- The steering committee is headed by a Swiss citizen.
- At least seven Swiss citizens belong to the society.
- The society convenes a members' meeting at least once a year and has an executive board that is re-elected periodically.
- The society is affiliated to the umbrella organisation responsible for its country if such an organisation exists (France, Germany, Italy, UK, Spain-Portugal, Austria-Liechtenstein-Slovenia, Netherlands, Canada, Argentina).
- The society expressly undertakes to inform the OSA if any of the requirements are no longer met.

Upon obtaining recognition from the OSA, societies are accepted into the worldwide network of the Swiss Abroad societies and institutions. They automatically receive communications and newsletters from the OSA and are listed on the www.swisscommunity.org website. Societies that do not fulfil all the above-mentioned conditions may be recognised as associate societies. This allows them to also benefit from the information and services of the OSA.

Societies that are interested in obtaining recognition from the OSA can complete the application form. It is available on the OSA's website, www.aso.ch, or by following the direct link: ogy.de/recognition-by-osa. (ASO)

The OSA's Legal Service provides general legal information on Swiss law, particularly in areas which concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law or intervene in disputes between private parties.

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