

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 47 (2020)
Heft: 5

Rubrik: Mailbag

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Dear Swiss Abroad,

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) has a small but important favour to ask. Please ensure that your local Swiss representation has your current personal email address. Many Swiss expatriates have not yet provided their Swiss representation with an email address, while many of the email addresses registered with Swiss representations are no longer used. The OSA urges you to keep your email address up to date. This is important for a number of reasons.

Protection and security: The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown how vital it is to stay connected in times of crisis. Armed with your latest email address, your Swiss representation can contact you quickly and easily in a crisis. This is for your own protection and security.

Weight and influence: All Swiss living abroad being reachable by email translates into greater political leverage for the "Fifth Switzerland". This is precisely what we want with a view to enabling direct elections to the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland", the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), to be staged online. Having everyone's email address offers the possibility to invite all Swiss Abroad to participate in a direct election – although at present it is not clear when such an election could take place. Essentially, direct elections enhance the legitimacy of the CSA. In turn, this will give the OSA greater weight and influence when it comes to representing the interests of the Swiss Abroad within Switzerland.

Furthermore, your email address is useful if there is an issue with postal deliveries in your country of residence and you receive the print edition of "Swiss Review" very late or not at all – in which case it is worth switching from the print edition to our free online edition. Once you have made the switch, we will send you a preview email before every new issue.

Please note that you should provide your local consulate, not the OSA, with your email address. For data protection reasons, the OSA cannot access the addresses of Swiss who live abroad. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is responsible for managing the relevant address database. You can also enter your new or updated email address simply and easily via the FDFA's online desk for Swiss nationals residing abroad: www.eda.admin.ch/swissabroad. This dedicated government website is a one-stop shop, offering you convenient online access to a range of services.

I hope you enjoy this new issue of "Swiss Review". All the best, and stay safe.

Ariane Rustichelli
OSA Director



Switzerland and the COVID-19 pandemic



countries.

Switzerland dealt with COVID-19 in a very responsible manner. Of course, it is bad when people lose their jobs and futures. However, Switzerland's response was quick and, for once, un-bureaucratic, unlike that of numerous EU

DANIEL TRÄCHSEL, MARZELL, GERMANY

Switzerland was caught napping like a lot of other countries, unfortunately. Countries that were prepared were hit much less severely (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore). Will Switzerland learn from this? The chances of that are slim when you consider how reluctant the Swiss media have been to criticise.

ADRIEN LOEWENBERG, PORTUGAL

I agree that there was a support system in place, and that the federal government worked very hard to help the entire country (unlike in the US, where it is absolute chaos except in states whose governors are endowed with a modicum of common sense). It was reassuring to know that my mother in Geneva could seek help if necessary. However, many of the underprivileged lacked the necessary safety net. The long line of people queueing at a food bank in Geneva was a good example.

GUILLAUME DE SYON, LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

Voters to give their verdict on paternity leave



I'm surprised Switzerland, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, is so behind in this case. If you ever gave birth to a child, you know how much energy it takes away from the mother. The support of the Daddy is so important for the new born baby and the mother. It's a good investment for the whole family and even more so for the whole country.

RONALD THOMA, ONTARIO, CANADA

As a Swiss expatriate who has been living in Germany for many years, I am just horrified at how incredibly backward Switzerland is when it comes to things like this. Take the word 'Vaterschaftsurlaub' for example, which literally means 'paternity holiday'. Having a small child at home is anything but a holiday. Parenting is a wonderful but energy-sapping responsibility that extends over a good many years. Hence we refer to it as parental leave in Germany, because both parents can happily do their bit instead of the mother shouldering all the burden like she does in Switzerland.

ANDRÉ TSCHACHTLI, GERMANY



The corona pandemic in Switzerland

I am totally against the introduction of paternity leave. If they want extra time to care for their children, fathers should take holiday leave, or, if they can, accumulate overtime hours during the months that precede the birth. Anyway, a working day only lasts eight hours. That still leaves plenty of time for fathers to take over from the mother and look after the baby.

CLAUDE-ALAIN GUYOT, CIREY, FRANCE

Switzerland is stuck in the Middle Ages when it comes to family support. Even ten days of statutory leave is a pathetic amount. It should be six months of leave for the two parents, consisting of at least 16 weeks of leave for the mother. Funnily enough, opponents of this measly proposal are the same people who are willing to harm the economy so that men aged between 25 and 40 can march around in circles and drink beer at the taxpayer's expense for three to four weeks EACH YEAR on those ridiculous military refresher courses. It appears that these people care little about the massive hit that employers have to take for something that has no national security relevance whatsoever.

MATTHIEU HÖSLI, FRANCE

The "limitation initiative" and Switzerland's relationship with the EU

Aside from the fact that Switzerland will benefit economically from a closer relationship with the EU as globalisation intensifies, a politically strong, peaceful Europe is also very much in Switzerland's interests.

CHRISTOPH TWERENBOLD, COLOGNE, GERMANY

After selling off the big industries and becoming a service provider and acting zoo for the world, the people should see this is the wrong path. All these left-wing habits are poison for the country. Go back to what you were, an innovative, thriving, well educated people. Stop degrading your education system. Start creating and inventing again. The world is big, the EU is small and damaged by itself.

ULRICH HALTINER, DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Preserving Switzerland's neutrality is an absolute must. Hence making a reasonable contribution to the EU for co-operation and to fit the greater good would be desirable. To be bullied into a system of less flexibility would be a mistake. After all a relationship between partners can work very well, no need to be married.

KURT FEHLMANN, HERVEY BAY, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

The Federal Council started lifting coronavirus restrictions in Switzerland at the end of April, before ending the lockdown at the beginning of June. However, the number of new infections rose again as society reopened. Protective measures were consequently reinforced at the beginning of July. Apart from new nationwide rules such as mandatory face masks on public transport, additional restrictions apply in some cantons. Here are the key points in our COVID-19 timeline:

6 June 2020: Significant easing of the lockdown

For many, 6 June marks a tentative return to everyday life. All educational establishments are allowed to open, as are swimming pools, zoos, botanic gardens, theatres, cinemas, restaurants, bars, and mountain railways.

21 June 2020: Relaxation has serious consequences

People become more relaxed. Partygoers promptly become the first superspreaders. Infection clusters are also traced to holidaymakers who have returned from countries such as Serbia.

30 June 2020: Infections rise

At the end of June, the daily number of new COVID-19 cases returns to three-digit territory for the first time since just before the lockdown in March 2020.

6 July 2020: Mandatory face masks on public transport

In view of the growing infection rate, Switzerland makes face masks mandatory on all forms of public transport.

8 August 2020: Back from holiday and into quarantine

Due to people coming home from holiday infected with COVID-19, anyone returning from a country that is on the list of destinations with a high risk of infection must now spend ten days in quarantine. After being updated on 8 August, this list comprises 42 European and non-European destinations. Current list of destinations:

www.ogy.de/mandatory-quarantine

A comprehensive timeline from April 2020 is available at www.revue.ch.