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Help in entering the Swiss job market

When Swiss Abroad return to Switzerland, it often means they are also looking for a job. Finding one is not always easy. However, there is an office in Basel dedicated to assisting them.

Around ten years ago, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) set up an advisory service for Swiss Abroad who wanted to return and work in Switzerland. The Recruitment Act formed the basis for this measure. In July 2019, SECO transferred its advisory and employment services to the Office of Economy and Labour of the canton of Basel-Stadt (AWA BS). AWA BS is now entrusted with providing Swiss job seekers from abroad with the best possible support in preparing for reintegration into the Swiss employment market. Ideally, assistance from AWA BS will help them find jobs before they return to Switzerland, or at least point them in the right direction. AWA BS is geared to providing practical guidance and advice tailored to each individual.

In greater demand due to the pandemic

People of employable age represent the AWA BS target group – totalling just over 442,000, or 57 per cent of all Swiss Abroad, in 2020. An average of 100 people returning to Switzerland contact AWA BS every year. The office in Basel received a record number of enquiries in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with massive job losses and a decline in economic activity around the world suddenly causing many Swiss to return home.

Besides searching for a job, many returnees also applied for financial and material assistance. They received advice and support during this difficult period, thanks to effective cooperation between AWA BS, SECO and the FDFA.

Practical information

AWA BS is no recruitment agency, but it provides practical information about the job market and terms of employment in Switzerland as well as putting Swiss returnees in touch with potential employers and recruitment companies. It also offers tips on preparing job applications (CVs, cover letters).

Last year, AWA BS received 254 enquiries from Swiss Abroad, with 98 people subsequently registering with the office and 156 people obtaining assistance without signing



up. Those who sign up can access job vacancies in Switzerland via the online public employment information system job-room.ch.

Enquiries from around the world

AWA BS receives enquiries from all corners of the world. Most of these in 2020 came from Swiss Abroad in Europe (42 per cent) – followed by Latin America (17 per cent), Asia (16 per cent), Africa (12 per cent), North America (10 per cent) and Oceania (3 per cent).

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There are many good jobs available on the Swiss labour market, but it's not always easy for returnees to find a foothold.

Photo: iStock

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Solidarity payment for victims of compulsory social measures

Thanks to a legal amendment, it is still possible to apply for a solidarity contribution.

Victims of compulsory social measures and placements in Switzerland before 1981 are entitled to a “solidarity contribution” – a payment intended as Switzerland’s acknowledgement of the injustice that they suffered. Applications for this payment are open to those who suffered or were mistreated as children or young adults after being placed in administrative care, e.g. indentured by the authorities to farms as a cheap source of labour, or placed in children’s homes. The same applies to victims of forced abortions, adoptions, sterilisation procedures, and castration, as well as those who were used as subjects in medical trials against their will (see article in edition 4/2018 of “Swiss Review”).

Some 10,300 applications have already

been submitted to the Federal Office of Justice so far, of which around 500 originate from people domiciled abroad. About 96 per cent have been approved and the solidarity contribution paid out.

The Federal Act on Compulsory Social Measures and Placements (CSMP) originally stipulated that applications for the solidarity contribution be submitted no later than the end of March 2018. A variety of factors meant that many people were unable to submit their applications before this deadline. Parliament therefore decided to amend the act by lifting the deadline. The revised act came into force on 1 November 2020. Consequently, anyone who has not yet submitted their application can now do so at any time.

To facilitate the application procedure, the Federal Office of Justice has put together a download page containing the application form (including relevant instructions), which can be printed out or filled out electronically: revue.link/solidarity.

Anyone who needs additional help in submitting their application or locating records is invited to contact the relevant cantonal victim centre or cantonal archive. A file containing a list of addresses is also available to download on the aforementioned website. The support that these insti-



Contract children, seen here in Wattenwil (Berne, 1954), were often exploited as cheap labour.

Photo: Keystone



tutions provide is free of charge and can also be accessed by people domiciled abroad. The Federal Office of Justice’s CSMP Unit can additionally be contacted for further information (+41 58 462 42 84 or sekretariat@fuer-sorgerische-zwangsmassnahmen.ch).

FOJ, CSMP UNIT

Contract children and victims of enforced protective measures protest in front of the Federal Palace in Berne with photos bearing witness to their stolen youth (2014). Photo: Keystone

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Federal votes

The Federal Council determines voting proposals at least four months before the voting date.

Everything you need to know about voting proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council etc.) is available at www.admin.ch/votes or via the Federal Chancellery's VoteInfo app.

The Federal Council decided that there will be four federal proposals submitted to the people on 13 February 2022:

- Federal Popular Initiative 'Yes to a ban on experiments on animals and humans – Yes to safe research that brings progress'
- Federal Popular Initiative 'Yes to protecting children and young adults against tobacco advertising (No tobacco ads for children and young adults)'
- Amendment of 18 June 2021 to the Federal Act on Stamp Duties (StA)
- Federal Act of 18 June 2021 on a Media Support Package



Popular initiatives

The following federal popular initiatives have already been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- Federal Popular Initiative "Yes to an independent and free Swiss currency with coins or banknotes (Cash is freedom)" (17.02.2023)
- Federal Popular Initiative "For a responsible economy within our planet's limits (Environmental Responsibility Initiative)" (24.02.2023)
- Federal Popular Initiative "Against the F-35 (Stop the F-35)" (01.03.2023)
- Federal Popular Initiative "Yes to fair and secure pensions (Generations Initiative)" (07.03.2023)
- Federal Popular Initiative "Living in dignity – For an unconditional basic income" (21.03.2023)

The list of pending popular initiatives is available in German, French and Italian at www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen

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