

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 81 (2015)  
**Heft:** [3]  
  
**Rubrik:** The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

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## The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

As your elected OSA Delegate representing New Zealand it is sometimes difficult for me to select or make a triage between the OSA activities which are of primary interest for us here in New Zealand and topics that are not so important. It has been my objective to inform you on a regular basis not only on OSA activities but also information that comes to hand through other sources and channels which I consider might be of interest or possibly be relevant for the Swiss living in New Zealand.

With the following articles I hope to bring you all up to date

### Legislation for the Swiss Abroad (Auslandsschweizergesetz):

This has now passed most of the political hurdles and should be implemented by November 2015.

In the main, legislation encompasses the following:

- Distribution of information to the Swiss Abroad
- Communication between the Swiss Abroad
- Political Rights and Duties of the Swiss Abroad
- Social Assistance which can be obtained by the Swiss Abroad

A set of laws regarding the Swiss Schools Abroad will form part of this new legislation and furthermore, Consular Protection and Consular Services Abroad.

### Swiss Abroad Education Act (Schweizerschulengesetz):

The Swiss Abroad Education Act has undergone a complete revision in parliament. It passed all political hurdles and came into effect in January 2015.

- Currently there are 17 Swiss schools abroad.
- A total of 7'500 students, of which 1'800 are Swiss children, can enjoy these facilities.

Today many former students occupy key political or economic positions. The Swiss schools are well established in their host countries and have the image of institutions that provide high educational quality.

### Swiss Banks:

Since 2008 OSA has been working hard lobbying Institutions and Parliamentarians trying to improve the

unsatisfactory position for the Swiss living abroad. This is a continuing battle but some progress has been made.

I hope to give you an update concerning the Swiss banks in one of the next issues of this magazine together with more detailed information regarding the Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information (Automatischer Informationsaustausch).

### Swiss Abroad Statistics

31st December 2014 over 746'000 Swiss were living abroad:

America:	181'039	+2'493	since 2013
Europe:	462'049	+9'108	since 2013
Asia:	50'592	+2'234	since 2013
Africa:	21'484	+ 266	since 2013
Oceania:	31'721	+ 625	since 2013

### Nomination and Election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad:

As you all know, Peter Canziani and I, and all before us, were elected to represent New Zealand at the AGM of the Swiss Society of New Zealand. Our mandate is for 4 years.

At the moment there is a working group comprised of members of the OSA Executive Board looking at how in the future the Delegates from the various countries are to be elected. In 2021 at the earliest, the new ruling could be implemented according to the optimistic timetable given.

At the present time there are three possible versions that are being discussed:

#### 1. Direct Election by Vote:

This would be similar to normal elections. Candidates have to register themselves. Also 25 signatures are required from Swiss supporting the candidate. At the election date all Swiss registered within a country can give their vote to the candidate of their choice in their country. The Candidates (number of representatives varies from country to country) with the highest number of votes will then represent their country as the OSA Delegates. At the moment this version presents the biggest challenges in terms of how the voting (electronically or paper or mixed form) is going to take place taking into consideration security registration and other legal aspects.

#### 2. Mixed Voting Version:

This version is a combination of version 1 and version 3. Half of the candidates would be elected by Vote and the other half in our case through the Swiss Society of New Zealand (Swiss Clubs).

#### 3. Status Quo:

Maintain the present system and the way Delegates are elected.

Basically, the reason for all of this is the fact that the OSA has come under pressure from the Swiss Parliament. There are apparently discussions concerning the legitimacy of the OSA (Auslandsschweizer Organisation). In the eyes of certain parliamentarians, OSA does not represent all Swiss Abroad. The majority of the Swiss living Overseas are not members of the OSA. With direct elections all registered Swiss Abroad are thus approached and given the opportunity to elect their representatives. With Version 1 or 2 the OSA hopes that it will be able to gain more political influence and pressure in bringing the concerns and requests and political initiatives on behalf of "ALL" Swiss Abroad before Parliament or Government Departments if deemed necessary, on the grounds that they have a legitimate Mandate. OSA also hopes to receive more financial funding from the Government.

### Swiss Review Regional issue for Oceania:

At the Conference of the Swiss abroad in August 2014, my Australian counterparts (Roland Isler and Beat Knoblauch) and I decided to look into the possibility of having an attachment inserted in the Swiss Revue, as other regions already have, with information specifically for Swiss living in Australia, New Zealand, Papua-New Guinea and associated Pacific Islands. With this attachment we also hope to be able to reach and inform Swiss people living in the Oceania/Pacific Region who are not associated with a local Swiss Club or in our case the Swiss Society of New Zealand. With the attachment in the Swiss Review we are also indirectly able to advertise the Swiss Society of New Zealand and the Clubs and possibly motivate some of the readers who are not members to join one of our clubs.

Here in New Zealand the information from the local clubs etc., is collected, edited and prepared by the Helvetia team. The space is very limited.

The collected information is sent to

# News from the Embassy

Australia where all the information to be published is collected. There it is revamped before being passed on to the Swiss Review publishers.

After months of negotiation the attachment "Oceania" is now part of the Swiss Review. At the moment it has 4 pages for all contributing parties.

At this point I would like to thank Tanja and her dedicated crew for jumping on board and doing all the hard work, detailed negotiations and working out the specifics in making this venture work. Without their help this would not have taken off.

The Swiss Review Magazine is published 6 times a year and is distributed in several languages to all registered Swiss Worldwide. In our case the attachment "Oceania" together with the Swiss Review is distributed to all registered Swiss in the Oceania/Pacific Region.

According to the Swiss Review team in Switzerland:

- There are currently around 2700 printed issues sent to Swiss registered in Wellington, of which about 2600 issues remain in New Zealand. The rest are distributed among the Swiss living in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu
- The overall print – e-mail ratio is about 2 print for 1 e-mail.

Considering that there are about 7000 Swiss registered in Wellington, and that one Review (print or e-mail) is sent to each household, there are probably about 1500 to 2000 e-mails sent out.

Peter Ehrler

Elected Council Member of the Swiss Abroad representing New Zealand.

*A letter sent by the Swiss Embassy to Swiss citizens who are nearing their 18th birthday.*

## Registration with the Embassy of Switzerland

Dear fellow-citizen,

You will celebrate your 18th birthday in the course of this year. I should like to seize the occasion of this important milestone in your life to convey to you my heartfelt congratulation on your becoming a full-fledged citizen of our country. This means that you will from now on enjoy all the rights and bear all the responsibilities of a Swiss citizen.

With this letter, I ask you to register with the Embassy. This is not only an obligation under our law, but also necessary in order to obtain services such as the issuance of a passport, marriage and birth registrations etc. later in your life. Please return the enclosed orange print-out of your personal data duly signed within thirty days, if necessary with corrections of details. If the Embassy does not receive this form from you, your registration will be cancelled and no services will be available until you are re-registered.

As a citizen of Switzerland, you will enjoy rights that are unique in the world since you will now be part of our country's highest political authority, our people, who not only elect their representatives every few years as in other democratic nations. Swiss citizens decide all the important issues our country faces. You will find enclosed information on how to exercise these rights, and I strongly urge you to do so. You will have to register in the Swiss municipality of origin of your family by using the enclosed form and returning it to this Embassy. You will then receive the voting documents in the official language of this Swiss municipality, German, French or Italian.

Swiss citizens also have obligations. Living in New Zealand, you will not have to pay Swiss taxes, and you are not obliged to serve in the Swiss Army as Swiss males must and females may do. Many young Swiss living abroad, however, chose to do so voluntarily. This option exists for young men who are not also citizens of New Zealand and for all young women. I encourage you to consider voluntary Army service since it is an excellent opportunity to get to know Switzerland, her beauty, her people and her cultures. The initial training period is 18 weeks. Further services would be possible, but not mandatory if you don't make Switzerland your permanent home. Army trainees get paid roughly 3000 NZ\$ a month during the initial period. For further services, this pay would be higher. Should you be a young male double citizen of Switzerland and of New Zealand with a strong desire to serve in the Swiss Army, feel free to contact me personally in order to find a solution.

Towards the end of this year, I and the Embassy staff intend to invite you to the Swiss Residence in Wellington where I live. You will receive information about this event in due time and I very much look forward to meeting you then in person.

Sincerely,

THE AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND

David Vogelsanger

## chuderwälsch

Dialect words from Grison

- |     |               |                        |
|-----|---------------|------------------------|
| 1.  | Hanmpfla      | a hand full            |
| 2.  | Kemmi         | chimney                |
| 3.  | Foppa         | to irritate, to annoy  |
| 4.  | Juza          | to cheer, to rejoice   |
| 5.  | Gäch          | steep                  |
| 6.  | Huder         | bad person             |
| 7.  | Uuh koga guat | very good              |
| 8.  | Täscha        | thoughtless woman      |
| 9.  | Kroma         | shopping at the market |
| 10. | Schnütznedli  | handkerchief           |
| 11. | Verluadara    | to waste, to run down  |
| 12. | Fätzätüfä     | a daring person        |

MR

The Swiss Café and Bakery has been operating in Milford since 1993 and specialises in all things Swiss. All our products are baked fresh daily without the use of premixes. Some of our European specialities include Berliners, Engadiner Nusstorte, Zuger Kirschtorte, Swiss fruit flan and many more! We also offer catering, special occasion cakes and party breads upon order. As well as our baking we offer cabinet food and a full cooked breakfast menu in store. Although we have a wide range of traditional products our bakers are always keen to develop new products to keep up with customer demands. We are proud to now have a **wide range of gluten free sweet and savoury items** which we endeavour to keep expanding! We are also proud to serve award winning coffee from Toasted Espresso.

Open:

Mon-Fri 7am-4.30pm

Sat & Sun 7am-2.30pm

**SWISS CAFÉ & BAKERY**



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