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ASO News

Swiss Old Age Pension Insurance (AHV), NZ Super and the European Union

You might recall the reply I received from the Swiss Federal Council, signed by Mrs Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, which I published in my article in the last December/January issue of the *Helvetia*. There, Mrs Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, on behalf of the Swiss Federal Council, stated that they are also working together with the European Union in trying to solve the issue. In the meantime, there has been a minor development. Although it is not very much, it is pointing in the right direction.

The European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in Brussels sent a letter of invitation to the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development, inviting the New Zealand Government to present and explain the New Zealand social security system (NZ Super etc.) to the Third International Forum on the external dimension of social security in Brussels. Unfortunately, New Zealand did not find it necessary to present its case in person. Instead, they sent an 8 page letter to Brussels dated 25th of September 2015, trying to explain and justify the New Zealand system. There is nothing new in the letter. They are still using the same old unjustifiable arguments trying to explain why the New Zealand Government is stealing and ripping off

working peoples' privately contributed pension funds. If anyone would like a copy of this 8 page letter, please contact me via e-mail.

From the information I have received, the European Union was "not very amused" by the letter, nor by the arguments and explanations given by the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development.

The European States are not satisfied with the response and agreed to monitor the issue closely.

Most European Countries as well as the United States and others, like Switzerland, have the same issues and problems with their pensioners living in New Zealand.

It is yet again a small promising step forward. The latest positive indication that is developing, to my astonishment and surprise, is the help and support from the New Zealand First Party, who has gone public and to Parliament, and has committed to changing the present unjustified and discriminating system (Section 70).

*Peter Ehrler
Elected Council Member of the Swiss Abroad. Representing New Zealand*

Making the Voices of Switzerland's Young Expats heard

On August 13 in Geneva, first efforts were undertaken to build a Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad.

They have much in common, but are spread around the world – so, to meet their own needs, young Swiss abroad have created an online youth parliament that makes use of Facebook, Skype and e-voting.

The first task of the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (as they call themselves) was to elect a steering committee to coordinate their activities, represent their interests, and promote their issues. The committee now has 13 members. They live in various parts of the globe and were chosen from a list of 17 candidates.

They were elected on October 18, by on-line vote. This was a symbolic date – the same day on which, back home,

the 50th regular parliamentary elections took place.

It was chosen to emphasise their feeling of belonging to their country of origin, explains Davide Wüthrich, one of the movers of this initiative who has himself been elected to the youth assembly.

The feeling of belonging can be somewhat tenuous, though, because young Swiss abroad have the feeling of not really getting much attention. The more than 750 Swiss clubs around the world do not always meet the needs of the younger generation of expats, who often stay away from them as a result.

Growing membership

One of the tasks of the worldwide youth assembly's committee will be to start up parliaments of young Swiss in different

countries. A series of startups are already planned, beginning with Britain in November and Chile in January.

Launched on Facebook last August 17 with 15 members, the Youth Parliament of Swiss Abroad is steadily signing up members all over the world. Currently the membership is around 300.

Getting more and more people is a positive signal that strengthens the motivation of the activists, says Wüthrich. This is needed, he adds, because it is quite a challenge to locate the young Swiss scattered around the world. Facebook and Skype are a way for members of the parliament and the committee to communicate and meet, even if it is only virtually.

But the first task is to make sure that potential participants know about the existence of the platform. It's not easy, concedes Wüthrich, but he hopes that parallel activities to the work of the Youth Parliament of Swiss Abroad, and now the assemblies in each country, will accelerate growth.

Translated from Italian by Terence MacNamee, swissinfo.ch
Full article: http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/networking_making-the-voices-of-switzerland-s-young-expats-heard/41767348

Expat youth assembly



The Youth Parliament of Swiss Abroad is non-partisan and open to all Swiss nationals between 15 and 35 residing abroad, or who have lived abroad for at least ten years.

According to its constitution, "it is committed to the needs of young Swiss abroad and aims to support political education, participation in and co-determination of the political process, and social development of young Swiss abroad".

The youth parliament's steering committee is made up of 13 persons, elected by the members of the parliament for a period of two years. Anyone entitled to vote can indicate two preferences: one for a candidate from their own continent, and one for a candidate from another continent. The idea is that the committee should include representatives from all the continents. (At the first election, they did not yet have a candidate resident in Asia.)