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Military rights and duties

Every Swiss must join the army

This basic principle contained in the federal constitution is also valid for Swiss Abroad, but not in precisely the same way as for Swiss citizens at home.

The following refers only to male Swiss citizens from the age of 20. Swiss women do not have to perform military service, but they may do so voluntarily in either the Women's Auxiliary Service or the Red Cross Service. If they sign up in either of these units they are considered members of the army and are subject to military discipline.

Out into the world

Anyone illegally avoiding military service is subject to military law. Swiss Abroad should take account of their military obligations and obtain all necessary information from their diplomatic post.

Male Swiss citizens who intend to remain abroad for more than 6 months require a military permit. They must apply for this to their area headquarters in Switzerland. Anyone who remains abroad with such a military permit is excused from Swiss military service.

Obligations while abroad

Those subject to military service possessing a permit to remain abroad should report to their Swiss diplomatic post, either personally or in writing, within one month of leaving Switzerland. They must of course also register all changes of address. If they move from one consular area to another, they must notify both the old and the new diplomatic post.

Those with military permits must report until the end of the calendar year in which they have remained abroad for three successive years. Beyond this period only those without military permits, who are still subject to military tax (see below) and who are fit for service must report. After the three-year period only those Swiss Abroad who return to Switzerland and intend to remain for more than three months must report.

Young Swiss Abroad

Swiss diplomatic posts contact young Swiss Abroad when they reach majority under Swiss law (at 20), informing them in writing of their duty to register and of their military obligations. However, as long as they live outside Switzerland Swiss Abroad do not have to do military service. (Special regulations apply to frontier commuters, etc.). But if they return to Switzerland for more than three months

In house

A new staff member



On January 18, 1993, Mr Paul Andermatt started work at the Service for the Swiss Abroad of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. One of his functions is to replace Mrs. Anne Gueissaz as editor of the Swiss Review's Official News. Paul Andermatt successfully concluded his legal studies at Fribourg University last year. He is married, has one son and lives in Fribourg. ■

(this may be extended to 6 months) they must register.

Basic training

Every year 100–150 young Swiss Abroad from all over the world volunteer for basic training. This lasts 17 weeks and takes place during a recruit's 20th year.

Not all male Swiss Abroad are eligible for basic training. Those who are also citizens of the country in which they live, those who are not fluent in at least one Swiss national language and those with serious criminal records are excluded. Any young Swiss Abroad who wishes to undergo basic training should contact his diplomatic post in good time. Young Swiss Abroad who cannot afford to travel to Switzerland for basic training may in some circumstances apply to their diplomatic post for a travel indemnity.

During basic training recruits may use the services of the Youth Service of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad. Thanks to support from the Central Agency for Soldiers' Welfare, the Youth Service is able to send two gift parcels to each recruit, including information about activities during and after training. Swiss Abroad recruits may

also attend the annual Congress for the Swiss Abroad free of charge.

Return to Switzerland

If a Swiss Abroad returns to Switzerland for more than three months, he must register with his local military representative within 14 days. He may be selected for service until the end of the calendar year in which he becomes 28. Those who have already been selected may be asked to undergo basic training until the end of the year in which they become 30. Those who are not selected because of age or disability may be required to take part

Will you be 50 this year?

If so, you can still join the voluntary pension scheme but you must do so within a year of reaching 50. Leave it any later and you will have finally missed the boat. Exceptions are special cases such as naturalisation, divorce or separation, widowhood or continuation of the compulsory insurance scheme. For further information you may apply to your diplomatic post.

Swiss Review

Changes of address

Changes of address should be notified to Swiss diplomatic posts only. Even though there may be some delay before the Swiss Review is sent to your new address, neither the Secretariat nor the Service for the Swiss Abroad are in a position to process changes of address.

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in civil defence and must pay military tax.

Dual citizenship

Problems may arise where military service is required by two states. These cannot occur for Swiss who are also

citizens of France, Colombia, Argentina and the US, since agreements exist to prevent it. Dual citizens who have already done military or civilian service in their country of second citizenship do not have to perform military service if they return to Switzerland.

land. But dual citizens who do Swiss military service may find they are still liable in their country of second citizenship. Such dual citizens are therefore advised to make enquiries with the military authority responsible.

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Current popular initiatives

The following popular initiatives are still open for signature:

For the abolition of the direct federal tax – until August 4, 1993.
Christoph Erb, P.O. Box 6816, CH-3001 Berne.

Against illegal immigration – until October 21, 1993.

Dr. Max Friedli, P.O. Box, Ahornweg 2, CH-3000 Berne 9.

For the protection of life and environment against genetic manipulation – until November 12, 1993.

Dr. Daniel Ammann, P.O. Box 8455, CH-8036 Zurich.

Residential property for everyone – until December 30, 1993.

Hanspeter Götte, Mühlebachstrasse 70, CH-8032 Zurich.

For a vote on EC entry negotiations – until January 21, 1994.

Markus Ruf, Zähringerstrasse 19, CH-3012 Berne.

For media freedom without media monopoly – until February 18, 1994.

Peter Weigelt, P.O. Box 217, CH-8029 Zurich.

Swiss grass (to legalise soft drugs) – until April 27, 1994.
Roland Fink, P.O. Box 323, CH-9004 St. Gall.

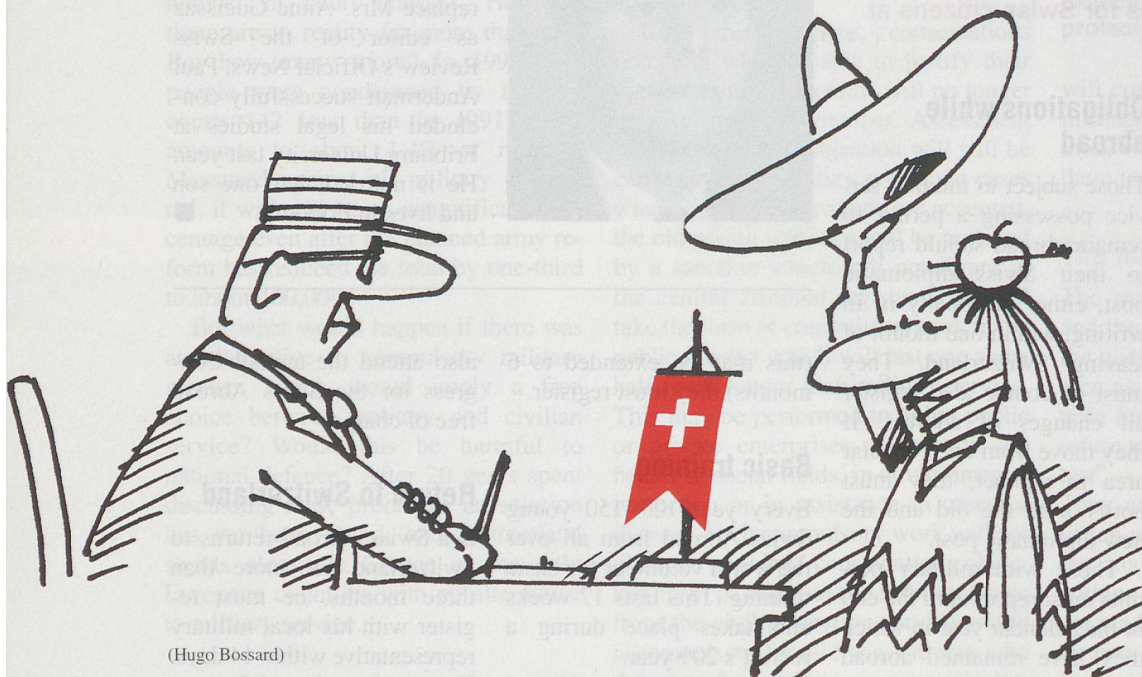
For the protection of humans against reproduction technology – until May 24, 1994.

Guido Appius, General-Guisan-Strasse 77, CH-4054 Basle.

Youth without drugs – until June 15, 1994.
Jean Paul Vuilleumier, Hochstrasse 6, CH-8044 Zurich.

For our future at the heart of Europe – until August 2, 1994.

Véronique Pürro, Avenue Ernest Hentsch 3bis, CH-1207 Geneva.



(Hugo Bossard)

How can I call a referendum?

The time limit for signing a referendum is only 90 days compared with 18 months for a popular initiative. The period between our editorial deadline and the Swiss Review's arrival usually makes it impossible for Swiss Abroad to obtain signature lists in time. So we have decided not to publish addresses of referendum committees. Optional referendums on federal enactments are, however, published in the Federal Gazette, available at diplomatic posts. Voters must themselves find out the address of the referendum committee in question and request a signature list. The

Service for the Swiss Abroad will assist as and when necessary. Swiss Abroad

may also set up referendum committees.

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Voting rights for 18-year olds

Since 18-year old Swiss Abroad cannot register in their own names, they do not automatically receive the important information on their political rights contained in the Swiss Review. Registration of 18-year olds would require adjustments to the information software used by diplomatic posts. For reasons of coordination new software cannot be provided to all Swiss diplomatic posts

before January 1995. However, we would like to emphasise the following:

All 18-year old Swiss Abroad are entitled to vote at the federal level and may report to their diplomatic posts, even though they are not officially registered. They will find that the necessary forms are available.

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