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Swiss Abroad Place in Brunnen

New layout for March 1996

The Foundation for Swiss Abroad Place Brunnen, which is responsible for the Place created for the 700th anniversary of the Confederation, has decided to give this beautiful spot on the banks of Lake Uri a face-lift for the coming spring. Pebbled areas are to be made green, which will also help the local authority which looks after the Place. The temporary information boards at the entrance will be replaced by a permanent

plaque describing the significance of the Place and listing the donors.

Walther Hofer is 75

On November 10 Prof. Walther Hofer, president of the Foundation for Swiss Abroad Place and honorary president of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, celebrated his 75th birthday. Warmest congratulations!

Friends of the OSA

Help us to help

The Organisation for the Swiss Abroad:

- has twice fought successfully against abolition of the optional pension scheme;
- has made a major contribution to extending the voting rights of the Fifth Switzerland;
- pays special attention to the needs of young Swiss Abroad;
- represents the interests of the Fifth Switzerland within the country.

Those who help the Friends of the OSA are helping the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad in its valuable work.

You can join by filling in the accompanying form. Many thanks in advance for your support. ■

New life members

Francine Asmis, Switzerland
Felix Bieger, Hong Kong
Walter Haeffiger, Switzerland
Renate Hirt, Germany
Marianne Junger, England
P. Knabenhans, USA
E. and H. Koller, Switzerland
Werner Rothweiler, Switzerland
Bernard Simon, England
Henriette Tissot, Switzerland
Peter Walther, Switzerland
Béat P. Zeller, Switzerland

Friends of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad

- ☐ Please send me more information about the Friends of the OSA
- ☐ I would like to join the Friends of the OSA
- ☐ as an individual member (Sfr. 30.— per year)
- ☐ as a married couple (Sfr. 50.— per year)
- ☐ as a company member (Sfr. 200.— per year)
- ☐ as a life member (Sfr. 500.— as a lump sum)

Name:

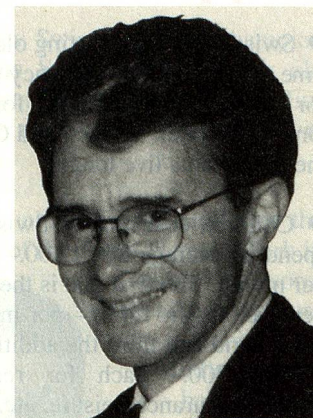
Address:

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Please return this form to: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16, Fax: 41 31 351 61 50. Many thanks for your interest. Membership contributions may be made to our Swiss National Giro (postal cheque) account no. 30-10580-7 in Berne.

Ten years at the SSA



On December 1 Rudolf Wyder will celebrate ten years at the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad. In 1985 he became deputy director and in 1987 succeeded Marcel Ney as director of the SSA. ■

It is planned to inaugurate the new look during the spring session of the Council for the Swiss Abroad next March.

The Board of the Foundation will again try – as in 1991 – to use the Place as a venue for important occasions during the jubilee celebrations in 1998. To keep all options open for this purpose additional design features going beyond the change in layout have been put on hold for the moment. This is particularly the case for the Monolith project which has still not obtained enough funds. ■

Discover Switzerland

Spend four to six weeks in a host family in Switzerland. Make friends. Cross frontiers. Try out an apprenticeship. Discover Switzerland and learn about new things. All this is promised by the youth exchange scheme organised jointly by the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad and the AFS Intercultural Programme for Swiss Abroad between 15 and 25. Young people from 17 countries have already taken part. Why not you too? Information and registration at:

SSA Youth Service
Alpenstrasse 26
CH-3000 Berne 16 ■

AJAS

Are you interested in professional training or studying in Switzerland? AJAS, the Association for the Training of Young Swiss Abroad, has all the details. Write to:

AJAS
Alpenstrasse 26
CH-3000 Berne 16 ■

Skiing at Easter

There is still some room at the Easter ski and snowboard camp for Swiss Abroad between 15 and 25. It takes place from April 5-14, 1996, at Grimentz, Valais. Information and registration at:

SSA Youth Service
Alpenstrasse 26
CH-3000 Berne 16 ■

Property Trustee Service abolished

In spite of the high demand which certainly exists the Property Trustee Service is being taken out of the range of benefits provided by the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad. Over a trial period lasting just two years it has become clear that establishing a network of agencies throughout Switzerland is impossible at reasonable cost. But such a network is needed to ensure a comprehensive and competent advisory service.



73rd Congress of the Swiss Abroad on voting rights

The best-informed voters of all

Swiss Abroad may now definitely be considered as an important political force in Switzerland. This was amply shown at the 1995 Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

"We are at a turning point. The extension of the voting rights of the Fifth Switzerland can no longer be dismissed as meaningless when 60,000 Swiss Abroad have registered to vote". These were the words with which Jean-Jacques Cevey, president of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, summed up the situation as he closed this year's congress. The important thing now was to consolidate what had been achieved. In particular, no opportunity should be missed of helping to involve the Swiss Abroad in the political life of the country and to provide them with the requisite information.

Speakers of the highest order

The more than 550 participants from 40 countries who came were able to enjoy a first-rate event. The political parties acknowledged the increased significance of the Fifth Switzerland by sending prominent representatives to sell their policies to this new and growing voter segment. They also joined in the various round table discussions. In this way those present obtained not only a comprehensive overview of the Swiss party landscape but were also able to discuss their specific concerns and requirements directly with the politicians themselves.

The subjects which are of the greatest concern to the Fifth Switzerland were aired in three workshops and a general discussion. These were information, mobility (particularly in the fields of education and training and social security), the position of

Switzerland and the Swiss Abroad in the European integration process and the image of Switzerland abroad.

Representing the government, Federal Councillor Ruth Dreifuss called on the Fifth Switzerland to contribute to the opening up of the country and to greater

liberality and tolerance. She encouraged the Swiss Abroad to make use of their political rights even more actively and in still greater numbers. Ruth Dreifuss paid particular attention in her speech to the optional pension scheme and Swiss schools abroad. She said that the present situation in both areas was being re-examined but in the process obligations towards the Fifth Switzerland and particularly young

people would not be forgotten.

Goal accomplished

Taken as a whole the congress was a success. The "ambitious goal" which the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad had set itself was achieved beyond doubt. Those present will be amongst the best-informed voters on October 22. Next year's congress will take place on August 23-25 in Neuchâtel. There will be more on that in the next issue of Swiss Review.

RL

Autumn session of the Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA) in Berne

Good half-term report



A well-attended meeting of the Council for the Swiss Abroad in the National Council chamber. (Photos: ASS)

In the middle of its four-year period of office the Council for the Swiss Abroad met for its first public session in the Swiss parliament building. The dignified surroundings suited the important issues at hand.

Free movement of persons is of the greatest importance for Swiss citizens wishing to reside abroad either temporarily or permanently. This fact was central to the main item on the agenda of the CSA session. Ambassador Bruno Spinner, head of the Integration Office of the Foreign Affairs and Economic Departments, informed members of the council about

the progress of the bilateral negotiations between Switzerland and the European Union.

The main issue is the free movement of persons. Swiss Abroad frequently come up against problems with residence and work permits and mutual recognition of diplomas. Ambassador Spinner said that discrimination against Swiss in EEA countries was not dramatic yet but had substantially increased.

"Generally satisfactory"

The present CSA was elected in 1993, so this year's autumn session was the half-year mark in the 1993-97

period of office. So it was the right occasion for the chairman, former National Councillor Jean-Jacques Cevey, to give a half-term report. There had been some significant successes – saving the optional pension scheme twice and preventing a cut in the subsidies to Swiss schools. But there were also matters still pending, such as the information problem, recognition of diplomas, the restructuring of the diplomatic and consular network and the final form of the pension scheme. But Jean-Jacques Cevey felt that what had so far been achieved was "generally satisfactory".

New Swiss associations

Once again the CSA was able to welcome new groups in foreign countries: the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Gymnastics Club in San Francisco, the Swiss Club of Central North Carolina, the Sacramento Swiss Ladies' Society (all in the United States), the Corporación Helvética Quinta Región-Chile, the Grupo CH 60-Plus Mexico-City, the Amicale des Suisses de la Drôme et de l'Ardèche (France) and the Schweizerverein Siegen (Germany).

RL