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The 74th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Neuchâtel

Research requires openness

Switzerland must continue researching, must open up and must promote mobility for its researchers. These were the main conclusions which emerged from this year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

About 500 of our compatriots from all over the world took part in the Congress of the Swiss Abroad, which was devoted mainly to the subject "Switzerland Researches Worldwide – the Contribution of the 5th Switzerland to Internationally Networked Research".

Those attending were able to enjoy a high-quality event which expounded on research from the points of view of the state, universities, multinationals, and small and medium-sized businesses. The discussions following each address considered questions such as: "Does Switzerland do enough for the mobility of its researchers?" "Are the researchers themselves sufficiently mobile?" "What opportunities will researchers have if they return to Switzerland?" etc.

"To continue research"

National Councillor Georg Stucky, vice-president of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, emphasised four points in his concluding address:

- Switzerland must open itself up to the world.
- Research is always linked to a certain degree of (economic) risk.
- Research policy must be explained better to the voters, since they are not only directly concerned but are also frequently called upon to pronounce upon it: atomic energy, gene technology, etc.
- Financial, personnel, and human limitations in research must be recognised.

In general terms, said Stucky, everybody was agreed that in the interest of

its well-being Switzerland must not only continue research but must also extend it and increase its international network.

"Awakening curiosity"

In his speech to the Congress, Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger asked for a new declaration of confidence in Switzerland and called upon the Swiss

The autumn session of the Council for the Swiss Abroad in Neuchâtel

Sickness Insurance Law: improvements demanded

Social security and sickness insurance were the main subjects considered at the autumn session of the Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA). This was meeting under the chairmanship of former National Councillor Jean-Jacques Cevey and coincided with this year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

It is true that the new Sickness Insurance Law contains definite improvements for Swiss Abroad returning to the country. But the territoriality principle does result in serious problems (see also Official News). The Council for the Swiss Abroad voted unanimously for a resolution to improve the status of Swiss Abroad in sickness insurance and particularly for appropriate solutions to be found for cross-frontier workers and Swiss living in countries with unsatisfactory insurance schemes.

General elections in 1997

For the second time since 1993, next year will see general elections to the CSA. The distribution of seats – which is based on current Swiss Abroad statistics – will remain the same, except that Austria will gain one representative. More detailed information on the elections will appear in the next issue of Swiss Review.

Abroad to use their openness to the world to awaken the curiosity of their compatriots in Switzerland for that which is new. He assured those present that the Federal Council was aware of their problems concerning the optional old-age pension and disability scheme and the sickness insurance legislation and that solutions were being sought.

The programme of this 74th Congress of the Swiss Abroad was rounded out by visits to firms, an impressive opening ceremony, a banquet and a Sunday excursion. Next year's Congress will be held in Lugano on August 21–24.

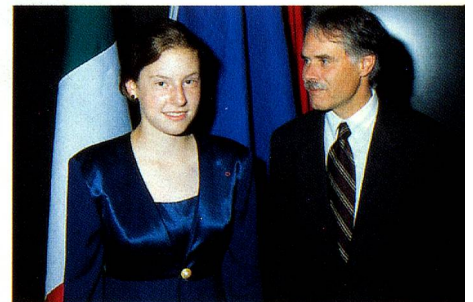
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Sun and fun

The two ski and snow-board camps of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad will take place from December 27, 1996, to January 5, 1997, at Zweisimmen, Canton Berne, and from March 28 to April 6, 1997, at Grimentz, Canton Valais. Beginners are warmly welcome! If you are interested, please contact: SSA Youth Service Alpenstrasse 26 CH-3000 Berne 16 Fax 41 31 351 61 50

Since July 1 Swiss Review has been available on the Internet and is regularly consulted.

In addition, the OSA is working with the French-speaking Swiss firm, TATIS, on a CD-ROM. This will give Swiss Abroad information on all questions relating to emigration, residence abroad and return to Switzerland. The CD-ROM will probably be distributed through Swiss Review in the coming winter.



Natalie Jomini, Winner of the OSA's youth competition was congratulated by Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger in Neuchâtel. (Photo: zvg)

The Council once again emphasised its readiness to work constructively towards reforming the optional old-age and disability pension scheme. But at the same time it reiterated its resistance to any abolition of this insurance opportunity.

Extending the information range

The CSA viewed favourably the efforts of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA) to provide more infor-

Once again the CSA was able to welcome new groups in foreign countries: Il Circolo Svizzero del Piemonte del Sud, Il Circolo Svizzero di Siena e Arezzo (both in Italy), Der Schweizerklub Kreta (Greece), El Club Suizo de Tiro y Deporte Quito (Ecuador) and Der Schweizerisch-Deutsche Wirtschaftsclub in Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt und Thüringen (Germany).

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