

# OSA news

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# The right to mobility

**A consensus solution on voluntary AHV/IV and rapid implementation of measures to facilitate the exercise of political rights: these two demands were resoundingly endorsed by the Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA) at its spring session in Murten.**

In recent years Swiss Abroad or Swiss wishing to emigrate have experienced drastic constraints on their international mobility. Former National Councillor Georg Stucky, President of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, described the lot of Swiss Abroad as mixed: revision of the voluntary AHV/IV to the detriment of the Fifth Switzerland, impediments to the exercising of political rights, ongoing cuts in subsidies for Swiss schools abroad, lack of funds for information purposes.

Reviewing the parliamentary elections in autumn 1999 Georg Stucky remarked that "for the first time the appointment of a Swiss Abroad to the National Council was within reach". Yet despite a sufficient potential vote, candidate Pierre-Alain Bolomey failed to be elected. On the one hand Stucky blamed the lack of mobilisation, and on the other the complex voting procedure with which Swiss Abroad are confronted.

In consideration of the fact that the Fifth Switzerland is an important part of our nation and represents a key segment of the electorate, the CSA calls on the responsible authorities to act rapidly to implement measures which make it easier for our fellow citizens abroad to exercise their political rights. In particular the CSA would like to see a lifting of the obligation to renew registration in the electoral roll, centrali-

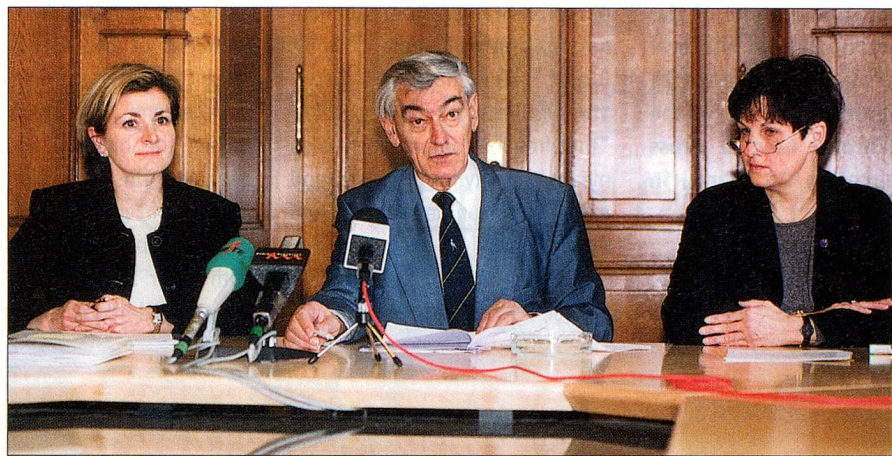


Photo: Michael Stahl

Georg Stucky, President of the OSA, flanked by Isabelle Schmidt-Duvoisin, OSA Head of Information (left) and Elisabeth Michel, President of the Swiss Associations of Germany (right).

sation of the electoral roll in the cantons, and introduction of internet voting as soon as possible. The number of voters registered

abroad is increasing every year. At present 70,000 of our compatriots living abroad are registered in the electoral roll. The CSA is aiming for

100,000 registered voters and a higher voting turnout.

## **Voluntary AHV/IV: bone of contention**

The Fifth Switzerland's parliament underlined its disappointment at the State Council's recent decision on voluntary AHV/IV, denouncing it as "draconian, impractical and counterproductive". It now hopes that the National Council does not miss the opportunity to present a solution which better addresses real needs. The CSA also unanimously approved a resolution addressing the National Council.

Elections were also held at the spring session of the CSA. National Councillors Liliane Maury Pasquier (SP, Geneva) and Rosmarie Zapfl (CVP, Zurich) and their colleagues Yves Guisan (FDP/Vaud) and Johannes Randegger (FDP, Basle City) were appointed as new Swiss-based members. Also elected were State Councillors Anton Cottier (CVP, Fribourg) and Samuel Schmid (SVP, Berne) as well as Severino de Vecchi, President of Pro Ticino.

Isabelle Schmidt-Duvoisin

## **New life members, 1999**

Membership of the Association for the Promotion of the Swiss Abroad Organisation has once more grown

- Peter Frisch, Colombia**
- Erika Klement, Austria**
- André Siegenthaler, USA**
- Adele Spinnler-Soehoed, Indonesia**
- Rosemarie Burchardi, Denmark**
- Alphonse Pittet, Canada**
- Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft Holland**
- Paul Halpern, Israel**
- Hans Zurbruegg, Mexico**
- Astrid Maelen Heilmann, Brazil**
- Gabi Leu, Italy**
- Elsbeth Reimann, USA**
- Willy Vollmer, Switzerland**
- Urs Gass, Spain**
- Hatem Ladjimi, Tunisia**
- Georges & Azucena Galletti-Rodriguez, Spain**
- Gilles Thevenot, Germany**
- Ariane Braillard, UK**
- Maurice Abetel, France**
- Jean-Luc Veuillez, France**
- Ruth von Siebenthal, Hong Kong**
- Heinz Wobmann, Switzerland**

## Passionate plea by OSA for the bilaterals

**In view of the major significance for its members of the referendum on the bilateral agreements scheduled for 21 May, the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad held a press conference on 28 March in Berne.**

The press conference was a resounding success and was

attended by a large number of representatives from the main national news media. "Don't forget," emphasised Georg Stucky, President of the OSA, "that freedom of movement also means mobility for the Swiss, and equal opportunities for us and our children."

Two Swiss Abroad – Elisabeth Michel, President of the Organisa-

tion for the Swiss Abroad in Germany, and Jean-Paul Aeschlimann, President of the Association of Swiss Clubs in France – also issued a statement. "We are impatient to see the bilateral agreements enacted! This will eliminate a number of legal barriers and we will finally be on an equal footing with other Europeans." This was the general tenor of the event,

which was underpinned by concrete examples.

In conclusion National Councillor and OSA Vice President Jacques-Simon Eggly pointed to the positive aspects of freedom of movement, seeing in it "a promising key element for the future of young Swiss men and women."

Isabelle Schmidt-Duvoisin

## Attractive holiday packages

If your summer vacation plans are still open, now is the time to check out the holiday packages offered by the Youth Service.

There's something to suit every taste – an outdoor camp on the shores of Lake Thoune (16.–30.7.00 and 30.7.–12.8.00 for 15 to 21-year-olds) with windsurfing,

mountain biking, climbing, tennis, beach volleyball and a trip up to the Jungfrauoch's "Top of Europe" (3456m), a language course (14.8.–25.8.00) to brush up your German or French, a stay with a host family and visits to various companies (24.7.–6.8.00 and 7.8.–20.8.00) or a seminar on edu-

cation (14.8.–20.8.00) including participation at the Congress for the Swiss Abroad.

For 18 to 35-year-olds the highlight of the summer of 2000 is the first-ever "Mobile in Switzerland" weeks in the Jura (20.–27.8.00) and Grisons (27.8.–3.9.00). The landscape and sights of these impressive regions of Switzerland can be explored by bicycle, in-line skates, train, cart, on foot, by boat and by scooter.

For detailed information on each package, visit

<http://www.aso.ch> or contact

Youth Service

Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad

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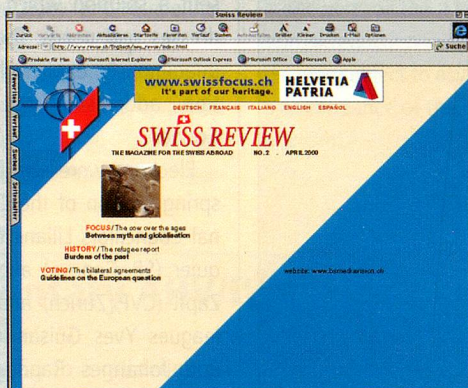
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### New look



2000 is a real year of innovations for the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad. At the beginning of this year the OSA launched its new internet page ([www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch)). At the same time "Swiss Review" presented its new look. It follows that the time is right to renew the magazine's web site, too ([www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch)). Since 1 April the new page version, graphically adapted to the OSA site, is open to visitors.

## 78th Congress of the Swiss Abroad: Switzerland, centre of education

Would you like to find out more about opportunities for studying in Switzerland?

The Association for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS) will be glad to provide information on the various options. Moreover, this year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad, to be held in Zug from 18 to 20 August, offers a unique insight into Switzerland's educational offerings through visits to various well-known institutes of learning, an informative exhibition, as well as

speeches and panel discussions on education. Registration forms and detailed information on the Congress are available on the internet under [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch)

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