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Swiss education update

In the next few issues of "Swiss Review" we will be providing you with regular updates on the Swiss education scene.

In addition to universities and Federal Institutes of Technology (theoretical research), Switzerland also needs to offer practice-based, high-standard courses in engineering, economics, administration, music, fine arts, medicine and social work (applied research). Since 1997 this task has been performed

by the Universities of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschulen or FH) which evolved from the restructuring of the Higher Schools of Engineering and Business Administration. As a result, persons who have completed vocational training now have an attractive choice of higher education options.

Switzerland operates seven regional Universities of Applied Sciences which offer full- or part-time (combined with employment) courses. The first degrees were awarded in Autumn 2000. In addition,

FHs offer a broad range of post-graduate studies and further studies. Admission to an FH requires either professional maturity (Berufsmatur, maturité professionnelle), academic maturity (gymnasiale Matur, bac général) with at least one year's relevant professional practice or a diploma from commercial college. The relatively short study time (three to four years) coupled with earlier work experience which students bring with them guarantee their high value in the job market. FH de-

grees are recognised throughout Switzerland and are also accorded equivalent value in EU countries. Graduates of the erstwhile Higher Schools of Engineering and Business Administration have the option of converting their diploma into an FH degree.

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New composition of the CSA

The current Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA) ends its period of office in August 2001. Over the next few months the mandates will therefore need to be re-assigned.

As the supreme organ of the OSA, the CSA represents the interests of all Swiss Abroad vis-à-vis the government and the general public. For this reason it is often referred to as the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland". This assembly consists of approximately 150 members: 68 from abroad as well as around 60 representatives and between 20 and 40 Swiss-based members. The number of CSA members is indexed to the size of their respective Swiss Abroad communities.

For countries and regions where

the majority of Swiss Abroad live, election of CSA members resident abroad is the prerogative of the umbrella organisations for Swiss clubs in the individual countries or country groups. In the case of other countries or country groups entitled to a seat on the CSA, it is traditionally the task of selected Swiss Abroad groups or a group of institutions to agree on delegates and their representatives. This system allows all Swiss Abroad to exercise their rights and participate in electing CSA members via the 750 or more Swiss associations around the world.

Swiss-based CSA members are elected by the Council itself based on the recommendations of the board committee and in consideration of their ability to promote the interests of the Fifth Switzerland due to their cultural, political

or economic standing. Since the Council for the Swiss Abroad is elected for a four-year term of office, its membership must be completely renewed in Spring 2001. In August 2001 the members elected for 2001-2005 will convene for their constituent meeting during the Congress for the Swiss Abroad in Davos.

Since its inception the CSA has scored a number of achievements, most notable among which was

the mention of Swiss Abroad in the Federal Constitution (Article 40), introduction of the optional AHV/ IV and the establishment of "Swiss Review" as the information medium for Swiss Abroad. If you, too, wish to see the interests of the Swiss Abroad effectively represented, cast your vote in these elections! Further information is available on our home page under www.aso.ch.

Isabelle Schmidt-Duvoisin

SJAS 2001 Summer Camp

This summer 250 young Swiss Abroad from all over the world are again invited to take part in one of the eight summer camps run by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (SJAS).

The aim of these camps is to acquaint children more closely with

past and present Switzerland and its geography, and show them some of the country's most interesting sights. At the same time children attending these camps are given the opportunity to make contact with children of the same age from a wide range of coun-

Congress 2001

The 79th Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be held in Davos from 17 to 19 August on the topic of "Switzerland and the UN". Details will be provided in the next OSA News and in the "Swiss Review" 1/01.

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tries and language backgrounds. During their 14-day stay they will also experience camp life and be able to take part in various creative leisure activities and sports.

The 2001 holiday camp season starts on 25 June with a two-week trip right across Switzerland, open to 20 children and young people aged between 12 and 17. Seven different camps will also be held between 7 July and 25 August,

normally for a 14-day period from Saturday to Saturday, for children aged between 7 and 14.

The standard parental contribution for a holiday camp is CHF 800 per child. Parents must pay the cost of travel to Switzerland. However, the SJAS feels it is important that young Swiss Abroad are given the opportunity to benefit from our service at least once during their childhood. We operate a fund

through which families may apply for reductions on contributions, and which even grants subsidies on travel costs in needy cases. We therefore expressly encourage parents to register their children even if the above costs are beyond the family budget!

The registration date is 25 March 2001, but depending on demand we may still be able to offer spaces in individual camps

beyond this date. A brochure with detailed information is obtainable from:

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