

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 36 (2009)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

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Camps for children aged 8 to 14

There are still some places left on our two New Year ski camps in Wildhaus (St.Gallen) and Saas Grund (Valais)! Whether they are skiers or snowboarders, beginners or at an advanced level, Swiss children abroad aged 8 to 14 can have a great time at our winter camps.

Winter camp in Wildhaus (St.Gallen) Winter camp in Saas Grund (Valais)

Date: Saturday, 26 December 2009 to Monday, 4 January 2010
No. of participants: 48
Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)
Ski or snowboard hire: approx. CHF 150

Registration

Precise details on the winter camps and the registration form are available at www.aso.ch (Offers / Offers for Children and Young People / Camps and offers / Holiday camps and travel - winter). Reduced contribution rates are available in justified cases. The form required can be requested on the registration form. We are also happy to post you our information brochure on request. The two winter camps in Wildhaus and Saas Grund are the only SJAS offers available during the 2009/10 winter season.

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

Registration for the summer camps will begin on 15 February 2010.

Precise details on the various summer camps in 2010 (dates, locations and age groups, etc.) and the registration form will be available from 15 February 2010 at www.aso.ch (Offers / Offers for Children and Young People / Camps and offers / Holiday camps and travel - summer). If you would prefer to look through our offers on paper, you can order a brochure from the office from February 2010.

Camps for young people aged 14 and above

The Swiss abroad will visit three winter sports regions next season. OSA welcomes young people to the holiday destination that is Switzerland, where the presence of nature is a little bit stronger than any-

where else in the world. What is so special about the OSA camps? We'll let the young people themselves tell you.

New Year ski camp in Sedrun (Grisons) 26.12.2009 to 4.1.2010

"I can't call this camp a vacation; I call it an adventure! It might sound childish but I felt like Harry Potter going to Hogwarts. So many different people from so many places and now they are friends. It is a very nice feeling, because I criticized whoever I saw and everything turned surprisingly wrong in a good way. I liked it a lot and gained a lot from it: Snowboarding adventures. New Year. Leaders. Appropriate moments of hilarious despair!"

Feedback from a participant of the 2007 camp

Winter sports week in Grächen (Valais) 27.2. to 6.3.2010

"The camp is well-organised and the atmosphere is very good. Each person is encouraged to have fun. I'll tell my friends that OSA offers this great opportunity, and it is really worth giving it a try! Not all countries offer a programme like this for people living abroad. It is fantastic that Switzerland does! Lots of fun and good memories."

Feedback from a participant of the 2008 camp for adults

Easter camp in Fiesch (Valais) 3.4. to 11.4.2010

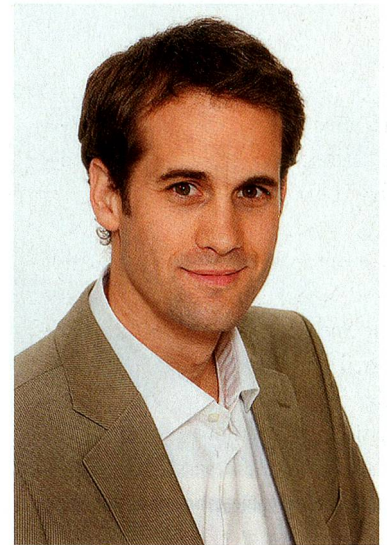
"I'll tell my friends that first off I didn't know what to expect and thought it would be ok but not amazing, but as soon as the camp began, it opened a door to a new world full of new people that are fun, and an amazing 8 days where I had fun each moment! Thank you all so much for making this camp so amazing!"

Feedback from a participant of the 2008 Easter camp

Educational offers for young people aged 14 and above

OSA language courses are aimed at young people with little or no knowledge of the language. They are beginners' courses heavily geared towards developing conversational skills. OSA aims to encourage participants to have the motivation to continue learning the language and to develop their knowledge. Language courses

are provided in cooperation with the Migros-Klubschule. OSA organises leisure activities, excursions and city tours on two afternoons a week. As the young people stay with Swiss host families, they gain a first-hand insight into everyday Swiss life and have the opportunity to try out their new language skills with their host parents. German course in Berne (4. to 15.1.2010)
French course in Fribourg (4. to 15.1.2010)



AJAS – New President

The Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS) has had a new president since the beginning of August 2009. Antonio Hodgers, a Green Party National Councillor, has replaced former National Councillor Remo Galli, who had been president of the association since November 2001. As the president and representative of AJAS, Antonio Hodgers was also elected to the Council of the Swiss Abroad at its meeting in Lucerne in August this year.

We would like to thank Antonio Hodgers for his willingness to work on behalf of young Swiss people abroad and to thank Remo Galli for the commitment he showed over the past few years.

Further information on educational opportunities in Switzerland is available from the AJAS office:
Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne
Tel.: +41 31 356 61 04, Fax: +41 31 356 61 01
E-mail: ajas@aso.ch
www.ajas.ch



Resolutions of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) appointed its representatives for the period 2009-2013 at its meeting in the hall of Lucerne's cantonal parliament. The debate focussed on the issues of political recognition for Swiss citizens abroad by the authorities and the importance of providing information for them. These issues prompted the passing of three resolutions concerning Swissinfo, "Swiss Review" and federal government's policy towards the Swiss abroad.

The Council now has 140 members: 120 Swiss abroad and 20 Swiss living in Switzerland (compared to 40 previously). This means that greater weight is ascribed to the delegates of the Swiss communities abroad to strengthen the Council's representation of the interests of the Swiss abroad. On behalf of the Council, its President, Jacques-Simon Eggly, confirmed the results of the election of delegates in which Swiss communities around the world took part through umbrella organisations of the Swiss associations and institutions recognised by OSA. 45% of the delegates in the new Council were elected for the first time. The average age of the delegates is 56, and 30% of them are women. The geographical spread is as follows: Europe is the most strongly represented continent with 60 delegates, followed by North and South America (30 delegates), Asia (16 delegates), Africa (8 delegates) and Oceania (6 delegates). Each delegate represents the vote of 1000 Swiss citizens living abroad. Members elected who are based in Switzerland, and who will represent the resolutions passed in plenary sessions to the Swiss authorities, include: Member of the Council of States Filippo Lombardi (CVP/TI) as well as National Councilors Christa Markwalder Bär (FDP/BE), Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin (CVP/FR), Carlo Sommaruga (SP/GE), Antonio Hodggers (Greens/GE), Hans Kaufmann (SVP/GE) and André Reymond (SVP/GE).

The CSA is anxious about the wavering commitment shown by federal gov-

ernment to the Swiss abroad. In all parts of the world where Swiss communities are found, consulates are being closed and information for the Swiss abroad has been subject to Draconian cuts ("Swiss Review") or once again called into question (Swissinfo). The CSA has called on federal government to make the concerns of the Swiss abroad a priority and, to this end, to enact an implementing law for Article 40 of the Federal Constitution and to bring all associated issues together under one department. The CSA will contest any proposals aimed at reducing the provision of information for the Swiss abroad; indeed, Swissinfo is at risk of further budget cuts. Finally, the CSA demanded a CHF 300,000 increase in the budget for "Swiss Review" for 2010 so that the magazine could once again be published six times a year instead of just four.

Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lucerne

The Swiss abroad met at their annual congress in Lucerne held over three days. More than 400 expatriates attended the 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad. This year's congress focussed on the topic of the Swiss abroad themselves. The debate centred on whether the 700,000 Swiss living abroad represent an asset for Switzerland.

To what extent does a large and well-organised Diaspora provide added value for Switzerland? What benefits does the network of contacts that Swiss people have established all over the world offer Switzerland? How important is international experience and knowledge transfer for Switzerland and its economy?

These and many other questions were discussed on Saturday, 8 August 2009 in front of an audience of around 400 Swiss abroad at the plenary meeting held in the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne. Well-known speakers explored the myths and reality of the contribution made to Switzerland by Swiss people living abroad in short presentations and round-table sessions.

The new chairman of the Swiss Post Office, Claude Bégli, recalled his own experiences as a Swiss abroad in his humorous opening speech entitled "The travel adventures of the Swiss Marco Polo". The theatrical performance delivered by the charismatic chairman of the Swiss Post Office captivated the audience and earned him an ovation.

Federal Chancellor Corina Casanova, representing the Federal Council, gave her speech at the end of the day. She said that the Swiss abroad were Switzerland's ambassadors on the international stage but that they had unfortunately had little opportunity to express their opinions in Swiss political life. She explained that it was therefore important to facilitate their access to the democratic process, in particular through e-voting.

On Sunday, exploring the city of Lucerne was on the itinerary with a guided tour of the historical centre and the surrounding area, including a trip to the Rigi.

The next Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be held in St. Gallen from 20 to 22 August 2010.

ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Our services:

- Legal Department
- Youth Service
- Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS)
- Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA)
- Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

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