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OSA advice

I worked in Switzerland for several years and probably also made contributions to a pension that I have never received. How can I find out whether I have retirement assets?

Mandatory contributions to the second pillar (pension fund) were introduced in Switzerland in 1985 on a nationwide basis. Prior to that, contributions to occupational pension schemes had been made on a voluntary basis, except where different provisions applied under collective agreements.

Swiss abroad who have undertaken gainful employment in Switzerland and have not had their second pillar capital paid out are entitled to pension benefits.

If you do not know the address of your former pension fund in Switzerland, you can send a written enquiry to the 2nd Pillar Central Office.

Use a 2nd Pillar Central Office form, which you can either download or request from the office. (See website address below)

The form you submit will be compared by the 2nd Pillar Central Office with the records of the pension institutions. You and the institution concerned will be notified in the event of a match. You should then present any claims directly to the pension or vested benefits institution.

In order to facilitate checks, it is important that you enclose an uncertified copy of the following documents:

- Old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) card
- Salary statement
- Employment contract

- 2nd pillar insurance card
- Confirmation of employment
- Death certificate in inheritance cases

2nd Pillar Central Office, Sicherheitsfonds BVG,
Eigerplatz 2, Postfach 1023, 3000 Berne 14,
SWITZERLAND, Tel. +41 (0)31 380 79 75,
Email: info@zentralstelle.ch
www.sfbvg.ch > 2nd Pillar Central Office >
Research for credit balances

OSA'S LEGAL DEPARTMENT

OSA's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law and specifically in areas that concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

Incorrect telephone numbers

Incorrect telephone numbers and an incorrect postcode appeared in the "Educational and training advice now provided by educationsuisse" article in the February 2014 issue of "Swiss Review". The correct contact details for educationsuisse – education in Switzerland – are set out below.

Information on educational and training opportunities and grants:

info@educationsuisse.ch
Fiona Scheidegger,
Co-Director of educationsuisse
fiona.scheidegger@educationsuisse.ch
Tel +41 (0)31 356 61 22
Ruth von Gunten, Advisor at educationsuisse
ruth.vongunten@educationsuisse.ch
Tel. +41 (0)31 356 61 04
educationsuisse, Alpenstrasse 26
3006 Berne, Switzerland

Spring meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

A considerable amount of time was dedicated to the discussion on the ramifications that the approval of the mass immigration initiative at the referendum on 9 February 2014 (also see pages 12 + 13) could have for the Swiss abroad. Many Council members expressed great concern, in particular over the consequences for young people and their education as well as for academia. The Council of the Swiss Abroad supported sending an open letter from the umbrella association of the youth organisations to the Federal Council and the European authorities about the "Erasmus+" programme, which has been suspended by the EU, calling for cooperation between universities and the mobility of students.

The Council members received good news regarding the law on the Swiss abroad which was adopted by the Council of States in March and looks set to be approved by the National Council during the summer session. The incorporation of all acts and decrees affecting the Swiss abroad in this law and the clear designation of responsibility to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) for matters concerning the Swiss abroad (single point of contact) should ensure greater coherence and efficiency in the future for the federal government's policy on the Swiss abroad.

A proposal on the limitation of the term of office of Executive Board members, clearly also an extremely contentious issue within this body, was sent back to the OSA's Executive Board for revision.

BE

SERVICES PROVIDED BY OSA

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), a foundation governed by private law, is a centre of expertise for safeguarding the interests of Swiss citizens living abroad. Besides the publication of "Swiss Review", it provides various services for Swiss citizens abroad in collaboration with its partner organisations.

■ **Legal advice.** Free advice on emigrating abroad and returning to Switzerland.

www.aso.ch – "Consultation" section

■ **Offers for children and young people.** Organisation of holiday camps and language courses, etc. for young Swiss abroad seeking a better understanding of their native country.
www.aso.ch – "Offers" section

■ **Advice on education and training in Switzerland.** Young Swiss abroad wishing to train or study in Switzerland receive support and guidance in selecting training and educational opportunities and making grant applications.

www.aso.ch – "Consultation" section

■ **Network.** The website Swiss-Community.org provides the opportunity to network with Swiss citizens all over the world.

www.swisscommunity.org



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3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND
Tel. +41 31 356 61 00
info@aso.ch



From generation to generation

Last year, 14-year-old Madelyn Meury and her 15-year-old cousin, Joel Pilkington, took part in the Swiss Trip organised by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA). Their grandfather, Peter Meury, made it possible for them both to go on this journey to discover their Swiss roots.

Joel was born in Canada and today lives in Sydney with his mother, Theresa, the daughter of Peter and Patricia Meury. Madelyn lives with her father, Matthew, around 25 kilometres from Sydney in Wahroonga. Theresa and Matthew both attended camps for young Swiss abroad in the 1980s.

Theresa was 15 years old, the same age as her son Joel, when she visited Switzerland with the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad. She has travelled the world extensively over the past 30 years, but she says that she will never forget the unique opportunity that presented itself when she was young. Joel, too, was able to enjoy exciting encounters with other Swiss abroad, journeys through breathtaking landscapes and an interesting and action-packed programme in summer 2013. He particularly enjoyed river-rafting on the Aare River. His mother reveals that he has talked so enthusiastically about the Swiss Trip that his younger brother also wants to attend a camp soon. His cousin, Madelyn, has talked a great deal about the friendships she made and the insights she gained into different ways of life since returning home.

She was a little apprehensive before the camp but soon realised that she had nothing to worry about. Making friends is easy in a camp group. You quickly learn to trust your campmates when you have to put up tents together, sleep in them overnight and travel from one place to the next on different forms of public transport day after day. Her father said that a trip like this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. He himself forged friendships that lasted long after the camp. His sister, Theresa, backs that up. They all agree that attending these camps boosts self-confidence and independence and gives you a chance to



Joel (second from the right) with his mother and brothers Bennet and Chace before the flight to Switzerland

make friends with people from all over the world.

Madelyn says that she could well imagine sending her own children on camps for the Swiss abroad in the future. The experience has helped her to mature.

Madelyn and Joel experienced varied aspects of Switzerland. They hiked in the mountains, in some of Switzerland's most beautiful landscapes, they travelled north-east from Zurich Airport to the Rhine Falls and from there southwards to Grisons, through the Alps on the Glacier Express to the Aletsch Glacier, then west on the Aare to Lake Neuchâtel from where they passed through the Jura to Lucerne, finally arriving back at their starting point after a ten-day trip. It was a packed itinerary, which allowed them to see a great deal of their grandfather's homeland. Madelyn has particularly fond memories of the cuisine on

the Swiss Trip. Enjoying rösti or a chocolate fondue together was unforgettable. Their grandfather had told them before their trip that the Swiss love their food and that this also connects them with their homeland. So Joel took a large packet of "Basler Lächerli" back to Australia with him.

FYSA camp leaders make every effort to organise a rich and diverse programme for the young Swiss abroad with overnight stays in a wide variety of places.

SIMONE RINER (FYSA PROJECT LEADER)

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad has been organising camps for Swiss children abroad for almost 100 years. www.sjas.ch

THE HISTORY

One day, we found a message in my FYSA mailbox from Peter Meury, the grandfather of two camp participants on the Swiss Trip, thanking us for the photo CD we sent and requesting a copy for himself. He also wrote: "In the past, film strips were sometimes produced as well, and my son still has one from a camp he attended." To our question about the "film strip" we received this reply: "I'll ask my son Matthew where the video is. Of course I can send it to you if he still has it. I know that it exists because it was on my bookshelf for many years and became of interest again when his daughter Madelyn registered for the camp." Peter Meury found the video, burned it onto a DVD and sent it to us here in Switzerland from Australia.

At www.sjas.ch /MEDIA REPORTS you will find the film of the Kandersteg camp in 1986.

Young people meet up in Switzerland

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad offers a wide range of holiday and educational visits to Switzerland during the summer.

Leisure offers:

Across Switzerland	19.4. – 26.4.2014
Summer camp 1 in La Punt	12.7. – 25.7.2014
Summer camp 2 in La Punt	26.7. – 8.8.2014
Adventure Travel	29.7. – 8.8.2011
Discover Switzerland	2 weeks

Training offers:

German course in Zurich	30.6. – 11.7.2014
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French course in Fribourg	30.6. – 11.7.2014
German course in Baden	11.8. – 22.8.2014
French course in Fribourg	11.8. – 22.8.2014
Seminar on the Congress of the Swiss Abroad	11.8. – 18.8.2014
Training in Switzerland	2 weeks

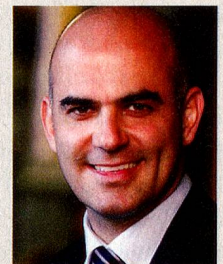
Further information on these offers can be found at www.aso.ch or www.swisscommunity.org

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

In July and August 2014, Swiss children living abroad will be able to spend two weeks having fun at our summer camps with 30 to 50 children from all over the world while, at the same time, discovering Switzerland and

its culture. There are still some places available on our holiday camps. For more detailed information and the registration form go to www.sjas.ch/Camps. We are also happy to post you our information brochure on request. This contains an overview of our offers. The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad would like to give all Swiss children abroad at least one opportunity to discover Switzerland in this way. We therefore offer reduced rates in special cases. We would be pleased to provide you with further information.

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)
Alpenstrasse 26,
3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND
Tel: +41 31 356 61 16, Fax: +41 31 356 61 01
info@sjas.ch, www.sjas.ch



Alain Berset



Otfried Jarren

92nd Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden – 15 to 17 August 2014

This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden will focus on the theme of "information technology and social media: opportunities for the Swiss abroad". Speakers will include Federal Councillor Alain Berset and Otfried Jarren, professor of journalism at the University of Zurich.

Find out more about the theme of the congress at www.aso-kongress.ch. You can also order your congress registration pack online here. Put the congress dates in your diary today. We look forward to seeing you.

Please send me the registration documents in spring 2014 for the 92nd Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden. My address is:

Surname:	first name:
Address:	
Country:	postcode/city:
Email:	

Please write clearly in block capitals. The registration documents are available in two languages: ☐ German ☐ French (please tick the language required) Return the completed form to: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Communications & Marketing, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND / Fax: +41 (0)31 356 61 01 or email us at communication@aso.ch