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“I particularly enjoy the practical projects”

Savian Scanu, a Swiss Abroad who grew up in Sardinia, talks about the challenges he has faced and his impressions while studying in Switzerland.

Savian Scanu, you are a Swiss Abroad who grew up in a village on the Italian island of Sardinia. What motivated you to study in Switzerland?

I decided to study in Switzerland due to the high quality of the education. I also wanted to learn German as I only spoke Swiss German. On top of this, the desire to see the world from an-

other perspective was another factor in moving to Zurich after completing my university entrance examination in Italy. I then discontinued my studies, worked in Switzerland as a gardener, among other things, learning the ins and outs of the working world in the process, and saved money towards further study. Finally, I registered to do a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

What are the main focus areas of this degree programme?

I have always been interested in environmental issues. The current importance of the topic, the professional relevance and the wide variety of lectures sparked my interest. The curriculum in the first year includes foundational courses such as mathematics, climatology and biology. Afterwards, you can specialise in a particular area. I deal primarily with sustainable tourism in my area of specialisation.

What do you like about your present study in particular?

I particularly enjoy the practical projects that we carry out with municipalities and tourist destinations. I am currently working on a concept for the sustainable development of tourism services in Scuol (GR). We have been discussing questions including: How can we retain the traditional Alpine landscape; and how can we provide incentives for people to use public transport?

What do you think of student life in Switzerland in general?

It's awesome. There is a wide range of free sports-related activities for students on offer in Zurich. It is also absolutely stunning down at the lake during summer.

What are your future plans?

All being well, I will complete my studies in December 2020. Afterwards, I want to work. I will probably have to complete several internships initially. They are usually low-paid, but are important to gain a foothold on the employment ladder.

What advice would you give young Swiss Abroad who are thinking of studying in Switzerland?

The most important thing is to find an apartment in good time, particularly in Zurich. You may be able to share one with other students. You should also get information about health insurance. Considering the high cost of living in Switzerland, a scholarship may be helpful. educationsuisse assisted me with my application for a scholarship from my home canton.

(RG)

educationsuisse, Education in Switzerland,
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Switzerland,
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www.educationsuisse.ch



Student Savian Scanu in the Grisons Alpine countryside close to Scuol (GR). Photo: donated

other perspective was another factor in moving to Zurich after completing my university entrance examination in Italy.

You registered to study Mechanical Engineering at ETH Zurich. What were the biggest challenges you faced initially?

My two biggest challenges were following the lessons in German and the generally high standard of teaching. I had to provide a C1-level language certificate to gain admission to ETH. After a few months, I realised that the faculty was not meeting my expecta-

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

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Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer
Fondation pour les enfants suisses à l'étranger
Fondazione per i giovani svizzeri all'estero
Fundazion per giuvens svizzers a l'ester

The “Parliament” of the Swiss Abroad will meet on 14 March 2020 in Bern

In keeping with tradition, the next meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) will be held on Saturday 14 March 2020 at the Town Hall in Berne. The meeting will be open to the public and a live feed will be available on the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) website, www.aso.ch, along with the agenda, which will be published approximately three weeks in advance.

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), representative body of the “Fifth Switzerland”, is made up of 140 delegates, of which 120 represent the community of the Swiss Abroad. The remaining 20 are individuals living in Switzerland, with a background in politics, economics, social advocacy or culture. They are all committed to representing their 760,000 fellow citizens living abroad.

The CSA meets twice per year to discuss subjects directly impacting the Swiss Abroad and to thereby protect their interests. The spring meeting will be held in March in Bern, and the autumn meeting will be held in August as part of the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. The delegates are appointed on a voluntary basis for a period of four years (2017–2021). They are elected by the communities of Swiss Abroad. During their meetings, the CSA may adopt resolutions and recommendations aimed at authorities, institutions or public opinion. (JF)



The Parliament of the “Fifth Switzerland” sits regularly in Bern. In this image: a debate during a meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad in March 2018. Photo: Marc Lettau

What challenges does our democracy face?

Annual Congress of the Swiss Abroad

Immigration, data protection, digital challenges, and exercising our political rights: how is the Swiss democratic system meeting today's challenges? Where does it need to change? How can we guarantee respect of the basic democratic rights in Switzerland, unique in the world?

Such are the questions, amongst many others, that speakers will be asked to answer or debate at our 2020 congress on the weekend of 22–23 August. Save the date now and join us in Lugano! (JF)

What is the procedure for setting up a new Swiss society?

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) aims to foster good relations among the Swiss Abroad and to strengthen their ties with Switzerland. The OSA is supported by its recognised Swiss societies abroad. However, what does a society need to do to obtain recognition from the OSA? It must meet all the following requirements:

- The purpose of the society is to foster good relations among the Swiss Abroad and to strengthen their ties to their home country.
- More than 50 per cent of the active members are Swiss citizens.
- The majority of the board of directors are Swiss citizens.
- The steering committee is headed by a Swiss citizen.
- At least seven Swiss citizens belong to the society.
- The society convenes a members' meeting at least once a year and has an executive board that is re-elected periodically.
- The society is affiliated to the umbrella organisation responsible for its country if such an organisation exists (France, Germany, Italy, UK, Spain-Portugal, Austria-Liechtenstein-Slovenia, Netherlands, Canada, Argentina).
- The society expressly undertakes to inform the OSA if any of the requirements are no longer met.

Upon obtaining recognition from the OSA, societies are accepted into the worldwide network of the Swiss Abroad societies and institutions. They automatically receive communications and newsletters from the OSA and are listed on the www.swisscommunity.org website. Societies that do not fulfil all the above-mentioned conditions may be recognised as associate societies. This allows them to also benefit from the information and services of the OSA.

Societies that are interested in obtaining recognition from the OSA can complete the application form. It is available on the OSA's website, www.aso.ch, or by following the direct link: ogy.de/recognition-by-osa. (ASO)

The OSA's Legal Service provides general legal information on Swiss law, particularly in areas which concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law or intervene in disputes between private parties.

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The Youth Service introduces a new camp

Besides the popular sport and recreational camps and the variety of the Swiss Challenge, the Youth Service is offering a new camp in 2020 for those who would like to improve their German or French.

New: language, sport and culture

This summer, the Youth Service is organising a new language, sport and culture camp in two of Switzerland's national languages – French and German. During the week, the participants will attend French or German lessons in the mornings given by specialist teachers. In the afternoons and at the weekends, they will play sport and discover Switzerland together. To round it all off, on the final weekend they will take part in the 98th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano.

Camp locations and camp date:

- Bern (BE) and Lugano (TO) 8 to 23 August 2020
- Age group for 16 to 25-year-olds

Sport and recreational camps

With young Swiss Abroad from all over the world, the participants in our sport and recreational camps experience a summer full of breathtaking excursions, hikes and sporting activities, and make new international friendships. The young people taking part enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of their homeland for two weeks. Base camp is in a comfortable lodge, from which to discover the region and Swiss culture together. These camps are for young people who enjoy sport.

Camp locations and camp dates:

- Château d'Ex (VD) 11 to 24 July 2020
- Fiesch (VS) 25 July to 7 August 2020
- Age group for 15 to 18-year-olds

Swiss Challenge

During the two-week Swiss Challenge, the participants get to know the great diversity of Switzerland, explore the largest Swiss cities and find out what it means when four languages meet in one country. The Swiss Challenge is a mix of sightseeing, travel, mountain hikes, sport and culture.

Camp location and camp date:

- Whole of Switzerland 11 to 24 July 2020
- Age group for 15 to 18-year-olds

More detailed information on the offers and on how to register is available on our website:

www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/youth-offers

Youth Service contact details:

Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA),
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Switzerland,
Telephone +41 31 356 61 24, Fax +41 31 356 61 01,
Email: youth@aso.ch.

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

Swiss children living abroad will have an opportunity to get to know Switzerland and its culture – and have a great time – at two-week summer camps between the end of June and the end of August 2020.

Run by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA), these camps offer the chance to explore lakes, mountains, rivers and countryside on foot, and visit various sights and cities. Games, sports and workshops will also feature strongly among the daily activities.

Children at the camps will learn a lot about their home country – from traditional songs and cooking recipes, to typical Swiss games and sports. The demand for our Schweizer Reise (Swiss trip) offer has grown every year, so we are pleased to inform you that we will offer two such trips per year in the future.

The camps all have one thing in common in that children of similar age from different countries meet and interact with each other across the linguistic, cultural and geographical divide. They are a chance to make new friends and share unforgettable memories.

There are still some free places available in our holiday camps. For a full schedule and further details as well as the relevant application form, visit www.sjas.ch/en/camps. Alternatively, we can send you a comprehensive overview of our camps by post on request.

The FYSA wants to enable all Swiss children living abroad to visit and experience Switzerland for themselves at least once. We therefore offer price reductions whenever these are justified. Simply fill in the "Application form for reduction of the camp fees". We will also be happy to help if you require any further information. (LR)

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