

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 49 (2022)  
**Heft:** 6

**Rubrik:** Swiss Community

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# What are the benefits of getting married as opposed to entering into a civil partnership?

**Question:** I am a Swiss Abroad and have been living in a civil partnership with my Canadian partner for a number of years. What would be the benefits of getting married?

**Answer:** The difference between a civil partnership and a marriage is not only symbolic. The “Marriage for all” regime opens up new opportunities for same-sex couples. If you are married, you have the right to adopt children together. You also have access to sperm donations in Switzerland. Provided access to reproductive medicine complies with the Swiss Reproductive Medicine Act, both spouses will be legally recognised as parents. However, in the case of private sperm donations, or if you and your partner access a sperm bank in your country of residence, only the person giving birth will be legally recognised as a parent in Switzerland. And with regard to adoptions and sperm donations, the question of whether a parent-child relationship is recognised in your country of residence depends on the relevant legislation in that country.

If you are insured under the Swiss old-age and survivors’ insurance (OASI) scheme, you have better legal protection as a married couple. If the eligibility criteria for an OASI survivor’s pension are fulfilled, a widowed spouse receives a surviving spouse pension, regardless of whether they have children – provided that (a) they are at least 45 years old when they became widowed and (b) have already been married for five years.

Unless otherwise agreed, the concept of joint ownership of property continues to apply to married couples, as opposed to the separation of property in civil partnerships. Furthermore, getting married makes it easier for your partner to obtain Swiss citizenship.

Couples can convert their civil partnerships into marriage by means of a simple document called a conversion declaration, which they can hand in at their local Swiss representation. Alternatively, couples can apply to initiate a preparatory procedure before marriage. This will then enable them to have their names changed at the time of marriage. Couples converting their civil



“Marriage for all” not only has symbolic implications. In many regards, marriage puts couples in a better position compared to a civil partnership. Photo: Keystone

partnership into a marriage can still change their names retroactively, but this will cost extra.

A word of caution: there is a gap in the law in the case of marriages involving the preparatory procedure, namely it is not clear whether a civil partnership is considered as time during which the couple are married. This, for example, could affect eligibility for simplified naturalisation – your partner must be married to you for at least six years – or your entitlement to a surviving spouse pension. However, with regard to the process of converting a civil partnership into marriage, the law clearly states that the duration of your civil partnership is taken into account. If you want to play safe, filling in a conversion declaration is therefore the best option.

Smilla Schär,  
OSA Legal Service,  
info@swisscommunity.org

## Summer holiday 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 with around 40 other children from around the world – at a series of two-week summer holiday camps from the end of June to the end of August 2023. Registration for these camps begins on 11 January 2023. The camp dates are:

**Saturday 24 June – Friday 8 July 2023**

**Saturday 8 July – Friday 21 July 2023**

**Saturday 22 July – Friday 4 August 2023**

**Saturday 5 August – Friday 18 August 2022**

Further details on the various offers (locations, age groups, etc.) will be available online from mid-December 2022 at [www.sjas.ch](http://www.sjas.ch). The registration deadline is 15 March 2023.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) wants to give all Swiss children living abroad the chance to get to know Switzerland in this way at least once. We therefore offer price reductions whenever these are justified. The relevant fee reduction application form is available for completion when you sign up to a camp. For further details, please do not hesitate to contact the FYSA. (LR)



Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer  
Fondation pour les enfants suisses à l'étranger  
The foundation for young swiss abroad  
Fondazione per i giovani svizzeri all'estero

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# The Swiss education system in brief

The Swiss education system is characterised by renowned universities and solid basic vocational training.

Switzerland offers an extremely wide range of education courses and training opportunities, and a variety of pathways can be followed. Anyone holding the qualifications required can generally embark on the course of their choice. Sufficient language skills in the language of instruction are also important.

A special feature is the vocational apprenticeship combining theory and practice. This basic vocational training takes place in a training company, i.e. in a private company or in a public authority, with one to two days of school per week. There are also some full-time schools. Two-thirds of all young people choose an apprenticeship in one of the around 245 professions after completing compulsory

schooling. During or after the apprenticeship, there is also the possibility of completing a vocational baccalaureate. With the vocational baccalaureate diploma, you can study at a university of applied sciences.

The universities in Switzerland offer a comprehensive, diverse, and excellent study programme. There are ten public universities (Geneva, Lausanne, Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Berne, Basel, Lucerne, Zurich, St. Gallen and Svizzera Italiana) and two federal institutes of technology (ETH Zurich und EPF Lausanne). Numerous public universities of applied sciences offer practice-oriented university studies. The universities of teacher education train young people to become qualified teachers at the various school levels.

We recommend that you inform yourself early on about the university admission requirements, the required language skills, as well as the options for applying for a vocational apprenticeship. RUTH VON GUNTEN

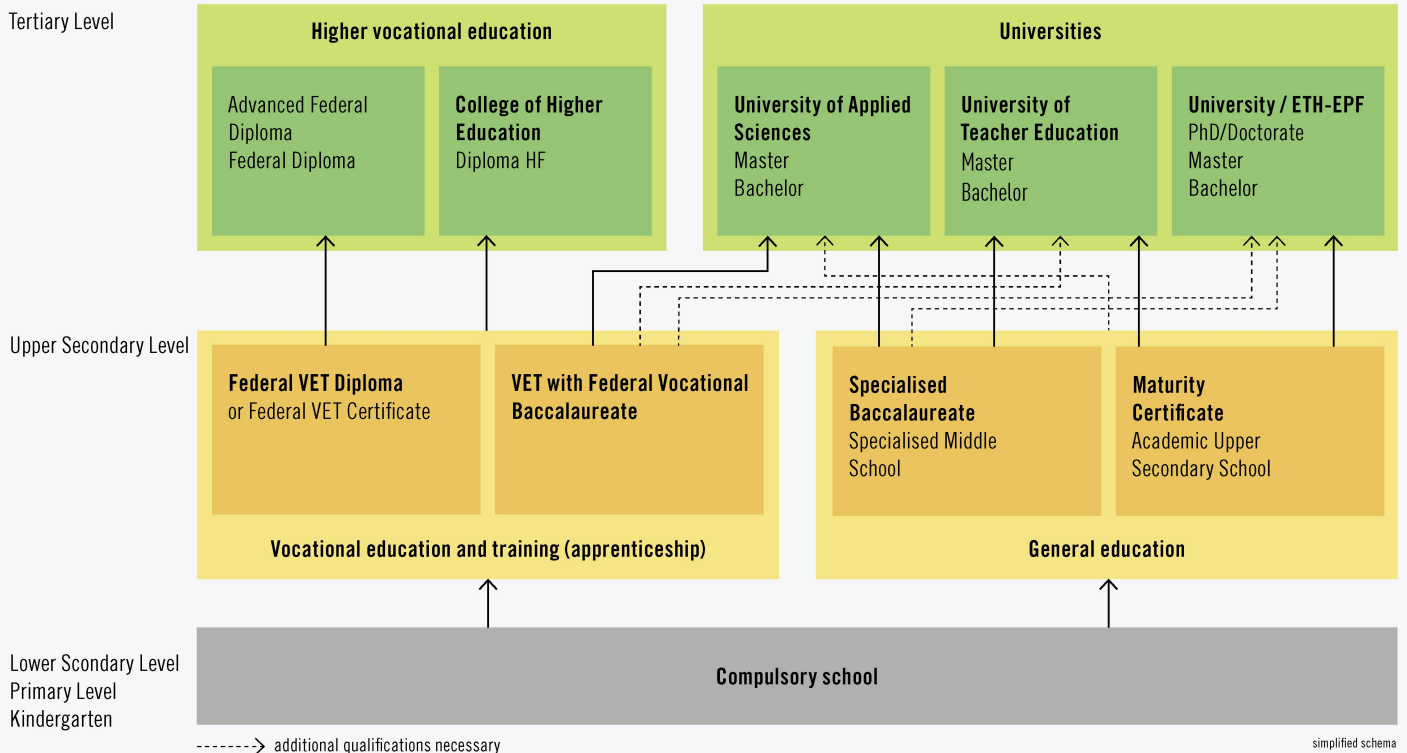
Educatiosuisse offers counselling to all young Swiss Abroad on all matters related to education in Switzerland.



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## The Swiss education system



The Swiss education system is characterised by a high degree of flexibility. There are many ways to begin or to change to a different education programme. Applicants with the required qualifications can generally attend their chosen course.

## Opportunities for Swiss Abroad aged 15 and over for 2023



The view's even better from up here. Photo: supplied

With the wonderful memories of this year's summer camp still fresh in our minds, we at the Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) are now preparing the events for the coming year. This much is already clear: we are delighted to announce that holiday camps will once again be held in Switzerland, together with the Online Congress, in collaboration with the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (YPSA).

### Holiday camps for 2023

A wealth of experiences, adventures and fun, combined with the opportunity to meet people your own age from different continents, are guaranteed. "It was an amazing experience; I would have loved to stay longer" and "I made plenty of friends and really appreciated the opportunity to discover Switzerland" - these are only some of the messages we have received from participants. We are looking forward to seeing many new and familiar faces over the coming year.

You can find all information about our events online: [revue.link/camps23](https://revue.link/camps23). Registration is open online from 14.00 Swiss time

on 10 January 2023 until 15 March 2023. For any further information, please contact the Youth Service.

URSULA KORMANN



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### Third Online Youth Congress: 24 June 2023

Committed and interested Swiss young people from around the world have the opportunity to gain a fascinating insight into interesting topics as well as to engage in discussions at the third Online Congress. For this event, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) is collaborating with the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (YPSA). Attendance is free of charge. Further information and the topics for this year's event will follow shortly. (UK)

## Voluntary donations to help support the printed version of "Swiss Review"

This edition of "Swiss Review" marks our continuing commitment to the printed version: we had plenty to tell you, so – in our estimation – we took all the material and turned it into a presentable edition worth reading. We are also honouring the sustained high interest that our readers have been showing in having a printed "Swiss Review". For many Swiss Abroad, this magazine has become a treasured, tangible link to Switzerland. Around 325,000 readers currently subscribe to the paper version of "Swiss Review".

This does not mean that all is well with the "Review", though – far from it. The war in Ukraine is driving up paper prices and energy costs even further. Swiss printing houses have recently had to raise their prices massively. Since the "Swiss Review" has no additional financial resources, this is becoming a serious burden.

In view of this, please note again that you can pay a voluntary subscription to help fund the print edition of "Swiss Review". Your kind support will allow us to continue publishing on paper for the foreseeable future. For a voluntary subscription, please make your payment to the following account (note that cheques cannot be cashed):

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## Discussion

Tensions between the EU and Switzerland are harming Swiss research and prompting fears of isolation. This topic, discussed in the previous issue, met with keen interest from many of our readers, who commented enthusiastically on Switzerland's relations with the EU. This messy situation continues to this day. Livia Leu, Switzerland's most senior diplomat, went on record only recently as saying that there were no signs of a new start to negotiations with the EU in the foreseeable future. The European Commission is not yet ready to negotiate, in Leu's view.



### Swiss scientists fear isolation

#### JEAN-LUC TISSOT, BRAUNSCHWEIG, GERMANY

The article leaves open how Switzerland lost its status of associate with the EU. It was the Swiss people themselves who decided this, by popular vote. Now, they are reaping what they sowed! I deeply regret the anti-European sentiment in Switzerland. I sympathise with the EU, which has consistently leaned away from cherry-picking in its policies, whether with Switzerland or with other countries.

#### PHILIPPE CASSARD, NORMANDY, FRANCE

What this excellent article shows comes as no surprise to me: the European Union is behaving like an imperialist organisation.

#### ANNE HEIDI BATCHELOR-SCHWEIZER, FRANCE

This is a typical example of another own goal for Switzerland. Accepting certain EU rules doesn't mean joining the EU. Sure, there are problems in every country. Having spent several years living in Spain, and having lived in France since 2016, I've seen this myself. But despite everything, I far prefer living in the EU to living in Switzerland, and I find that sad. It's a shame for Switzerland to not seize at least a few opportunities for approval.

#### MICHEL TIËCHE, FRANCE

Only research at European level will provide the possibility of effectively surviving against powers such as China, the United States and

others boasting resources against which even a rich Switzerland will not be able to contend. If Switzerland has been able to fare well in the world until now, it is certainly not through withdrawal, but thanks to its openness to the world, its acceptance of people on its soil who have come to enrich the land with their skills, and its ability to exchange. Seeking to have everything without giving anything in return is a surefire way to end up losing everything, sooner or later. CERN is a wonderful example of shared success, co-built on a European scale. Switzerland would never have managed this alone.

#### URS DIETSCHI, SALT SPRING ISLAND, BC, CANADA

This is the result of Switzerland always trying to be different and better than the rest of the European countries. It is time to become a member of the EU team.

#### RUBI TEL ARI, ISRAEL

Switzerland needs to be independent in its relations with other countries, especially with Europe. The world is about to change dramatically and Switzerland has to have the ability to coordinate its national interests, especially with regard to technology research. Europe and the USA are weakening and some other countries will prevail - India, Brazil and Israel are all potential partners for future research and development.

### Why are new oil-fuelled heating systems being installed again?

#### FLOW BOHL, LONDON

Great article. Shame Switzerland came out against the CO<sup>2</sup> Law in 2021. That means Switzerland will continue to depend on expensive fossil fuels from totalitarian regimes.

#### RENATO BESOMI, SPAIN

I can understand that a lot of homeowners have to watch their spending. Heat pumps are expensive and they're not subsidised enough by the state. The price of electricity has its part to play too. Everything is supposed to be electric, but there's apparently not enough electricity to go round and, above all, it costs too much.

#### BRUNO BRÜCKMANN, GERMANY

We should finally break away from this "lawnmower approach" of treating all property in the same way and actually start optimising the south-facing roofs of new houses and adapting building regulations accordingly.

#### ÖNDER ERDOGAN, ÇORUM, TURKEY

The less reliant we are on the outside world, the better. The worst example of this is the Russia/Ukraine war that's currently going on. Therefore, the best way forward is to make plans for the future without wasting any time.

### The Helvetic unity of the "Fifth Switzerland"

#### MARC MEISTER, SPAIN

An interesting study, which introduces you to the Swiss Abroad over 55. I have been living in Spain for over 36 years, and have therefore spent over half my life in another country. That said, I still feel very attached to Switzerland. Something that makes me particularly happy is that my children, who have never lived in Switzerland, are the biggest Switzerland fans you could imagine. They even know the line-up of the Swiss national football team off by heart...

Visit the online edition of "Swiss Review" at [www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch). Read the latest comments on our articles and join the conversation yourself. You can also share your opinions on the community discussion forum of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA).

Link to the SwissCommunity discussion forum:  
[members.swisscommunity.org/forum](http://members.swisscommunity.org/forum)

