

OSA news

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85th Congress of the Swiss Abroad, Geneva, 17–19 August 2007

**United and committed:
the Swiss on humanitarian
missions**

The 85th Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be devoted entirely to Switzerland's active involvement in humanitarian aid worldwide. The event will provide a behind-the-scenes look at the humanitarian work that goes on in Geneva.

The programme of the 2007 congress, which will focus on humanitarian Switzerland, is currently being finalised. In addition to Swiss Federal President Micheline Calmy-Rey and ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger, we will have the great honour of welcoming Tim Aline Rebeaud to the plenary session on Saturday 18 August. Ms Rebeaud is the founder of the Maison Chance and Centre Envol homes for orphans and disabled children in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City.

There will also be a panel debate in which Walter Fust,



Geneva, the city hosting the Congress of the Swiss Abroad

the director-general of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Peter Brey, the general secretary of Terre des Hommes Switzerland; and Isabelle Segui-Bitz, the president of Médecins Sans Frontières, will discuss the topic "Humanitarian aid: Partner or competitor?" A representative of the United Nations will also take

part in the debate, which will analyse the relationships between the different organisations involved in providing humanitarian aid. The discussion will be chaired by Swiss Solidarity Head of Communication Roland Jeanneret. Issues under debate will include how aid organisations work together to provide assistance efficiently, and whether they complement one another or compete like companies in the free market.

After visits to the offices of the UN and the ICRC, planned for Saturday afternoon, participants will be invited to attend discussion groups on a variety of topics related to humanitarian aid and involving the relevant organisations. This will be followed by an evening of entertainment aboard the "Lausanne" on Lake Geneva. Finally, on Sunday, the charming side of Geneva will be presented to the guests from the Fifth Switzerland, with visits to landmarks like the Cité Calvin and the Chateau de

Penthe, which houses the Museum of the Swiss Abroad.

Further information on the Congress: www.aso.ch

Super deals for young Swiss abroad

This year, as every year, there's plenty to discover in Switzerland. The youth offers of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA) are as attractive as always, and yet often surprisingly new. So how about a trip to Switzerland? It would be a shame to miss the opportunity.

Aside from its traditional youth offers, the OSA's programme of events for 2007 includes two attractive new projects for young Swiss abroad. In August, there will be a *seminar* in Geneva entitled "United and committed: the Swiss on humanitarian missions". The seminar will familiarise young people with Switzerland's humanitarian

85TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD, 17–19 AUGUST 2007 IN GENEVA

Please send me documentation on the 85th Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

Surname: _____

First name: _____

No./street: _____

Town/city/postcode: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

(Please complete in block capitals) Please return completed coupons, to reach us no later than 30 May 2007, to Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Congress, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, e-mail: congress@aso.ch. For organisational reasons, the deadline for registration for the Congress of the Swiss Abroad is the end of June. The registration form is included with the Congress documentation which you can order using the above coupon. You can also order the Congress documentation by e-mailing congress@aso.ch. Please remember to include your full postal address.



tradition, and they will be able to visit the offices of the ICRC, UN and NGOs. Together with Terre des Hommes, we'll be organising a street campaign on children's rights. At the weekend, the young people will be actively involved in debating this issue and will have a chance to meet and talk to Swiss Federal President Calmy-Rey at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

In October, the OSA plans to run a workshop on the Swiss general elections. Young people will be introduced to the political system in Switzerland, analyse the election campaign and visit political parties and politicians. They will therefore gain first-hand experience of the Federal Council and Upper Chamber elections and valuable insight into direct democracy.

The exciting thing about the *summer camps* is that they bring together young people from different countries and cultures. The OSA organises activity holidays, wide-ranging sporting events, project work, excursions, workshops, parties and much else besides. As a result, your children will quickly overcome any inhibitions they might have about trying out a new language. Meeting people in similar situations is both fun and exciting. And there are plenty of opportunities to make new friends.

The dates:

Summer camp 1 in La Punt:
15.7.–27.7.2007
Summer camp 2 in La Punt:
29.7.–10.8.2007
Mobile Switzerland:
the Bernese Oberland:
1.10.–7.10.2007

OSA guide to education in Switzerland

This programme is aimed at young people who are

interested in vocational training in Switzerland or who would simply like to sit in on teaching at a Swiss university or tertiary college. We offer individual advice and explain the education and training available in Switzerland. You'll meet students who will show you their university, you'll live in a guest family and be given a travel pass with which you can explore all of Switzerland in complete freedom.

Language teaching

Swiss abroad can freshen up their German or French in *two-week language courses*, live with an open-minded guest family, experience day-to-day life in Switzerland, and enjoy an attractive programme of leisure activities that ensures the courses are both entertaining and fun to take part in.

So dig out your diary and plan your summer holiday in Switzerland. You won't regret it. Just visit our Web site, www.aso.ch, where you'll find details of all the programmes. You can also get information about the above offers by writing to the Youth Service at youth@aso.ch

OSA receives donation from Swiss abroad artist

Swiss artist zZARA, who lives and works in Spain, has produced a series of five pictures entitled "Yo 2005" especially for the meeting room at OSA headquarters. The work focuses on the presence of the Swiss around the world as well as the Berne-based organisation representing their interests back at home. The artist presented his pictures to the OSA at a private view on

17 November. More information on the artist and his work can be found at www.zzara.com

Dashing through the snow...

What do you do if you're at winter camp, there's hardly any snow outside and the cable-car ride to the pistes is a trip to green slopes? Exactly: you make your own snow.

This was the situation facing the ten camp leaders in Hasliberg Reuti during the winter camp from 27 December 2006 to 5 January 2007. With an autumn storm raging outside, they decided to play their trump card and try out a few tasty recipes in the warm house rather than sending the children out into the wind and rain. The plan of action was hatched over a plate of spaghetti, a sure-fire way to find something for everyone, and one that needs little preparation. The only risk for the organisers is that the young chefs forget to pack their culinary masterpieces in the rush to get ready at the end of the camp or decide to leave them because they won't fit into their suitcase. That's why experienced and forward-thinking camp leaders prefer running cooking workshops at which the finished products can be eaten right away, like that wintertime classic: biscuits prepared, cut out and decorated by the children

themselves. Having weighed out the ingredients, beaten the eggs and marvelled at the amount of chocolate that goes into the mix, the children took great care imaginatively constructing entire houses from their biscuits. Indeed, the children's creativity knew no bounds.

The nicest experience for the young bakers was dusting their typical Swiss chalet in icing sugar until it was submerged in deep, sweet snowdrifts.

Incidentally, Fate was kind to the camp community. It snowed heavily in the first few days of the new year, and the novice skiers and snowboarders were eventually treated to so much powder snow that they are bound to want to come back for more next year.

SIMONE RINER, FOUNDATION FOR YOUNG SWISS ABROAD

"Switzerland – Land of Chocolate"

The title and part of the text of the article printed in our December issue were largely based on the work of the author and journalist Alain J. Bougard, a French-Swiss expert on the history of chocolate, details of whose book you will find below. We understand that he is currently working on a follow-up. "CH comme CHocolat", Alain J. Bougard, Published by Slatkine, Geneva, 09/2001, hardback, 120 pages, French, with many illustrations.

ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD

- 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)

OSA, Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Phone +41 31 356 6100, Fax +41 31 356 6101, www.aso.ch