

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

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OSA advice

How and where can Swiss television and radio programmes be received abroad?

The programmes of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) are generally transmitted via satellite and most are encrypted. This is because the broadcast rights for many programmes only apply in Switzerland and not abroad. The programmes of SRF info – the repeats' channel of Swiss television – are broadcast unencrypted. These are in-house productions which are not subject to copyright restrictions. Reception via satellite is also confined to Europe and some regions of North Africa. SRF programmes cannot be received via satellite anywhere in the Americas, in central and southern Africa, Australia, Oceania or Asia.

To receive the programmes via satellite, in addition to a conventional TV set, you need a satellite dish, a satellite receiver and a Sat Access card. This card is required to decode the programmes. Sat Access cards can only be issued to Swiss households abroad and to persons residing in Switzerland. Official confirmation, for example from a consulate, that a person is a Swiss citizen abroad is not required but this must be confirmed by signature when ordering the card.

The application for a Sat Access card can be sent by email or by post to the SRG customer service department. The order form can be found at www.broadcast.ch. Alternatively, you can register by telephone on the SRG SSR helpline and receive the form for signing by post.

The card costs 180 Swiss francs for the first year and 120 Swiss francs for every year after that. Payment can be made with a credit card or via a bank account in Switzerland.

BARBARA ENGEL

Order form for Sat Access card at: www.broadcast.ch. All technical details can also be found on this website.
Postal address: SRG SSR, sat access, Postfach 2015, 8052 Zurich, SWITZERLAND
Helpline: + 41 0848 00 44 22 00
helpdesk@broadcast.ch

Educational and training advice now with educationsuisse

The Association promoting Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS) and education-suisse, which represents the interests of Swiss schools abroad, have decided to work more closely together in future and to merge as of 1 January 2014.

Fifty years after its founding, AJAS carried out a review and came to the conclusion that exploiting synergies with educationsuisse would be beneficial to both organisations.

For educationsuisse – an association that primarily has experience abroad – the co-operation with AJAS presents important networking opportunities with the education system in Switzerland. AJAS' vast experience in providing advice on education, courses and grants to young Swiss abroad who wish to continue their education in Switzerland will in future also be directly available to pupils at Swiss schools abroad.

Information is available from:

Fiona Scheidegger, Director of AJAS
ajas@aso.ch, from 01.01.2014 fiona.scheidegger@educationsuisse.ch
Irène Spicher, Director of educationsuisse irene.
spicher@educationsuisse.ch

Summer camps for 8 to 14 year olds

Registration process for summer camps will begin in January 2014

The exact details, such as location, date and age groups, etc., for the various summer camps run by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) will be published in "Swiss Review" from February 2014 and at www.sjas.ch. You will also find the registration forms there. Anyone requiring an overview of the offers in paper form can order the brochure from the office from January 2014.
Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA),
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, Switzerland
Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01
Email: sjas@aso.ch, www.sjas.ch

Offers of ASO Youth Service

OSA offers young Swiss abroad a wide range of opportunities for visiting Switzerland

There are still places available in the following camps:

■ Winter sports week for adults in Davos: 29 March to 5 April 2014

A skiing and snowboarding camp for adults aged 18 and over in the famous winter sports resort of Davos has everything that winter sports enthusiasts could ever desire. The OSA team will be on hand to provide tuition on the slopes, to act as guides in the vast ski area and to organise entertainment.

■ Swiss excursion "Across Switzerland": 19 to 26 April 2014

On this journey we make a stop wherever there is something of interest to see: The Rhine Falls, Lake Lucerne, the irrigation channels in the canton of Valais and the Aare river are examples. Those taking part will discover many cities and regions as well as Switzerland's transport network.

Educational offers:

Our offers enable holidays to be combined with learning. Young people who wish to know more about Switzerland's educational institutions receive individual advice on educational opportunities. Students can drop in at Swiss universities. Friendly host families look forward to welcoming visitors from abroad.

Offers for young people at www.swisscommunity.org

SwissCommunity.org is the platform for Swiss abroad run by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. All offers for young people can be found on SwissCommunity. On the website, young people report on their experiences, post photos and videos and can exchange information with each other.

Information on the offers for young people can also still be found at www.aso.ch or obtained from:
Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Tel.: +41 31 356 61 00
youth@aso.ch



Farewell to Rudolf Wyder

AFTER 28 YEARS AT THE HELM OF THE ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD, RUDOLF WYDER WILL STEP DOWN FROM HIS POSITION AT THE END OF THE YEAR AND OFFICIALLY ENTER RETIREMENT.

GEORG STUCKY, HONORARY PRESIDENT OF OSA, TAKES A LOOK BACK AT THESE EVENTFUL YEARS.

IT WAS 1991, THE YEAR BEFORE THE EEA REFERENDUM. The issue was all everyone was talking about. There were even groans about the scores of readers' letters in the editorial departments of small local newspapers. And, of course, the meeting of the Executive Board of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and the Council of the Swiss Abroad by Lake Geneva also focused on the arguments for and against accession to the European Economic Area.

It was the first time I had attended an OSA congress, and I attentively observed how masterfully Rudolf Wyder navigated his way through the storm. It was not so much the EEA but a minor organisational matter that provoked controversy at the time. Outraged participants swarmed around, gesticulating and arguing with one another. And right in the middle stood our Director, calm and composed, with a facial expression that I saw many times again later and which I called his "biting the bullet" expression. Ruedi Wyder called for a break, got reorganised, spoke with those on the left and right and finally restored peace to the proceedings. I was not aware at the time of what had long been obvious to others – an extremely gifted diplomat was at work. Later, as President, I would often benefit from this strength possessed by "my right-hand man".

A MEMORY FOR FINE DETAIL

Diplomats are maligned for being long-winded and obsessed with protocol when dealing with third parties. In this respect, Ruedi is no diplomat although he is fully versed in the rules of etiquette, perhaps due to his hotel background in Diemtigtal. Dealing with people in this remote alpine valley, Ruedi presumably learned from a young age to adopt a direct and honest approach. In discussions with close friends and colleagues, he unceremoniously gets to the heart of the matter. But he can also be shrewd and

asks astute questions to extract important information from someone he is speaking to. Ruedi has a good head for names and facts. I have often been astonished at how far back he is able to recall the details of negotiations or solutions found and the names of those involved. He is also extremely accomplished, very much the diplomat in this respect too, at expressing himself precisely and elegantly and is well versed in the art of presenting convincing arguments. His contributions and reports make pleasant reading, and his proposals are usually approved.



Ruedi Wyder the diplomat is also a realist. When he took up the reins in 1985 in Alpenstrasse, there were around 400,000 Swiss residing abroad – today, there are over 715,000. It is not just the constant rise in the number of Swiss abroad that presents a major challenge for OSA, so too do the changes in the reasons for emigration. The notion of the Swiss emigrant setting off for the USA by

ship, leaving his homeland behind forever, is long gone. In the modern day, emigrants leave Switzerland for educational reasons, for fixed-term secondments at their employers' subsidiaries or for a less expensive life in the sun in old age. This changes the relationships between the Swiss residing abroad. Interest in existing institutions and Swiss clubs is declining, contact with Swiss who have long lived in a foreign country is only sought occasionally – mainly just to take advantage of their experience and network.

Ruedi Wyder recognised this development at an early stage and as Director constantly raised the question of whether the 750 or so Swiss clubs were sufficient as the basis for relations. He urged the Executive Board to consider new strategies, and the expansion of services was one of his main preoccupations. He also pushed for the election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad via the Internet. Ruedi will not experience this innovation as OSA Director but that does not diminish his achievements.

RIGHT TO VOTE CHANGES RELATIONS

The introduction of the right to vote by post in 1992 changed relations between the Swiss abroad and Switzerland in two ways. On the one hand, the Swiss abroad were able to co-determine Swiss issues, which strengthened their relationship with their homeland, and, on the other, Switzerland became more aware of the Swiss abroad. This is especially true of the political parties, who suddenly had new potential voters and increasingly focused attention on them. After all, 150,000 voters – roughly the number registered on the electoral rolls – equates to a medium-sized canton, such as Fribourg or Solothurn.

In 1994, I set the objective of 100,000 voters registered on the electoral rolls. Ruedi Wyder told me back then that I was a dreamer divorced from reality as federal government was estimating just 25,000. Ruedi smiles today when I remind him of that. The fact that we actually exceeded my target – thanks of course to the tremendous efforts of OSA – is of great satisfaction to us all.

The Director of OSA has had to perform new tasks and rise to new challenges in view of the electorate abroad. He has taken this on courageously and proactively and has achieved remarkable success. His persuasive efforts in the Federal Palace and the good relationships he has maintained with members of parliament and staff at the federal administration also go a long way towards explaining why the Swiss schools abroad have not been financially starved, why “Swiss Review” continues to receive federal government funding and why the Swiss Abroad Act is extremely likely to soon become a reality.

MAN OF THE PEOPLE

Of course, there have been and continue to be disappointments. When, for example, federal government announces

the closure of another consulate, I see the “biting the bullet” expression on Ruedi’s face. The arguments, contrary to the facts, which resulted in the restriction of voluntary old-age and survivors’ insurance, hit him particularly hard. He doggedly opposed this and foresaw the negative consequences. These were clearly illustrated, for example, by the crisis in Argentina ten years ago. Many of the 14,000 Swiss living there were badly affected. Ruedi Wyder travelled to Argentina and organised effective support. He also helped man the emergency hotline in 2004 when the campaign to assist the tsunami victims in East Asia got underway over the Christmas period.

In his position as OSA Director, Ruedi Wyder is also the head of a “household full of women”. Men are very underrepresented on the OSA team. Managing such a team is no easy task. However, the boss involves his staff in the processes, sets them objectives, purposefully assigns them responsibility and is capable of acting very decisively when neces-

sary. When the Executive Board once criticised him, saying that staff turnover was too high, he firstly showed – with his usual composure – his “biting the bullet” expression. He then pointed out, backed up of course by figures, that there was a “very productive” working environment at Alpenstrasse 26. On countless occasions during Ruedi’s “reign” there were celebrations because one of his staff had given birth.

And now two women from his team will succeed him – Sarah Mastantuoni and Ariane Rustichelli. They are assuming a wonderful legacy but also a challenging task in many ways.

Dr Rudolf Wyder would have received a medal abroad. In Switzerland, the gratitude of the republic in spirit must suffice. We are certainly most grateful to him, and his former president, who would not have achieved half the level of efficiency without him, wished to express that here in writing.



Rudolf Wyder at his last Congress of the Swiss Abroad as OSA Director in Davos in 2013