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E-Voting is the way to uphold the voting right of the “Fifth Switzerland”

Many Swiss citizens living abroad are only able to participate in federal elections and votes with the help of e-voting. For this reason, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, in its petition submitted on 30 November 2018, demands that everyone in the “Fifth Switzerland” should be able to vote electronically by 2021.

The petition was well received around the globe: OSA was able to submit 11,492 signatures collected online from 150 countries to the Federal Chancellery on 30 November. This figure corresponds to almost seven percent of the 172,000 Swiss Abroad included in an electoral register (as of March 2018) and underlines the importance of the issue for the “Fifth Switzerland”. The core demand of the broadly supported petition addressed to Parliament and the

Federal Council is that in future – namely by 2021 – all Swiss voters living abroad should be able to vote electronically. For many people, e-voting is often the only voting method that allows them to take part in votes and elections within the voting period. This is because documents sent by post often arrive too late.

Through the petition, OSA is also opposing the growing criticism of e-voting. The Canton of Geneva has only just decided to abandon its

The OSA Executive Board and directors in front of the Federal Palace in Berne on the day the petition was submitted, holding a huge USB stick representing the importance of e-voting.

Photo: Adrian Moser

e-voting system by February 2020 at the latest (see page 31). From OSA’s point of view, this is regrettable because the security of the system was never in question. The decision taken in Geneva was solely based on financial considerations. It is therefore also regrettable that it was not possible to find a solution with the Federal Chancellery and other cantons. OSA believes that it is important that the federal government and the cantons also commit themselves to technological development in order to guarantee the security of the system – especially its individual and universal verifiability. (ASO)



Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

Alpenstrasse 26
CH-3006 Berne
Tel. +41 31 356 61 00
Fax +41 31 356 61 01
info@aso.ch
www.aso.ch
www.revue.ch
www.swisscommunity.org

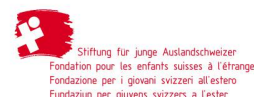


Our partners:

educationsuisse
Tel. +41 31 356 61 04
Fax +41 31 356 61 01
info@educationsuisse.ch
www.educationsuisse.ch



Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad
Tel. +41 31 356 61 16
Fax +41 31 356 61 01
info@sjas.ch
www.sjas.ch



Leslie's dream job in Switzerland

educationsuisse gives advice on all matters related to education in Switzerland. It is also involved in the placement of language assistants, as shown in the case of Leslie Schmid.

In Swiss upper secondary schools and vocational education and training schools, native speakers enrich language lessons and exemplify cultural aspects of their country of origin. These language assistants, usually young students from abroad, are placed by the national agency Movetia in collaboration with educationsuisse. Leslie Schmid, a Swiss Abroad from Canada, is one of them. She has been working since September 2018 as a language assistant at the Kantonsschule Zug upper secondary school and describes her experiences in an interview:

Leslie Schmid, what made you apply for the programme?

As a small child I already knew that I wanted to be a teacher someday. In Ottawa I studied German language and literature and got a teaching diploma for foreign languages. Since a large part of my relatives live in Switzerland, I decided to apply here for the position of English language assistant. Movetia helped me find my dream job – I love the work!

Were you able to settle in quickly at school and in Switzerland?

Yes, I settled in quickly at school and also get along well in

everyday life in Switzerland. The teachers and students have accepted me very well. I feel at home here. It certainly helped that my parents and brothers in Canada always spoke Swiss German.

Are there any specific differences between Canada and Switzerland?

There are differences, such as in the school system. What I particularly noticed is that the Swiss engage in less small talk than we do in Canada. It also seems more difficult for me to find friends outside of my working environment. Life here is more expensive; the medical insurance costs were a huge shock for me. In Canada health care is free! What also astonishes me every day is how many people here smoke.

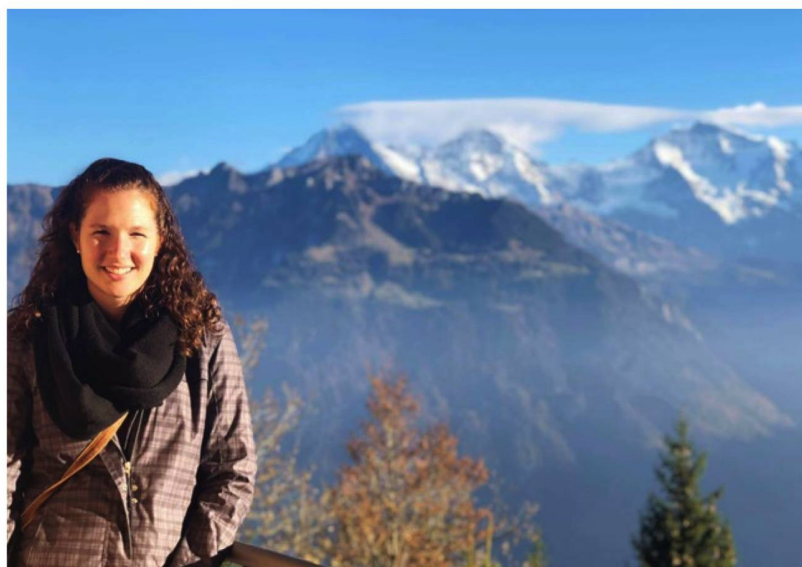
Is it difficult living so far away from your family in Canada?

Sometimes yes and sometimes no. I used to miss all my Swiss relatives. Now I miss my parents and brothers, who stayed behind in Canada. I grew up on a dairy farm, so whenever I pass by a farm here, I'm really homesick. Thanks to the new technologies though, I can give my family a short call at any time.

Applications for language assistants for the school year 2019/20 are being accepted until the end of March 2019.

For detailed information about the Language Assistance programme, kindly contact edith.funicello@movetia.ch or info@educationsuisse.ch, educationsuisse, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Schweiz, Telefon +41 (0)31 356 61 04, info@educationsuisse.ch, www.educationsuisse.ch.

Leslie Schmid uses her language skills to support teachers at the Kantonsschule Zug.



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Editor-in-Chief: Stéphane Herzog (SH);
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responsible for "news.admin.ch",
Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA,
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EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Sandra Krebs
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OSA Youth Service

Sport and Adventure Camps

With other young Swiss Abroad from around the world participants in this camp experience a summer full of breath-taking excursions, hikes and sporting activities, while making many new friends from around the globe. Over a two-week period, youngsters enjoy a fun-filled atmosphere in their Swiss homeland. A comfortable camp house serves as the base camp, and together we explore the region and Swiss culture. This camp is geared towards young people who would like to engage in sporting activities.

Camp locations and dates: Schwende (AI) 13 to 26 July 2019
Sainte-Croix (VD) 27 July to 9 August 2019

Swiss Challenge

Over two weeks, participants become acquainted with Switzerland's diversity, explore the biggest Swiss cities together and experience what it means when four languages meet in one country. The Swiss Challenge is a mix of sightseeing, travelling, mountain hiking, sport and culture.

Camp location and dates: throughout Switzerland 13 to 26 July 2019

Outdoor Camp

The romance of a campfire, sleeping under the stars and a journey through the Swiss mountain landscape. In the Outdoor Camp, young Swiss Abroad experience an adventure in the magnificent Swiss mountains and learn to live in harmony with nature.

Camp dates: 27 July to 9 August 2019

Politics Camp

In this sporty camp, the group explores the alpine and political landscape of Switzerland and discusses together the history and major issues of Swiss politics. There are workshops, meetings with politicians, hikes, sightseeing, and overnight stays in hostels and on farms. The final weekend sees the group head motivated and inspired to the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Montreux.

Camp dates: 3 to 18 August 2019

Subsidy

The Youth Service has funds available to support participants with limited financial means: www.swisscommunity.org/de/jugend/beitragsreduktion

Contact

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad OSA, Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Switzerland, Telephone +41 (0)356 61 24, Fax +41 (0)356 61 01, Email: youth@aso.ch
Details about the offers and the registration form can be found on our website: www.swisscommunity.org/de/jugend/jugendangebote

THE SWISS ABROAD ON INSTAGRAM



“It’s hard to listen to a Swiss complain”

Professional mountain biker Ariane Lüthi has lived in South Africa for eight years. As a woman, the 35-year-old says she has had to fight harder there than in Switzerland. She thinks that Swiss who have never travelled don’t appreciate how much Switzerland has achieved when it comes to societal issues.

My job: I became a professional mountain biker through my ex-husband. I’ve been lucky to celebrate some good successes during my career. I will probably never be rich in terms of money, but I love my job. It has enriched my life with beautiful, intense memories which have made me a happier person at the end of the day.

My South Africa: Being a mountain biker, the dry and warm weather is a great advantage to clock up the miles without catching a cold. But the biggest difference to Switzerland is probably South Africa’s cultural diversity, which is much greater than at home. There is a reason why South Africa is known as the rainbow nation.

My Switzerland: The Swiss are extremely well off. As poverty is pretty rare in Switzerland, people don’t really value what they have. Once you have seen how people can be happy with very little, it’s hard to listen to a Swiss complain. Looking at how wealthy Switzerland is, I think we should do more to alleviate the great suffering in the world.

My heart: When I left Switzerland and got married soon afterwards, I thought I’d probably stay in South Africa. Now that I’m divorced, I’m contemplating Swiss residency again. I miss my Swiss friends, my family, chatting away in Swiss German and the beautiful Alps, which I miss in the South.

The original interview was published on swissinfo.ch, the online service of the Swiss Broadcasting Company, which is available in ten languages. Do you live abroad too? Then tag your Instagram photos [#WeAreSwissAbroad](https://www.instagram.com/WeAreSwissAbroad).