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Communications of the Secretariat of the Swiss abroad



Commission of the Swiss Abroad

The traditional meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad took place in Berne on Saturday, 12th March 1977. It was chaired by Dr. Louis Guisan. This year, it coincided with the first federal plebiscite at which Swiss resident abroad could take part.

From the many items on the agenda, which were dealt with, we should like to mention the following:

- The number of Swiss from abroad who took part in the federal plebiscite was still rather small. The information media will therefore have to give more detailed instructions as to the method of voting.
- Situation with regard to paying old-age pensions: In this, considerable delays have occurred for the Swiss abroad. The matter will be pursued further, for ways and

means must be found to secure prompt payment of pensions.

- Sickness insurance: There is now an insurance company which will accept people of all ages without admission payment. This may satisfy Swiss returning to Switzerland from abroad.

- All admission tickets for the «Fête des Vignerons» were sold out at the end of January. It is useless to write. There will be no sale of tickets at the door before individual performances.

Lausanne 19th to 21st August 1977 55th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad



The 55th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will take place in Lausanne, capital of the Canton of Vaud and economic and tourist centre on the shores of «Lac Léman».

The main theme of the Assembly will be «The Swiss Abroad and Technical Co-operation», which will enable us to show the divers activities in this field by our compatriots abroad.

The date of the Assembly was fixed in connection with the «Fête des Vignerons», whose last performance will take place on 14th August 1977. Thus visitors will have ample time to discover the beauties of the Vaudois wine districts, before they take part in our gathering. We expect our readers in large numbers in *Lausanne* where we shall have the pleasure of receiving and welcoming you.

Please fill in the application slip in block letters as soon as possible, so that we may send you detailed information regarding the 55th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad.

Our address: Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad of the NSH, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne 16, Switzerland.

55th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad in Lausanne

Would you please let me have the programme and _____ copies of the application form.

Name and Christian name(s): _____

Address: _____

Country: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Swiss citizenship

Notice to Swiss women married to foreigners:

Result of insertion published in this periodical in December 1976, regarding the nationality of children of couples as described above:

A proper flood of letters has been sent to us, altogether over 1300. We should like to take this opportunity and thank all those who took the trouble to let us know their interest in this problem.

You will surely understand that it is impossible for us to answer all the letters in writing, especially since every case presented to us shows individual aspects.

We should like to stress that Swiss citizenship is legally not possible for children of Swiss women married to foreigners. We are far removed from being able to offer such a possibility. The study of the problem begun after receiving your letters is far from concluded, and all we can say now is that perhaps your wish will one day become a reality.

Legal position today

Acquisition and loss of Swiss citizenship are defined in the federal law of 29th September 1952. Essentially this decrees the following:

- Swiss citizenship is given at birth to a child born in wedlock, whose father is a Swiss citizen, and the illegitimate child whose mother is a Swiss citizen. (Art. 1)
- The legitimate child of a foreign father and a Swiss mother is given at birth cantonal and communal citizenship and thus Swiss citizenship, provided the child *cannot* have at birth any other nationality. (Art. 5, 1)
- Application for citizenship can be made by a foreigner only if he has lived in Switzerland for a total of *twelve years*, of which three during the five years prior to making the application. (Art. 15, 1)
- For the period of twelve years, the time which the applicant lived in Switzerland between his completed 10th and 20th year of age, counts double. (Art. 15, 2)
- The re-naturalization of a woman whose marriage has ceased to exist, whose husband has died, whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved, may include children under age, provided they live in Switzerland (Art. 20), or these children may regain Swiss citizenship more easily, if the mother has retained her Swiss citizenship on marriage (Art. 28a) provided the conditions under Art. 20 are fulfilled.
- Children of a Swiss woman (Swiss at birth) who have lived in Switzerland for at least ten years, may become naturalised very easily if they live in Switzerland and make the application before completing their 22nd year of age.

Thus one can see that *residence in Switzerland* is absolutely essential. This law dating from 1952, which is at present being revised, has already received a considerable modification inasmuch as, from 1st January 1978, children of Swiss mothers who were Swiss at birth and foreign fathers will be given Swiss nationality *provided the parents are living in Switzerland at the time of birth*. A retrospective clause has been provided for, but the children must have fulfilled the conditions at birth and must not yet have reached the age of 22 on 1st January 1978.

Our campaign has the following aim:

To try and get Swiss citizenship also for children of Swiss mothers and foreign fathers, even if they are born and resident abroad.

Shall we be successful? That is very difficult to say, above all with regard to what success will look like. The controversial point at issue will be whether the children in question will become dual nationals or whether they will have to opt for one or the other nationality on coming of age. Your letters on this problem are a great help to us, and we repeat our thanks.

The committee has started work, and you will be informed of its progress in this periodical. But we warn you, the task will be a long one, for the time it takes for a law to become operative is between eight and ten years.

Our Address: Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne 16, Switzerland

Campaign «Swiss Citizenship»
The Committee