

Council of the Swiss Abroad, Delegates for the Term Summer 2009 -2013

I am pleased to inform you that the elections for delegates are now complete.

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Meeting of March 28, 2009, Rathaus Bern

On a beautiful spring day the Council of the Swiss Abroad met in the Rathaus Bern. Our three Canadian Consular districts were represented by one delegate each: Montreal by Ron Favarger, Toronto by Vreni Tobler Ducommun, Vancouver by Rolf Brulhart.

These were some of the main topics on the agenda:

The Introduction of biometric passports. Their cost will be approximately CHF 140.00 for adults and CHF 60.00 for children. They will include a photo and two fingerprints. The Swiss electorate voted on May 17 because several groups had organized a referendum against it. Our Council had voted to recommend acceptance.

Partnership with Swiss Tourism. It will be a natural fit. Hopefully it will also motivate many Swiss Abroad to visit their homeland.

Political representation of the Swiss Abroad in the Swiss Parliament will be a topic for many years to come. None of the Swiss Abroad who ran for office in the federal Parliament were elected, as they had to run in their canton.

Seat allocation for the Council of the Swiss Abroad:

Canada will continue to have only five delegates, despite our best efforts to be allowed one more. Five seats for three districts could potentially create problems, especially since we do not have a Canada-wide umbrella organization. Until this is resolved, I will continue to coordinate the Canada-wide elections for the delegates.

The Swiss Abroad wish for more and better funded consulates. There can be no more cost cutting or they will be unable to function properly.

Unfortunately the Swiss Revue will be reduced to four printed issues a year. Many Swiss living abroad rely on it. It will be available on the internet; but the Council members sharply criticized this cost-cutting exercise by the Swiss government.

Our organization strongly supports the Swiss efforts to enable electronic voting. Many cantons are preparing for it; and the citizens of Geneva already voted to introduce it. E-voting will hopefully motivate more Swiss Abroad to join the 125,000 already registered voters.

The Swiss Abroad are the best ambassadors. Just how much they contribute to trade, understanding, and networking will be the topic of our Congress, August 7-9, in Luzern. All Swiss Abroad are invited. You will find the information under www.aso.ch.

This is my last report as your delegate. Thank you for having elected me for the last twelve years in the Swiss Club Toronto. I wish the five delegates all the best. Do not hesitate to contact them.

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