

Philippine – Switzerland Au Pair Program

This program between the Philippines and Switzerland started in 2010, and involves the placement, in Switzerland, of Filipino au pairs between 18 and 25 years of age under a cultural exchange agreement with a Swiss host family. The maximum stay of a Filipino au pair in Switzerland is one year.

Under this scheme, the au pair is placed in a cultural and language learning program in Switzerland. He/she lives with the host family at par (*au pair*) or on equal basis with the members of the family, and share in light household chores, child care and other responsibilities agreed upon in the au pair placement contract. The host family shall provide the au pair with an allowance (pocket money) and assume the cost of his/ her language lessons.

Hiring of au pairs in Switzerland are done through authorized Swiss agencies. A Filipino who is interested to be deployed to Switzerland as an au pair, may either have to find a host family and request a Swiss agency to facilitate the processing of his/her documents in Switzerland, or apply directly with the Swiss agency that will in turn match him/her with a host family seeking an au pair. The Swiss agency will handle the processing of the au pair's documents in Switzerland, including arrangements for the au pair's departure / arrival from the Philippines to Switzerland and the final return to the Philippines.

From the Philippine side, management of the deployment of Filipino au pairs has been liberalized and turned over, principally, to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, and the Philippine Bureau of Immigration. Generally, these procedures are followed for Filipino au pairs departing for Switzerland:

- The Swiss agency submits the au pair contract (signed by the host family, duly notarized and legalized) to the Philippine Embassy in Berne or the Philippine Consulate General in Geneva, for authentication. The authenticated contract is sent to the au pair candidate in the Philippines.
- In a parallel procedure, the Swiss agency processes the au pair's documents and permits in the canton (or state) where the host family resides; after which, the clearance /visa endorsement is transmitted to the Swiss Embassy in Manila for the visa issuance.
- After his/her visa has been issued, the au pair attends a country familiarization (CFS) seminar at the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), which will then issue a CFS sticker affixed on his/her passport.
- The au pair will depart from the Philippines by presenting to immigration authorities (at the airport of departure) his/her au pair contract authenticated by the Philippine Embassy /Consulate General, and passport with the CFS sticker.

The Philippine-Swiss au pair program is expected to enhance and deepen the friendship and understanding between the Filipino and Swiss people.