Abstract

This thesis sets out to describe and discuss, to analyse and criticise post-compulsory education in the francophone part of Switzerland, or Suisse romande. A further object is to see whether this part of the oldest confederation in the world might have lessons on the educational front to offer the European Community or indeed whether there might be practices in the EC whose adaptation to Suisse romande's situation and circumstances might be beneficial. The remaining object is to propose a series of models for educational structures - autonomous, synthetic and pluralist - and to determine which model fits which part of Suisse romande's post-compulsory education. After describing the rationale behind the work, the thesis moves on to set out the historical, geographical, economic and cultural background to the area in question in order to provide a context for the main body of the discussion. This reduces the need for tangential digressions to explain particular aspects of education in Suisse romande. The main text covers post-compulsory school (with a description of the end of compulsory school), vocational training, adult education and higher education with a concluding chapter devoted to drawing together some of the threads spun in the course of the thesis. The writer found that Suisse romande in particular and Switzerland in general have much experience which the EC might do well to examine. There is, for example, the creation of national certificates in vocational training which, although of equal value throughout the country, bear the clear stamp of their Canton of origin. Autonomous structures have been brought together, in the case of schools, by negotiation between Cantonal authorities (with the encouragement of Federal government).
Compulsory education in Switzerland lasts for nine to eleven years depending on the canton. In most cantons, children must begin primary school at age six. Primary school lasts eight years; however, only six of them are mandatory. Mandatory secondary education lasts for three years, but in some cantons it is four. Cantons create their own school calendar, but the school year in Switzerland typically starts mid-August or September and ends in May or June. Schools typically follow twelve-week semester systems with two semesters per school year.

School Ages in Switzerland.


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Extracurricular activities are compulsory during lunch breaks and optional after school. The Primary School Programme: Bilingual French-English education for Grades 1 to 4 based on a curriculum which prepares students for the Swiss Maturity or International Baccalaureate. Advanced proficiency in education technology and multimedia tools. The High School Programme: Bilingual education for Grade 9 and 10 students to prepare for either the Swiss Maturity Programme or the International Baccalaureate Programme.

Post-compulsory education in Suisse romande.


1. 2. Compulsory Swiss Education. Education is compulsory for all children and young people from 9 to 11 years. Children start compulsory education when they are about four to six years old until about when they turn 15 years old. The cantons also regulate this. Even though there are private schools in Switzerland, most students attend public schools in the local area. Compulsory education in Switzerland starts at primary school (Primarschule). In most cantons this stage includes a kindergarten (Kindergarten) lasting 1-2 years, to which children of ages 5-6 are taken. At the age of 11-12, students transfer to secondary schools (Sekundarschule I). By the standards of the state curriculum, secondary school graduates are required to speak three languages: two national languages to choose from and English. Education in Switzerland is associated with prestige and elitism. Thanks to public and private investments, the country is a leading center for scientific research, in which students are involved from the first years of study at the university.