



Youth exchange
in Switzerland
12-19 Dec 2021

COVID-19: What now?



SCI Switzerland
Volunteering for Peace

Hello!

We are happy to have you on board as a participant for this youth exchange. In this infosheet, you will find lots of information about the project. If you have any questions that are not answered in here, please reach out to Iuliia at iuliia.beliaeva@scich.org.

With this youth exchange, we want to bring together 30 young people from all over Europe to reflect and discuss the effects the pandemic had on themselves and on society - and together we want to imagine a world after the pandemic.

The dates of the project are 12-19 December 2021.

- Arrival Day: 12 December – ideally you arrive at the venue in the afternoon
- Departure: 19 December – feel free to plan your departure anytime during this day from the morning on

In case you get lost or in case of an emergency right before or during the project, please feel free to contact Thomas at +43 664 878 1377 (WhatsApp) / +49 15788507240 or Iuliia at +7 920 948 1755 (Whatsapp).

We're looking forward to meeting you and wish you a wonderful journey to
Switzerland!

Iuliia, Thomas and the SCI Switzerland team

This project is financed by Movetia:

movetia Austausch und Mobilität
Echanges et mobilité
Scambi e mobilità
Exchange and mobility

Travelling to Switzerland

It is time to arrange your travels! You can do this either by yourself or together with your sending organisation – let them know what you prefer. If you have any questions, Iuliia and Thomas will support you as well! What do you need to have in mind when looking for tickets?

1. Saint-George! But maybe Geneva first? Our venue will be the group house “La Nouvelle-Lune” (*in English: the new moon*) at Chemin des Vernes 9 in Saint-George. The next big city is Geneva, so you need to look for connections to Geneva first and from there to Saint-George (normally via Nyon). Your final stop should be “St-George, Maison Neuve”.
2. Dates? Our arrival day is December 12. We ask you to arrive at the venue ideally before 17:30 CET. Departure from the venue is on December 19 in the morning anytime.
3. Some more time in Switzerland? Travels can only be reimbursed, if your stay before and after the Youth Exchange lasts a maximum of 5 days each, e.g. you could arrive on December 8 and leave on December 23.
 - If you want to arrive in Switzerland before December 8 or leave later than December 23, we won't be able to reimburse your traveling costs according to the rules of our funding.
 - Please note that accommodation before and after the dates of the project will not be covered.
4. Be reasonable. Please buy only tickets at reasonable prices (e.g. no 1st class).
5. Book refundable tickets. In case something happens (e.g. you get COVID-19 or people without vaccines that are approved in Switzerland are not allowed to enter anymore), it would be important to be able to cancel your ticket. Please buy tickets for which you could get the money back in case you cannot travel.
6. If somehow possible, we encourage you to avoid flying. Of course we know it is not always possible depending on where you are travelling from, the time your job / everyday life gives you etc. However: Planes are massively responsible for

the climate crisis and we encourage you to try travelling by train and bus instead.

- Compare the emissions that your journey emits by train, car or plane: <http://www.ecopassenger.org/>

7. How much can my travels cost? According to the funding rule, each participant will receive a maximum reimbursement of the travel costs up to 400 Swiss francs. If your travel costs exceed this sum, we will only be able to reimburse the maximum amount mentioned above.

8. Let us know! Please tell us your arrival and departure time to and from Saint-George and which means of travel you will take by sending your tickets / arrival time in an email to iuliia.beliaeva@scich.org.

Some means of transport that we would suggest are:

Train



Use the website of the Swiss Railways to book your trip to the venue. You'll probably have to go both by train and bus to reach the accommodation. Luckily, you will only have to book a single ticket on the following website:

<https://www.sbb.ch/en>

Alternatively, you can look up schedules and tickets on the app "Omio" or at Rail Europe:

<https://www.raileurope-world.com/>

Bus



Flixbus (<http://www.flixbus.com>) is an international bus company with connections all over Europe. There are lots of connections to Geneva, both directly or with few transfers. There are other companies with international connections such as Eurolines (<https://eurolines.com/>).

Plane



The nearest international airport is Geneva international airport. We recommend arriving there by plane.

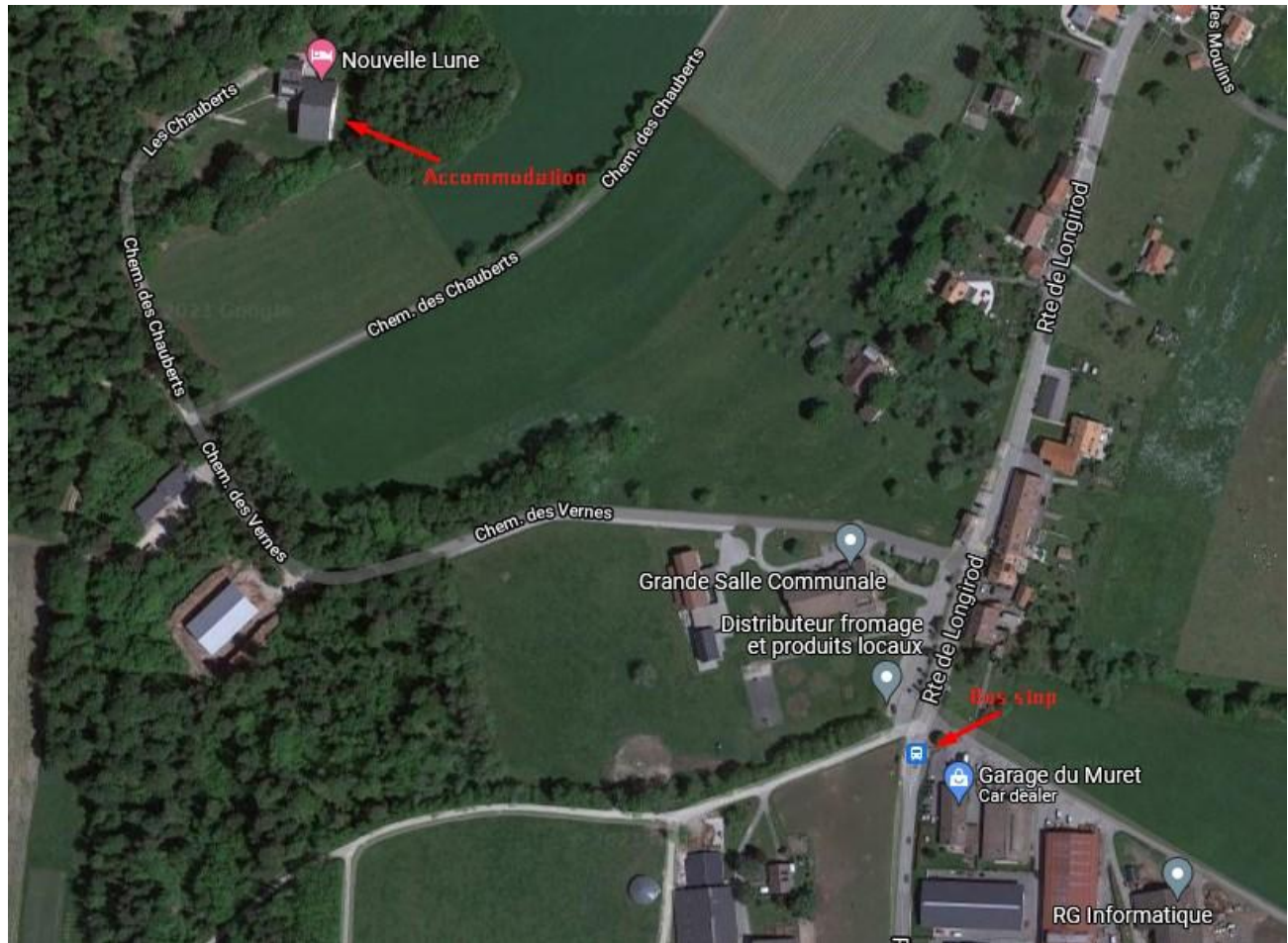
Reaching Saint-George

Our venue is: group house La Nouvelle-Lune, Chemin des Vernes 9, 1188 St-George.

How to get there by public transport:

From Geneva, take the train to Nyon, then change to a bus heading to "St-George,

village" to the stop "St-George, Maison Neuve". Take the path on the other side of the road, which passes by the multi-purpose hall (at this intersection, there is a sign indicating "MJSR, La Lune", it takes about 10 minutes on foot).



COVID-19 regulations

The pandemic is not over yet and there are lots of rules for events like this taking place. Because of this, we will ask everyone who participates to:

- Try and be fully protected (ideally fully vaccinated with vaccines [accepted by the EU](#) and Switzerland or recovered and once vaccinated)
- Do NOT travel if you have any symptoms of COVID19! (fever, coughing, loss of sense of taste or smell, etc.)
- Bring enough face masks (FFP2 or medical masks) for the whole duration of the

project to protect yourself and others, and also for excursions, public transport, shopping etc. Depending on the rules in December, we might need to wear masks inside, when we cannot keep enough distance between us.

- Follow those 3 STEPS one by one:
 - Check how your country of departure is classified by Swiss authorities: Please check your country's current status [here](#). You need to check them regularly for changes because the classifications change frequently.
 - Depending on how your country is classified (at the exact date of entering Switzerland!), you need to follow the steps mentioned on the website applying to your case.
 - Do a negative test before arriving. In order to feel safer in this big group, everyone, no matter if you're vaccinated and recovered or not, will need to do a COVID-19 test before reaching the venue. Rapid tests may be 24 hours old, PCR tests max. 72 hours. In Switzerland prices for rapid tests may vary, but normally they are around 35 Swiss francs. If it's cheaper in your country, please do a test at home. If you arrive in Switzerland earlier and you are in big groups before the start of the project, please make sure to have a test after that.

We will take COVID-19 seriously. We will check your proof of testing or vaccination upon arrival. Your proof of recovery/vaccination in case you come from a high risk area has to be sent to Iuliia at iuliia.beliaeva@scich.org prior to the project. We will also have a few rapid COVID19 tests, some masks and disinfection liquid at the venue and will arrange rapid tests to be done by all participants during the exchange. We will give you more info about hygiene rules (when to wear masks, how to hold distance, etc.) upon arrival.

About the organisers

This youth exchange is organised by Service Civil International Switzerland and the two facilitators of the project will be Iuliia and Thomas.

What is Service Civil International (SCI)?

- We are Service Civil International, or short SCI, and we are an international peace movement.
- We are independent: We are not a religious organisation and we are not affiliated with any political party.
- We are activists: We want to promote a culture of peace by organising international volunteering projects and peace education.

- **We are different:** In our usually very hands-on projects (most of them 2-week volunteering camps aka “workcamps”), we bring people from different backgrounds together to promote peace, solidarity and understanding.
- **We are pretty old:** Service Civil International was founded in 1920 after World War I by Swiss peace activist Pierre Ceresole.
- **We are many:** In regular years without pandemics, thousands of people around the globe participate in our projects. We are happy that you become one of them with this training!

No worries, you will find out more about SCI during the project! :)

Luliia (she/her) is currently doing an EVS project in Switzerland. She has a B.A. degree in pedagogics and spent several years working with young people in Russia. Luliia has also participated in numerous youth exchanges, workcamps and volunteering projects. Within the SCI network Luliia had a chance to work with such topics as, for example, global justice, sustainability, gender and would love to share the knowledge she’s gained.

Thomas (he/they) is a peace activist and political educator living in Berlin. He is active in SCI since 2011 and has organised and coordinated many volunteering projects, trainings, seminars and youth exchanges since then, often focusing on anti-discrimination, global justice and antimilitarism. Thomas is the co-founder of the collectives Critical Queer Solidarity (Berlin) and Education for Utopic Change (Leipzig).

About the project

The world is more unequal than before (or is it?)

Who knew the world could change so quickly? The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone and it shows us our weak points as a globalized society. We already started to adapt to the “new reality”, but still haven’t really processed this. Some questions that we will discuss in our group will be:

- What has COVID-19 meant for us personally?
- How were young people framed in the media during the pandemic (only going to parties, not caring, etc.)? How can we get back our voice as young people?
- How are environmental degradation and eating animals related to this pandemic?
- How did capitalism and patriarchy make the pandemic even worse?
- How do we need to change society to prevent the next pandemic?
- What chances do we have to imagine a new world after this pandemic?

With this youth exchange, we want to bring together 30 young people from all over Europe to reflect about the pandemic, what we learned and are learning from it and

what all of this means for young people.

Youth exchange in the Swiss mountains

In this project, you will experience how people in other parts of Europe experienced the pandemic and you will come up with strategies on how we as young people can change society for the better after this experience! These discussions will happen in a fun and non-formal way - please don't expect many expert inputs, we will mostly learn from each other!

You will be able to transform your discussions and reflections into short videos and zines to distribute online. There will be filmmaking and zine-making workshops at the youth exchange.

And since we're in Switzerland, we will make sure to also include some outdoor time. It's December – possibly we'll make some snow sculptures!

Safer Space for everyone

What is a safe space? We cannot guarantee to provide a "safe" space that is completely free of discrimination. We do not welcome sexism, racism, homo-, bi- or transphobia, ableism, body shaming and any other form of discrimination. We are individuals and we are all learners. It's okay to make mistakes, but we ask everyone to be open to accept criticism, be aware and critical of structural power dynamics and help to prevent exclusion.

Providing a safer space is everyone's responsibility. On Day 2 in the morning we will create a group agreement where we discuss how we can fulfill everyone's needs to feel comfortable and safe in the group during the project. Actively work to make everybody feel comfortable. Be aware of and embrace the fact that we all come from different backgrounds and have individual stories.

Share what you know!

There will be an "Open Space" part in the program, which means that you can suggest workshops or things to discuss. Bring some materials or ideas of what we could discuss and do as a group together.

Our working language is English

The working language of the activities is English. Don't worry if your English is not perfect! If you have any difficulty understanding something, we will be there to help

you and other people speaking your native language will be able to translate and explain for you.

Our daily rhythm

The programme is divided into 6 full days + arrival day (December 12) + departure day (December 19). Our day will usually start at 9:00 in the morning and finish at 18:30 in the evening. It will be split into morning sessions of 3 hours and afternoon sessions of 3 hours, interrupted by 2 coffee breaks (30 min) and a lunch break (2 h).

In the evenings, we have non-mandatory evening sessions planned for you. You can decide yourself if you want to join these evening sessions or if you need some rest.

We will introduce the final program to you at the beginning of the youth exchange. At the moment, we are still developing it and changing it around. :)

Enjoying Switzerland is great, but not the focus

Please keep in mind that our program is pretty intense, so if you want to do proper sightseeing in other parts of Switzerland or get to know the country better, you need to come a few days earlier or stay a few days longer.

Accommodation



Simple living. We will basically have our own house. Rooms are very simple and without any luxury: You will sleep in rooms shared by up to 5 people. While there will be pillows and wool blankets, please bring your own pillow case, bed linen, sleeping bag (OR bed sheets for the wool blanket) and towel. There are 9 toilets and 2 washrooms with 6

showers for the group. You will be able to choose your own bed once you arrive at the venue.

Gender division? We will not from the beginning divide rooms, showers, toilets etc. by gender. You will be able to choose a room for yourself and we will make sure that everyone feels comfortable with this. Ideally, please let us know in advance about your preferences concerning this and we will find a solution.

Some more practical info:

- There is free internet access in the accommodation.
- You can drink water from the tap. It's good!
- There is a supermarket closeby.
- Smoking is not allowed on the territory of the group house. You will need to go outside for smoking.

Food

How do we do this? We will cook for ourselves in the venue, starting with dinner on December 12. On December 19, breakfast is included as well. Our cooking team will coordinate the cooking process, but they will definitely need our help. Cooking is care work – it would be great, if you could bring or think of some nice gift or gesture that we could give to our cooks.

Simple, delicious and vegan: The food we provide will be vegan, sometimes with vegetarian options. Of course we will make sure that you will have all the appropriate nutrients (carbs, proteins, healthy fats, vitamins and all that stuff) that you need to be a functioning human being. If you have any specific intolerances, allergies or diets you would like to make us aware of that you haven't told us about in your application, please do so by writing to Luliia at iuliia.beliaeva@scich.org.

Why vegan? Animal agriculture is massively responsible for climate change and environmental destruction (and pandemics), because it uses enormous amounts of resources (water, land use etc.) and emits enormous amounts of greenhouse gases (e.g. CO₂ and methane). If we want to preserve our planet and create global justice, we need to change the way we eat – and projects like this are a great start. It is not prohibited at all to eat meat, but you would need to organise and buy this on your own.

You can make our coffee breaks more interesting! Bring a food item from your village, city, family, community, region or country to share with the others. There will not be an “intercultural evening” (we can explain at the project why we didn’t put it in the program, we find the concept strange), but we encourage you to make our coffee/tea breaks more interesting in this way! :)

How should I prepare myself?

Please make sure to bring the following items:

- sleeping bag OR bed sheet for wool blanket
- bed linen
- pillow case
- towel
- COVID-19 vaccination certificate OR negative PCR test 72 hours before the start of the project (see COVID-19 chapter)
- face masks (FFP2 or medical mask)
- indoor slippers
- toiletries
- comfy clothes for movement exercises
- appropriate and warm clothes for winter (warm jacket, rain jacket, hat, gloves, shoes for snow and rain, etc.)
- ear plugs, if you are sensible to snoring
- insurance card, passport
- food items from home to share with others during coffee breaks

Bring an item that represents a story of something that happened to you since the COVID-19 pandemic has started. For a storytelling workshop during the exchange, we would like to use these items.

Reimbursement Procedure

For this project, we will transfer the money to you or to your sending organisation after the project.

Here are the steps for a successful reimbursement of your travel costs:

- Please keep all your tickets (trains, subway, bus, plane), invoices, receipts AND

boarding passes (plane) carefully.

- If you have only digital tickets that you would like to be reimbursed for, you can send them to Iuliia after the project via email together with the travel reimbursement form that you will receive by mail.
- If you have also physical tickets that you would like to be reimbursed for, right after you are back home, send all tickets, together with the reimbursement form that you will receive by mail, to SCI Switzerland (we suggest you to send them via registered mail):

SCI Switzerland
Monbijoustrasse 32
3001 Bern
Switzerland

- Reimbursements will be done in the weeks after the end of the project via bank transfer.
- We strongly recommend you to scan the tickets and save the scanned files on your computers before sending them. In that way, we have some proof that your tickets existed, in case they get lost in the mail.

If you have any questions about reimbursement, please contact Iuliia at iuliia.beliaeva@scich.org.

Safety, Health, etc.

Insurance: Please bring your (European) health insurance card or your individual insurance with you. We will insure all non-EU/non-Swiss participants via the SCI insurance for the duration of the project (not for travels!). Please let us know if you'd like more information about this.

Allergies: If you have any allergies, please make sure that you bring all of the necessary medicine with you and please make sure to tell us about it, if you didn't already in the application form.

Emergency number: The European emergency number 112 can be called even from a mobile phone without a SIM card.

Money: The currency in Switzerland is Swiss franc. You can pay by card in a lot of places, but paying with cash is still common as well.

Tap water: If nothing else is mentioned, tap water in Switzerland is drinkable. *Tap water*

in trains is not drinkable.

Photos and videos: We will take videos and pictures during the project to use them for promotion of the project on social media. Please let us know at the exchange if you don't feel comfortable being in pictures.

Weather: Average temperatures in December around Saint-George are between 3°C and 7°C. It is possible that it rains or snows. We advise you to bring with you warm clothes, shoes for cold and rainy weather and a waterproof jacket. You can check the weather forecast [here](#) before coming to get a better idea.