

9 Adoptions of children from Korea

For a long time, the Republic of Korea⁴⁰⁴ was the most important country of origin for foreign adoptions in Switzerland. Most entry permits for children from Korea with a view to subsequent adoption in Switzerland were issued in the 1970s. In 1970 there were 105 entry permits, in 1974 208 and in 1975 277 entry permits. From 1977 onwards, the numbers fell rapidly: 38 children received an entry permit in 1977, four in 1978 and only one in 1980. From 1981 to 1990, a total of only five entry permits were issued for children from Korea to enter Switzerland.⁴⁰⁵

While Korea was the main country of origin of adopted children for Western countries for a long time, the East Asian country largely stopped international adoptions from the mid-1970s. From 1978, the adoption of Korean children by various countries, including Switzerland, Great Britain and Italy, was virtually impossible. Exceptions were made for foreign couples living in Korea. However, children were still given up for adoption to other countries, including the USA and Belgium. According to the Swiss embassy in Seoul, the Korean government justified this by stating that many Korean children were already living there, but that no new "channels" should be opened to other countries. Switzerland was one of the last countries to conclude a contract with a Korean placement agency.⁴⁰⁶ Another reason given by the embassy ^{was} that there was no longer any Swiss organisation working with an agency recognised by the Korean government.⁴⁰⁷

The key turning point with regard to the international adoptions that continued to be carried out was the 1988 Olympic Games in Korea. Due to heavy media criticism of its adoption policy, the Korean government massively restricted international adoptions.⁴⁰⁸ In 1988, a meeting was held between the Swiss vice consul and representatives of the Korean government to discuss the adoption ban.⁴⁰⁹

Nevertheless, in the second half of the 1980s, Alice Honegger still endeavoured to obtain a permit for the placement of adoptive children from Korea. She asked the Swiss embassy for a copy of the Adoption Act and the Adoption Regulations, Guidelines on the Adoption of Korean Children and the Adoption of Korean Children.

⁴⁰⁴ In the following, we use the term Korea as used in the research mandate of the Federal Office of Justice for the Republic of Korea, colloquially South Korea.

⁴⁰⁵ See: Appendix 1 to 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Quote from: CH-BAR, E2200.24#1999/5#23*, Note M. Neubauer*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 12 January 1984.

⁴⁰⁷ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1999/5#23*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul to a couple from Switzerland interested in adoption, 17 August 1989.

⁴⁰⁸ Ceschi 1996, p. 35 Cf. also Kim 2016, p. 82 Cf. CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/94#22*, memo from the Swiss ambassador, 11 April 1988, on the "adoption ban". Cf. also CH-BAR, E2200.24#1999/5#23*, South Korea Slows Export of Babies for Adoption, in: The New York Times National, 12 February 1990, where further reasons for declining foreign adoptions were cited: Declining birth rate, economic upturn, increased acceptance of abortions and increasing adoptions by Koreans themselves. See also the following critical article on Korean adoptions: Baby Exports a Billion Won Business, in: The Korea Post, November 1985, which speaks of a profitable "business".

⁴⁰⁹ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/94#22*, memorandum by Swiss Vice-Consul K. Gerber*, 11 April 1988, on meetings at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

The Swiss embassy provided her with the addresses of the relevant welfare office, recognised private placement agencies, orphanages and hospitals. She received the requested information from the Swiss ambassador with the note that soon no more Korean children could be adopted.⁴¹⁰

9.1 Evidence of child trafficking and scandals

The holdings of the Swiss embassy in Seoul, the only Swiss representation in Korea, consulted for this report are small. It contains newspaper articles on the subject of adoption,⁴¹¹ entry permits for individual children and correspondence between embassy staff and Swiss authorities and parents interested in adoption. The latter were mainly informed by embassy staff that the adoption of Korean children by Swiss couples was no longer possible.⁴¹² Overall, there is little information on child trafficking and problematic or illegal adoption practices in the dossiers of the Swiss embassy in Seoul.

Indications of lucrative business with adopted children

There are isolated indications that at the end of the 1970s, when the adoption of Korean children was hardly possible for Swiss nationals, couples gave a fictitious residential address in a country where the adoption of Korean children was still possible. A letter from Stefan Koch* of the Federal Aliens Police to the Swiss embassy in Seoul from 1979 refers to this: Koch wanted to know "if the competent Korean authorities are souscrivent au placement d'enfants coréens en Suisse par pays interposés. On the other hand, is the visa issued by your services before departure or not? Or is it issued by the French or Italian embassy in Séoul and under what cover? [...] Everything therefore depends on whether or not the parents of the children are making the declaration of a fictitious address abroad. Vous voudrez bien vous en assurer. "⁴¹³ Koch warned: "En tant qu'autorité, il nous

⁴¹⁰ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/94#22*, Alice Honegger, Adoptio Foundation, to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 27 August 1985; Richard Durand*, Swiss Ambassador in Seoul to Alice Honegger, 17 October 1985.

⁴¹¹ These include some that take a critical look at the topic of foreign adoptions. Cf. Eva Wyss, Adoptionswille greifen zur Selbsthilfe. Erfahrungen und Gefahren mit Kindern aus der dritten Welt, in: Tages-Anzeiger, 9 January 1979, or Susan Boos, Herzig sind sie, die Kleinen, doch sie werden groß. Around 600 Third World children, many of them from Sri Lanka, are brought to Switzerland every year - often carelessly, in: Die Weltwoche, 2 April 1987, in which an example of an illegal adoption from Colombia is mentioned. It also mentions that the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Trogen set up a home for foreign children from failed adoptions in 1986. The dubious placement activities of Alice Honegger and the problem of the verifiability of reputable placement centres are also discussed.

⁴¹² CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/94#22*. This dossier contains many letters from the embassy to parents interested in adoption.

⁴¹³ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Stefan Koch, Federal Aliens Police, to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 12 January 1979.

appartient cependant d'être prudent lors de l'octroi d'autorisations d'entrée qui pourraient être délivrés dans des conditions n'étant pas correctes. "⁴¹⁴

Stefan Koch argued that there was resistance to international adoptions in Switzerland and that they did not want to act without the consent of the Korean authorities. He enclosed an article from the Tages-Anzeiger newspaper with the letter, which criticised, among other things, the fact that the placement of adoptive children had become a lucrative business in individual countries. In the article, an adoptive mother denounced the fact that officials in Korea were getting rich from the placement of children. Koch himself also commented on the business of adopting children.⁴¹⁵ The Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim, however, rejected the indirect criticism. Adoptions took place in Korea "without the active involvement of this embassy". He therefore saw "hardly any possibility of finding out whether the Swiss adoptive parents are providing false information." The Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim passed the responsibility on to Koch: as the prospective adoptive parents lived in Switzerland, "your services could carry out such a check more easily. "⁴¹⁶ In addition, foreign adoptions were increasingly being stopped, which is why the problem raised would resolve itself over time. "In any case, I will make sure that the instructions I receive on your entry authorisations are strictly observed, as has always been the case in the past. "⁴¹⁷

Federal Office for Foreigners' Affairs problematises adoptions from Korea

More detailed information on problematic aspects of adoptions from Korea can be found in the fonds of the Federal Office for Foreigners' Affairs, which contains a separate dossier on foster care and adoptions in Korea.⁴¹⁸ It contains an exchange of letters between the Federal Foreign Police, initiated by Stefan Koch, and the Swiss embassy in Seoul regarding Korean mothers who wanted to have their children returned for adoption. Koch wrote to the Swiss embassy about two girls who were to come to Switzerland for adoption. Terre des hommes had informed him that the two girls would be reclaimed by the mother and that the

⁴¹⁴ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Stefan Koch, Federal Aliens Police, to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 12 January 1979.

⁴¹⁵ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Eva Wyss, Adoptionswillige greifen zur Selbsthilfe. Erfahrungen und Gefahren mit Kindern aus der dritten Welt, in: Tages-Anzeiger, 9.1.1979. The article takes a critical look at international adoptions; various members of the authorities, including Stefan Koch, as well as an employee of the Zurich foster child supervisory authority and the head of foster child welfare for the city of Zurich have their say.

⁴¹⁶ All quotations from: CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, V. Mürger*, Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim in Seoul, to the Federal Aliens Police, 5 February 1979.

⁴¹⁷ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, V. Mürger, Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim in Seoul, to the Federal Foreign Police, 5 February 1979.

⁴¹⁸ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*. For the holdings of the Federal Office for Foreign Nationals, see Chapter 13.

Adoption would therefore not materialise. This has been happening frequently recently.⁴¹⁹ Would it be possible "to organise a search for abandonment on the spot before transferring such children for adoption abroad. If they have been abandoned, it is because their mothers found themselves in misery, but they were also dependent on them because they took them back. Wouldn't it be possible to help them on the spot? These cases are completely outside the framework that we have set ourselves and certainly put Terre des Hommes at a disadvantage too, because we have an identical conception in this area."⁴²⁰ Koch not only called for more detailed investigations by the embassy, but also raised the question of whether help could not be better provided locally instead of through international adoption.

The Swiss embassy confirmed that Korean children adopted by Swiss citizens are increasingly being reclaimed by their biological parents. "The problem of abandoned children given up for adoption, which often gives rise to criticism in the local press (see attached photocopied newspaper articles), is well known to this embassy. I reported on this to the EPD last year. The Korean authorities are trying to counteract the situation. There are plans to introduce sponsorships under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs. There are also plans to overhaul the adoption law so that only orphans, but not children given up for adoption by their parents, are allowed to leave the country. Numerous private organisations and institutions are working to help these orphans and foundlings. However, as you can see from the enclosures [various newspaper articles, author's note], these are not only reputable organisations. Unfortunately, the solution you proposed, to clarify the matter on the spot through this embassy, is not feasible."⁴²¹ The embassy was therefore aware of the problem, but at the same time pointed out that little could be clarified on the spot through the embassy and not much could be achieved.

Embassy employee writes the report "The Korean adoptive child problem"

The Federal Office for Foreigners' Affairs also holds a report entitled "The Korean adoption problem" by an employee of the Swiss embassy in Seoul. The detailed report is not dated, but was sent to the Federal Aliens Police in 1976.⁴²² It is a key document for analysing the adoption of Korean children in Switzerland. The employee had written the report in direct connection with the problem that Koch had mentioned in 1975. Accordingly, she had focussed in particular on "the frequent reclaiming of

⁴¹⁹ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, Stefan Koch, Federal Aliens Police, to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 21 April 1975. It is not clear from Koch's letter whether he is referring to Terre des hommes Lausanne or Terre des hommes Switzerland.

⁴²⁰ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, Stefan Koch, Federal Aliens Police, to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 21 April 1975.

⁴²¹ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul to the Federal Aliens Police, 7 May 1975.

⁴²² CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, report by Swiss embassy staff in Seoul "The Korean adoptive children problem", undated, 1975 or 1976.

of children voluntarily given up for adoption by their parents "⁴²³ , according to the Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim in the letter with which he sent the report to the Federal Aliens Police.

The embassy employee noted that there are many orphans in Korea, but that adoption is frowned upon in Korea itself. Children of single, widowed or divorced mothers as well as married couples with financial difficulties are mainly given up for adoption. She referred to four government-approved agencies: Holt Children's Service, "the leading and it seems most reputable agency", Korea Social Service, Social Welfare Society and The David Livingstone Adoption Programme of the Christian Crusade.⁴²⁴

It is known that the placement of children is a "lucrative business" for the agencies and that they try to "persuade unmarried mothers and parents with financial difficulties to give up their children for adoption in order to meet the brisk demand for young Koreans for childless households in the United States and Europe." The Korea Social Service, which in cooperation with Terre des hommes Lausanne is solely responsible for the placement of adoptive children in Switzerland and also sends children to the USA, the Netherlands and Denmark, was also clearly criticised in the report. The agency has been in existence for eleven years, "but the director does not want to be able to provide documentation or annual reports on his agency." The agency is housed in a villa on the outskirts of the city, where the children also live until their departure; at times there are up to 200 children. "The infants' and toddlers' rooms are in the basement, some without windows. Everything is spotlessly clean, but somehow seems quite 'commercial' and yet very depressing. Director Rhee* is reluctant to answer questions, but admits that on average two out of 10 children are reclaimed by their biological parents before the exit formalities have been completed." In two cases, a child was not placed by Terre des hommes or Korea Social Service, but "by a 'lady' who is said to live in Germany and occasionally comes to Korea to pick up children. The contact person here in Korea is Dr Lee*, a doctor at the Municipal Psychiatric Clinic. She only wants to deal with adoptions occasionally (probably against the law). "⁴²⁵ The report clearly referred to problematic and illegal placement practices. It stated that the Korean authorities were aware of the shortcomings in the child welfare system but were not yet in a position to remedy them.

The author considered the stricter departure formalities newly established with the introduction of the new Emigration Act to be positive. Cases in which children were living abroad without their parents' authorisation

⁴²³ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, B. Grossmann*, Swiss chargé d'affaires a. i. in Seoul, to the Federal Aliens Police, 25 February 1976.

⁴²⁴ Holt Adoption Programme, later Holt International Children's Services, was founded by the US couple Harry and Bertha Holt. It was one of the first large international adoption agencies. From 1955, Holt placed children abroad on a large scale, particularly in the USA. Denéchère 2021, p. 103f. From the mid-1960s, there was cooperation with Terre des hommes. Macedo 2020, p. 299, p. 316f. On the Holt International adoption agency, see Michaelsen 2022, p. 114.

⁴²⁵ All quotations from: CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, report by Swiss embassy staff in Seoul "The Korean adoptive children problem", undated, 1975 or 1976.

for adoption should no longer occur in future. The report also mentioned the example of a child who had been abducted by a domestic worker and brought to Canada for adoption, which had made waves in the media. The report concluded with clear words: "The longer one deals with the problem of adoptive children, the more one gets the impression that it is not primarily about helping; it is not all within the law and the placement of adoptive children overseas is a lucrative business for the agencies."⁴²⁶

Individual mediation centres and people on site criticised

In 1976, Terre des hommes Lausanne also received complaints about the activities of placement organisations operating in Korea. Terre des hommes Lausanne reported dubious activities of the Korea Social Service and of Mr Hye* of the Netherlands-Korea Children's Foundation, a private Dutch organisation, to the Federal Foreign Police. The Federal Foreign Police then asked the Swiss embassy in Seoul to investigate the allegations.⁴²⁷ The Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim replied that nothing "detrimental" was known about Mr Hye.⁴²⁸ "One is nevertheless tempted to wonder how exactly he takes the tasks and resources entrusted to him. In any case, he is said to be able to afford a very comfortable high standard of living at 'administrative expense'."⁴²⁹

In 1977, it was the Swiss embassy that reported what it saw as irregular practices to Bern. Terre des hommes Lausanne and its new cooperation partner were criticised. Minho Chung* from Kyonggi Neighbours Aid had approached the embassy. Mr Chung and Kyonggi Neighbors Aid "cannot be recommended under any circumstances. The bad experiences gained through this representation stand for this: CHUNG [sic] presented himself to my employee as the director of an orphanage near Osan [...], where the children destined for Switzerland were located. A meeting was arranged. However, the address given proved to be completely inadequate. [...] One was not expected at all. CHUNG was probably visiting there by chance, but [the] director of the home, which incidentally makes a good impression, is a 75-year-old woman who no longer wants to send children abroad. CHUNG lost face. Klein admitted that the children in question were all in Seoul and were not orphans but had been given up for adoption." The new liaison officer of Terre des hommes Lausanne had to "hide behind one of the four organisations mentioned [state-approved adoption agencies], presumably the Korea Social Service, which he knows has the quota (quotas for textiles, fish... and recently also for orphans!!!) of 670

⁴²⁶ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, report by Swiss embassy staff in Seoul "The Korean adoptive child problem", undated, 1975 or 1976. On the mediation practices of Dr Lee*, see also CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, Swiss embassy in Seoul to a couple from Switzerland interested in adoption, 20 May 1976.

⁴²⁷ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, Federal Aliens Police to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 19 March 1976.

⁴²⁸ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, B. Grossmann*, Swiss chargé d'affaires a. i. in Seoul, to the Federal Aliens Police, 9 April 1976.

⁴²⁹ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, B. Grossmann, Swiss chargé d'affaires a. i. in Seoul, to the Federal Aliens Police, 9 April 1976.

children a year for those partners who are prepared to make gifts and presents (a car is urgently needed!). Or are they trying to exert pressure so that, if the leverage doesn't help, they can use a 'straw man' to stay in business? So the trade in pseudo-orphans is also flourishing again after Switzerland! I just don't understand how 'Terre des Hommes' can lend a hand!"⁴³⁰ The Federal Aliens Police subsequently called Terre des hommes Lausanne, which provided copies of letters to prove how the contact with Chung had come about and defended Kyonggi Neighbours Aid. The Swiss embassy took the following position on the matter: "The mere fact that Kyonggi Neighbors Aid does not have a state licence to deal with adoptions is reason enough to refuse to cooperate with them. Incidentally, my colleague urged Mrs Agata Meier* [from Terre des hommes Lausanne, author's note] to be careful. Mr Chung has not yet been able to produce passports for the five children who have already been approved. He will need the support of one of the four adoption organisations mentioned in my recent report or a 'good friend' in the relevant ministry to obtain them. I think we should not refuse entry to these five children, but make it clear to Mr Chung that as long as he could not produce a licence, no further visas would be issued."⁴³¹ This example points to several problematic issues. Korean children were apparently passed off as orphans in order to facilitate adoption. The machinations of the local placement organisations were not transparent and their seriousness and legality could hardly be verified. Furthermore, corruption appeared to be involved in the placement of adoptive children, with certain circles enriching themselves. Finally, the Swiss chargé d'affaires ad interim also spoke explicitly of a flourishing "trade" in adoptive children. "Pseudo-orphans". Nevertheless, the Swiss embassy did not reject the current visa applications.

9.2 Further indications of irregular and problematic practices

The information on the events described above can be found in the dossier of the Federal Office for Foreign Affairs. There are various other indications of irregular and problematic practices in the dossiers of the Swiss representation in Korea. These included, for example, incorrect information about the children or placements without the appropriate authorisation.

⁴³⁰ All quotations from: CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, B. Grossmann, Swiss chargé d'affaires a. i. in Seoul, to the Federal Aliens Police, 24 October 1977.

⁴³¹ CH-BAR, E4300C-01#1998/299#1489*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul to the Federal Aliens Police, 12.12.1977. Agata Meier* was responsible for adoptions at Terre des hommes Lausanne at the time.

Incorrect or missing information on the personal details of the adoptive children

There is extensive correspondence between the Federal Office for Civil Status and the Swiss embassy regarding missing or incorrect information on the names, place and date of birth of children travelling to Switzerland for adoption purposes. In 1980, for example, an entry permit for a Korean girl stated: "Since the exact personal details of foster or adoptive children are often not known when the application is submitted, it is possible that the information given does not correspond to reality. The exact personal details are therefore recorded on the basis of the passport after the child has entered the country and are declared binding, even if the name in the passport does not match the name on our permit."⁴³² After the introduction of the PAVO in 1978 until its revision in 1989, blank permits, i.e. entry permits issued without the child's name or with a fictitious name, were not possible. It appears that they were nevertheless used in practice, but were problematised.⁴³³

This problem is also expressed in the reply from the Swiss embassy in Seoul to a woman who was adopted from Korea to Switzerland as a child and was looking for her mother in the early 1990s: "The Korea Social Service, the Korean office that released you for adoption, informed us on request that your mother apparently used a false name and address for this adoption, which was still possible at that time. That is why no data about you is available on the computer."⁴³⁴

Linguistic hurdles

The often missing or incorrect information was not least due to language difficulties. In Korea, writing was also a major hurdle. The Swiss representation sometimes had to rely on local translators who could not always speak English well.⁴³⁵

This is illustrated by an exchange of letters between the Swiss embassy and the Federal Office of Civil Status that has survived in the files. The latter asked for the place of birth and the name of the biological parents of a Korean girl who had been adopted by a Swiss couple for entry in the family register. Enquiries were made both at the Korean placement agency Holt Adoption and at the orphanage in Chonan, which had given the child to Holt Adoption.

⁴³² CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/94#22*, entry permit for a Korean child, 12.12.1980.

⁴³³ Bitter, Bangarter, Ramsauer 2020, pp. 175-177, 211.

⁴³⁴ CH-BAR, E2200.24#2002/209#21*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul to adopted person, 6 October 1993.

⁴³⁵ Cf. E.g. CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Federal Office for Civil Status to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 7 January 1980.

adoption were unsuccessful, however. The Swiss embassy enclosed "a translation in Sum- marian and the original of the reply letter from Chonan. "⁴³⁶ It stated that the child, born in 1963, had been "taken over" by the orphanage in January 1964 and that there was no information about the parents. The translation was followed by a comment from the embassy:

"Although the date of birth of the child is known, the orphanage has no further information. The translator of the message was explicitly asked whether the expression 'taken' could also mean 'found' or something similar. He said it only meant 'took' = taken, taken over. "⁴³⁷ This example makes it clear that the Swiss representation was dependent on local translators. In this case, it therefore remained unclear whether the child had been abandoned or handed over to the children's home by someone.

Other similar cases can be found in the files. In 1980, the Federal Office for Civil Status asked the Swiss embassy in Seoul to notarise and summarily translate a certain adoption certificate and the "Family Registration", a type of birth certificate. It should also be added whether the place of origin entered in the certificate is also the probable place of birth of the child: "As far as we can see, the documents available to us do not clearly indicate whether the adoption was merely the result of an agreement between the adoptive parents on the one hand and a (private) adoption agency organisation and the child's guardian on the other, or whether it was pronounced or at least approved by a state authority. "⁴³⁸

Mediation activities without authorisation and financial enrichment

The Swiss embassy's records contain references to the Swiss national Gabi Studer*, who was active in the placement of children from Korea. She did not have a licence for this and took the view that her activities were purely advisory and therefore did not require a licence. She assisted parents interested in adoption with advice, providing addresses and dealing with the authorities.⁴³⁹ However, the Federal Aliens Police were of the opinion that Studer was carrying out a limited placement activity. It wrote to the Zurich Cantonal Aliens Police that Studer "is not content with just giving advice. [...] Should anything go wrong, it would certainly be an advantage,

⁴³⁶ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1987/156#45*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul to the Federal Office for Civil Status, 18 August 1971.

⁴³⁷ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1987/156#45*, Swiss Embassy in Seoul to the Federal Office for Civil Status, 18 August 1971.

⁴³⁸ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Federal Office for Civil Status to the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, 7 January 1980, concerning "Adoption of Korean nationals [...]".

⁴³⁹ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Gabi Studer* to Federal Aliens Police [at this time already Federal Office for Foreigners' Affairs, author's note], 18 June 1979.

if Ms Studer had a permit as an intermediary and a special permit for inter-country adoptions.⁴⁴⁰ The Swiss embassy was also instructed to inform the Korea Social Service in Seoul about Gabi Studer's legal situation and to inform it that Studer was not yet a recognised intermediary.⁴⁴¹ This specific case illustrates once again that the definition of the placement of children from abroad for adoption purposes was not always clear. The Federal Aliens Police insisted on correct compliance with the regulations but, given the way adoption procedures were regulated in Switzerland, had to leave the substantive examination of placement qualifications to the competent cantonal authorities.

Finally, there are also isolated indications that people have benefited financially from the placement of adopted children. In the aforementioned Tages-Anzeiger article, which was kept by the Swiss embassy, one woman criticised the fact that the costs for a child from Korea far exceeded the administrative costs and that it was "obvious" that officials were getting rich from the placement.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Federal Aliens Police to Cantonal Aliens Police Zurich and Swiss Embassy in Seoul, undated. This is a note made by the Federal Aliens Police for the Zurich Cantonal Aliens Police and the Swiss Embassy on a copy of a letter to Gabi Studer, 29 June 1979.

⁴⁴¹ CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Federal Aliens Police to Zurich Cantonal Aliens Police and Swiss Embassy in Seoul, undated. The following was also reported to the Swiss embassy: "The Korea Social Service in Seoul should be informed about the legal situation of Ms Studer, who cannot be considered a recognised intermediary in Switzerland." ⁴⁴² CH-BAR, E2200.24#1996/92#15*, Eva Wyss, Adoptionswillige greifen zur Selbsthilfe. Experiences and dangers with children from the Third World, in: Tages-Anzeiger, 9 January 1979.