

This document is an English synopsis of the most important content of our homepage. The original homepage is written in German, including content in Italian, Albanian, Portuguese and French. You find references to the original website using the links.

[Home](#)

"The right to marry and to have a family is guaranteed."
(Article 14, Swiss Federal Constitution)

TESORO

Association for addressing the suffering of illegalized migrant families with seasonal and annual residence status.

Illustrations: Nando von Arb

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Claim

Attack on the Family!

Imagine ...

... you arrive in a country and learn that your children are not allowed to enter. Despite your lack of political rights, you attempt to appeal to the immigration police. All your requests are rejected, and the reason given is "the current over-foreignization of our country".

... as a teenager, you want to 'integrate' into Switzerland, only to discover that a law from the 1930s, which separated you from your parents in early childhood, was intended as an 'anti-integrative' measure.

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Association

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On October 1, 2021, an association was founded under the name TESORO with the purpose of representing the interests of family members affected by the Swiss Seasonal Worker Statute (A) and Annual Resident Statute (B). Due to the ANAG - the Law on the Residence and Settlement of Foreigners - approximately half a million migrant worker families were separated, criminalized, and illegalized from 1934 to 2002.

- An attack on migrant families that were "not allowed to exist."
- An assault by immigration authorities on the integrity and privacy of migrant workers.
- An assault by society, which for decades refused to acknowledge the violation of the human rights of these families.
- An assault on humanity through inhumane economic exploitation systems such as the rotation principle.

The affected individuals continue to suffer from the consequences to this day. TESORO transforms this suffering by naming the violence. TESORO believes that what the affected individuals know about structural racism in Swiss family policy is a hidden treasure, valuable to society as a whole. TESORO means turning objects of history into active and thinking subjects. Despite the immense fragmentation of our individual fates, we stand in solidarity with each other and with other groups affected by family separations and illegalization.

TESORO is committed to ending the current violence against migrant families and integrating the history of this attack on families with Statute A and B into Switzerland's collective memory. The members of the TESORO association demand:

- Official recognition of the suffering and an apology from Swiss authorities.
- Historical examination of the illegalization of families with Statute A and B.
- Adequate financial compensation for the incurred suffering.

[Board](#)

The board members Giulia Bernardi (actuary), Paola De Martin (president), Melinda Nadj Abonji (vice president), Salvatore Bevilacqua (contact for French-speaking Switzerland and Italian-speaking Switzerland), and Miroslav Janjic (treasurer) at the 4th general assembly of the T association, Zurich, March 28, 2025.

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TESORO Board Members and Their Roles:

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[Statutes](#)

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Media Enquiries

How do you communicate an attack on families that were not allowed to be? In Switzerland, a country where privacy and family life are sacred?

Caption:

"Lo Stagionale", directed by Alvaro Bizzarri (Switzerland, 1973), film stills. The main character of this Swiss film classic from 1973 is a seasonal worker. He works and lives with his son in Switzerland. The federal immigration authorities (Fremdenpolizei) inform him in writing that he is not allowed to do so and that the child must leave the country, or they both must leave. The father is desperate. No authority, no embassy representative, no union can help him to exercise his human right to live legally with his child in Switzerland. These film stills show how well the phenomenon was already known in the media in 1973: the seasonal worker opens a drawer full of newspaper articles he has collected on the subject.

Appeal to Media Professionals!

We have observed that for half a century, media attention has been focused on the representation of individual fates of those affected by the Statutes A and B, which quickly gained attention and were then soon forgotten. Therefore, we appeal to those responsible for the media.

A Paradigm Shift is Required!

Are you interested in a long-term socio-political change? And in conveying our expertise, concerns, and experiences, given a human face by members of TESORO in your medium? Please get in touch with us! We are looking forward to establishing a profound collaboration with you.

- [Press Review](#)
- [English Article: BBC 2022](#)

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Research

The violence of migration and family policy, carried out in the name of the ANAG, is vast and multifaceted. The consequences of this population policy shape our entire society, while research on population, migration, and family policy in the name of the ANAG remains one-sided.

TESORO states:

1. Even in research, there is a widespread societal assumption that violence is a problem of the victims. This assumption is wrong.
2. Research usually focuses on the illegalized Italian children of affected families after World War II. This focus is limited.

TESORO demands:

New research should make a key contribution to a comprehensive reappraisal of the past. Aspects that are regularly neglected or underrepresented should be analyzed, such as:

- The history of how the ANAG **transformed law into injustice**, a transformation that took place before its enactment in 1934. This process was then radically cemented through its implementation.
- The structural **violence of migration and family policy** in the name of the ANAG as an integral part of Swiss history.
- The long-standing **culture of denial and silence** regarding this history of violence.
- The deep traces of violence in the **relationships** between affected and non-affected families.
- Swiss migration and family policy in the name of the ANAG towards families from **all countries of origin**.
- The **continuity** of implemented violence after the abolition of the seasonal worker status in 2002 up to the present—against families of short-term residents in the low-wage sector, refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants (*sans-papiers*).
- The **similarities** of this violent population policy in Switzerland towards Jewish, Yenish, Romani, impoverished, Black, and queer family members.
- The **analogies** between Switzerland and discriminatory family policies in other countries.
- The role of **perpetrators and accomplices**.
- The little acknowledged, diverse **resistance**.

TESORO demands:

1. The participation of **those affected** by the ANAG **as researching agents**.
2. The integration of **transnational, multidisciplinary, and intersectional** perspectives.
3. A broad public reappraisal, supported and accompanied by a **National Research Programme** (so-called NRP).

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Bibliography of key secondary literature – TESORO's recommendations for new research projects: [PDF](#) available for download.

Groundbreaking impulses from recent research (PDFs can be requested via [email](#) from TESORO).

[Contact](#)

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