

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

AUGUST 2007 / NO. 4



Federal elections 2007

The voters will determine
the country's future

Why is Switzerland
so politically stable?

How the Swiss abroad
can take part in the elections



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Wealth problems

IN THE AUTUMN of 1987, shortly before the Swiss elections, I met a 35-year-old American primary school teacher from Los Angeles in Asia. I will never forget the stimulating conversation we had. Phil – for that was his name – told me about how difficult life was for American teachers, that for instance he wasn't paid over the summer holidays and that his salary was in any case so low that he had to teach English to immigrants three evenings a week simply to make ends meet. He said he liked travelling, and thanks to a thrifty lifestyle and his extra income he could afford to take an extended holiday every few years. Without complaining about his lot, he answered all my questions on life in LA, describing the crime in the sprawling conurbation, the drug problems and the appalling living conditions faced by illegal immigrants from Mexico.

However, suddenly he turned the tables on me and asked, "What are the principal problems in Switzerland?" I thought it over for a moment and told Phil that we were about to go to the polls and that environmental protection was the main election issue. The American looked at me in dismay and told me he'd found Switzerland a veritable paradise when he'd travelled through it a few years earlier; clean air, healthy forests and pure rivers. What had happened, he wanted to know. I said it was simply about trying to preserve the status quo.

What could I tell him today if he asked me about the principal problems of Switzerland? Would I say we had a problem with dangerous dogs? Or with the assault rifle and munitions that every soldier is required to keep at home? Or would I tell him about the problems we have with our welfare state? Would I dare say such things to an American, of all people, whose workers know neither a state pension scheme, unemployment benefit nor invalidity insurance?

"Small west and north European states only have wealth problems," said Berne-based political scientist Hans Hirter in an interview with Swiss Review. That puts Switzerland in the same boat as countries like Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.



Heinz Eckert

Our relative prosperity is probably one reason why the campaigning has been rather lacklustre so far. Even so, we would like to encourage all Swiss citizens living abroad to take part actively in the forthcoming elections and help increase the turnout over the last elections. If you haven't added your name to the electoral roll yet, you should do so as soon as possible. It's not too late to register for the elections on 21 October.

Never before have so many of the Swiss abroad stood as candidates. Will one of them manage to win a seat in the Federal Parliament in Berne?

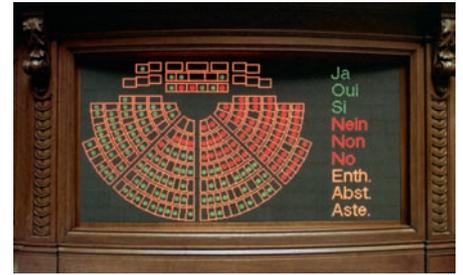
This issue of the "Swiss Review" is devoted entirely to the Swiss federal elections. We present the parties and their manifestos, as well as the candidates that are of particular interest to the Swiss abroad.

If you want more in-depth information about the elections, we can recommend a suitable site on the Internet: swissinfo and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad have together set up the first ever online election platform providing information specially aimed at the Swiss abroad. There will also be an election blog which will give foreign-resident Swiss citizens an opportunity to express their opinions and discuss Switzerland and the elections.

We hope that many of you will join in the debate, and look forward to receiving all your posts.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Special election 2007 issue



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Cover photo: 2007 elections: who will win a seat the Federal Assembly in Berne? Photo: Federal Chancellery

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Die Liberalen. LDP

Liste 3

... und Andreas Albrecht in den Ständerat.

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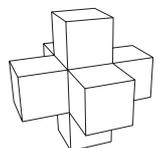


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Kanton Schaffhausen
Vorstandsmitglied



Christa Markwalder
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weil sie sich für eine
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Swissness

A huge thank you for the Swiss Review; our only source of "swissness". My father emigrated to South Africa in the 1960s. Because he was Swiss, I too was eligible for a Swiss passport, which I have cherished ever since my father came home with the large, bright-red passport bearing the white cross. After completing my national service in South Africa in 1990, I was fortunate enough to be able to visit Switzerland, a beautiful country that has remained etched in my memory like a fairytale. Today I have a 13-year-old son whom I tell the few things I know about the land of his grandfather. I hope that my financial means will enable me to send him to Switzerland one day so that he can appreciate what all Swiss men and women already know: it is a wonderful country. Until that day, I eagerly await every new issue of the Swiss Review, thanks to which I can keep in touch with lovely Switzerland. After all, reading the Swiss Review is the only way that many of the Swiss abroad can maintain their "swissness".

JURGEN VOGT, SOUTH AFRICA
(BY E-MAIL)

Swiss railways

Because my wife is originally from Switzerland and she still has three sisters and other family members there, I am an avid reader of the Swiss Review. In your April issue I saw three graphics on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Switzerland and what it meant to people. Over the years, I have spent nine extended holidays in your country, and I believe that your railway system is your greatest asset. It is the gateway to Europe. When I ask Australians



who have visited Switzerland for their opinion, they all praise the Swiss railways, their staff, the friendly service and good advice. I have already written to the head of the SBB twice to praise every aspect of the Swiss rail-

ways, and have received books and a special train tie from him in return. I already look forward to my tenth visit to Switzerland.
GEOFFREY MEDCALF, TUNCURRY,
AUSTRALIA

Switzerland's armed citizens

I am concerned about the fact that the Security Commission wants to stop soldiers storing ammunition for their assault rifle at home. If this recommendation were implemented, it would disarm the entire Swiss militia in one fell swoop. It would also suggest that the Swiss government no longer trusts its citizens to carry weapons. The right to bear arms is the symbol of a free society. By contrast, any society that restricts or denies this right is a slave society in the mould of the former Soviet Union and Nazi Germany under Hitler. I hope that the government has the good sense to reject the Commission's advice or at least put the matter to a referendum.

ERWIN ALBER, BANGKOK
(BY E-MAIL)

Thank you

Many thanks for the Swiss Review, which manages in just a few pages to keep us informed about the major social developments in our beloved homeland. I always read it with great interest and wish the entire Swiss Review team all the best for the future.

ELISABETH DONNET-DESCARTES,
FRANCE (BY E-MAIL)

Swiss delicacies

Where can you get the best polenta, the tenderest sauren mocken and real capuns? And who produces the fruitiest Merlot? There are countless restaurant guides, but none offer as many recipes and information on all aspects of eating and drinking in Switzerland than the two-volume "Urchuchi" by Martin Weiss, published by Rotpunktverlag. One volume is dedicated to the Ticino and Misox regions and presents 45 restaurants and 30 grotti, plus 200 shopping tips and 120 recipes to try out yourself. The other volume of Urchuchi covers 70 restaurants in German-speaking Switzerland and the Grisons region and offers 300 shopping tips and 150 recipes to choose from.

Urchuchi is also a voyage of discovery through Switzerland's culinary heritage. In compiling his guide, Martin Weiss not only spoke to the country's top gourmets. He also went in search of an "authentic feel". The result is two beautiful and accessible volumes, with a third on the culinary delights of western Switzerland due to appear next year, rounding off a veritable treasure trove for everyone who loves genuine local Swiss cuisine.

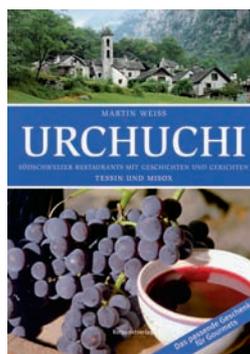
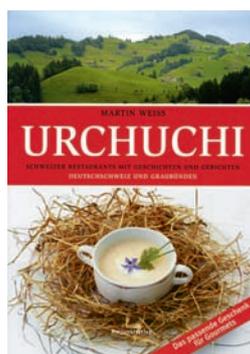
There are portraits of master chefs like mushroom specialist Thuri Maag and farmhouse cooks like 80-year-old Lorenza Caminada from Vrin, the last person alive who knows how to make amplius, a Grisons dumpling. You'll find everything from Glarus "net" roast to ziger bananas, Zug röteli to freshwater crabs and delicious chügeli pâté, and any other traditional Swiss recipe you could possibly think of – not to mention interesting articles and extensive information about the various products.

Even those well-acquainted with Ticino are bound to find tasty inside information on hitherto unfamiliar delights in the volume covering the cuisine of Ticino and Misox. For instance zincarlin, a peppered fresh milk cheese; cicitt, an apparently exquisite goat sausage that can only be found in the Maggia valley; and polenta

made from red cornmeal, which the Ticinese have starting growing again. No fewer than 120 recipes have been gathered from Ticino's cucina povera, capturing a chapter of the region's cultural history that can easily be tested at home, including mousse made from goat cream cheese, chestnut gnocchi, coniglio al forno, busecca and Ticinese bread cake. While some of the recipes are from ancient farming families and passed down from one generation to the next, others have been developed recently or revived by top Ticinese chefs.

Urchuchi is both appetising and packed with wonderful photographs, fascinating articles and interesting information. Now we can't wait for the third volume dedicated to the cuisine of western Switzerland.

EC



Urchuchi is published in German by Rotpunktverlag, Postfach, CH-8026 Zurich. Price: CHF 59. www.rotpunktverlag.ch, www.urchuchi.ch.

Closing insurance gaps with Soliswiss

Soliswiss has become even more important now that most Swiss expats resident in other European countries are no longer able to pay contributions to the voluntary AHV. We spoke with Michael Vögele, Member of the Executive Board of Soliswiss Ltd., about customized insurance and retirement solutions.

Switzerland's national insurance system has always had a good reputation: people with high levels of income co-financed the pensions of those with lower earnings. Effective March 31, 2007, contributions to the voluntary social security fund (AHV) have been ceased for a large number of residents in European countries. The majority of Swiss expats however live in Europe. They are now forced to fall back on private solutions to

finance an additional pension that provide benefits after retirement or in the event of disability or death.

Mr. Vögele, which alternatives are available for Swiss expats who reside in other European countries to adequately top up the reduced payments from the voluntary AHV?

First of all: Swiss expats who take up residence in a country outside the EU and have made compulsory contributions for at least five consecutive years before leaving Switzerland can still get age, disability and life cover from the voluntary AHV. The only requirement is that they register with the voluntary insurance scheme within 365 days of their deregistration from the compulsory insurance scheme.

Back to your question: Swiss expats look for insurance solutions and ways to save and invest either in their country of residence or in Switzerland. What speaks for the latter is that many Swiss abroad do not exclude a return to their home country. Investing money in Switzerland gives them a feeling of security. It is not easy to choose from a variety of products and solutions. Good advice can be literally worth its weight in gold.

How does Soliswiss advise its customers?

We proactively approach our members and customers, and suggest one or more solutions based on an analysis of their per-

sonal situation and their financial circumstances. Our advice is tailored to their needs.

Which criteria do you use to determine the best solution for each person?

We distinguish between different groups, focusing in particular on risk and financial status: first, young or single people. Second, married couples, with or without children, because in families and married couples abroad there is usually one breadwinner earning for several people. Third, people around 50 years of age: they are usually well-off, their children are completing their education and they are starting to think more specifically about planning for retirement. And then there's the fourth group: pensioners.

Which products do you offer your customers?

For the first group, we focus on income protection and, especially for unmarried customers, on retirement planning. Our recommendation for groups two and three are traditional insurance as well as savings and investment products. These combine savings for old age with life insurance, because in the majority of cases the main purpose is to safeguard close relatives in the event that the primary earner should pass away. The ideal products for groups three and four are investment funds, as these customers are usually already financially secure and looking for profitable medium-to long-term investment opportunities for additional savings. The fourth group is interested in guaranteed performance after retirement, so annuities have lost none of their attraction.

What is the greatest strength of Soliswiss?

Our advice and our retirement planning products leave

room for hybrid solutions. The combination of products corresponds to the customer's individual needs. Our approach accommodates the requirements.

We guarantee good performance, a high level of security and a variety of products. The customer can diversify and still receives everything from one source – a sustainable and profitable kind of advice.

What disadvantages result from the cooperation with Soliswiss?

Some of the products we offer are not available for sale in all countries. But this immediately generates another benefit: we are putting a lot of energy into developing customized solutions for each country. Soon, a Swiss expat in Italy will be able to benefit from different products than his compatriot in France. Our portfolio already includes the first offerings of this kind.

Tell me about profitability and duration of these policies.

The current conservative assessment is having a negative effect on insurance profits. The surplus we broker with each insurance policy can counteract this price pressure up to a point, depending on the individual case – which is another advantage. Life insurance policies are long-term by nature, neither party can cancel them overnight. This means that our customers enjoy guaranteed protection during the entire term of the policy, which cannot be curtailed or indeed revoked by the insurance company if conditions deteriorate.



Michael Vögele was born in Zürich in 1963. After a traditional education in banking he spent time in various foreign countries to perfect his language skills in between working in the private banking sector. In 1992, after completing his studies in Business Administration, he joined the life insurance domaine at Credit Suisse Group. In 1997, he moved to Geneva Insurance Company as Head of Retail Marketing and Communication. From 2001 onwards, he managed the Winterthur Group's Customer Service and Training department for the banking sales channel. He has been a member of the Executive Board of Soliswiss since its inception in 2006, with responsibility for the insurance brokerage department.

Robert Gober at the Schaulager. From now until 14 October, the Schaulager in Münchenstein just outside Basel will be hosting the most extensive exhibition to date of the works of American artist Robert Gober. The exhibition consists of 40 sculptures, five large-scale installations and several groups of sketches which have been produced by the artist over the last three decades and have aroused great interest. www.schaulager.org



Robert Gober, untitled, 2005–2006. Stoneware, beeswax, cotton, leather, aluminium straps, human hair, cast lead crystal, aluminium foil, oil-based and acrylic paint



Robert Gober, untitled, 1999–2000. Plaster, beeswax, human hair, cotton, leather, aluminium straps, enamel paint



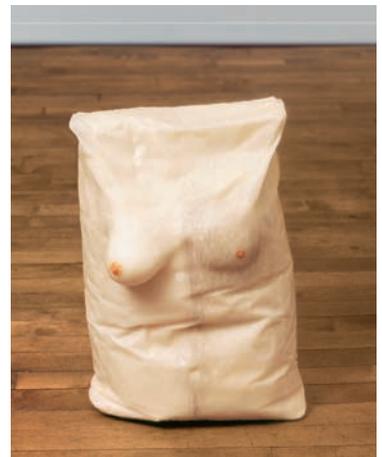
Robert Gober, Melted Rifle, 2006. Plaster, paint, cast plastic, beeswax, walnut wood, lead



Robert Gober, untitled, 1990. Beeswax, cotton, wood, leather, human hair



Robert Gober, untitled, 2005–2006. Stoneware, beeswax, cotton, leather, aluminium straps, human hair



Robert Gober, untitled, 1991. Wood, beeswax, leather, fabric and human hair



Robert Gober, untitled installation, 1989



Robert Gober, X Playpen, 1987. Wood and enamel paint



Suppose they gave an election and someone went!

We are the people.

Federal elections, which take place every four years, are the highlight of the Swiss political calendar. And yet turnout remains modest compared to other countries. By Rolf Ribi

Article 148 of the Swiss Federal Constitution reads, "Subject to the rights of the People and the Cantons, the Federal Parliament is the highest authority of the Confederation." The Federal Parliament consists of the 200 members of the National Council and the 46 cantonal representatives on the Council of States. On 21 October, the Swiss people at home and abroad will elect the members of the National Council, in other words, the lower house. This election, the highlight of Swiss political life, takes place every four years.

However, there are few signs that this summer's campaigning will be emotionally charged. Even so, the political parties are ready to tour the country rallying voters, and have already earmarked CHF 1.5-2 million each for this purpose. Remarkably, their campaigns all use images and slogans that evoke patriotic sentiments. The Social Democrats' logo features the Matterhorn, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) is campaigning under the slogan "My home, our Switzerland", the Free Democrats have a three-dimensional Swiss cross on their Web site, while a new white cross on the Christian Democrats' party logo is designed to attest to their "Swiss" credentials. The SVP has gone to the greatest lengths to appear patriotic, with a billy goat called Zottel who is to make an appearance at all its election rallies.

Even if the campaigning does liven up in the autumn, one thing is certain: elections arouse less interest in direct democracies like Switzerland than in representative (parliamentary) democracies like France, for example. Turnout at the 2003 elections was just 45.2 percent, the third-lowest figure since the

introduction of proportional representation in 1919.

There are several reasons for this poor turnout in comparison with other countries. If you are regularly involved in the decision-making process through referenda, elections are not of central importance. By contrast, in countries like France the ballot box is virtually the only place where people can express their political sentiments. In addition, the elections within the Swiss consociational system do not lead to a complete change of government. Instead, the balance of power between left and right and between individual parties usually shifts only marginally.

Co-determination through voting

And yet there are good reasons to become actively involved in elections – indeed very good reasons.

Firstly, if you don't bother voting, you leave the task of shaping the future to others (including your political opponents). Secondly, nearly all parliamentary decisions are taken within the confines of the Federal Parliament building and are not put to the people. It is the elected MPs who make most of the decisions and determine how bills are to be presented to the electorate – and often enough whether they should be put to a public vote.

The third point is that it is the men and women elected to the Federal Parliament who choose the Federal Council every four years. So it is the parliament elected by the Swiss people themselves that determines whether we have a national government with a conservative or centre-right majority, as is currently the case, or whether the Federal Council of the next legislative period is more

balanced, more socially-minded, more environmentally conscious and more cosmopolitan than the present one.

Four years ago, the Federal Office of Statistics looked into which socioeconomic groups were more or less likely to vote. Its findings were clear: "Men, older people and those with a higher level of education and greater incomes vote more often than women, young people, the less well-educated and those with low incomes." This imbalance in participation by the various groups led to a "systematic distortion" of the will of the people that was undesirable from a national political point of view, it said.

After the federal elections of 2003, voters were asked why they had cast their vote. Thirty-nine percent gave "political co-determination" as the most important reason. Next up, at 18 percent, was "tradition, habit and civic duty", although this argument in particular is losing ground. "To support a particular party or candidate" (13%) was seen as less important, though slightly more so than "political interest" (11%). Interestingly enough, the motivation differed between the various language groups. Whereas a clear majority of voters in German-speaking Switzerland stated "political co-determination" as their main reason for voting, voters in the "Latin" regions had a very different priority. In French-speaking and Italian-speaking areas, "awareness of traditions and civic duty" was the most important motive.

"State authority rests with the people", the constitution of Zurich canton asserts concisely. And so it does. We are the people, and our electoral behaviour plays a decisive role in shaping our country's future.



“We can look forward to a boring election.”

This October's federal elections will not bring about any major changes in parliament, merely minor shifts within the left- and right-wing camps. Political scientist Hans Hirter, a professor at Berne University, explains why the situation is so stable in Switzerland. Interview by Heinz Eckert

“SWISS REVIEW:” *The elections of 20 years ago were dubbed the “elections of hope”, the environment was the main campaign issue and the Greens were expected to win. Do you see any parallels between then and now?*

HANS HIRTER: I certainly don't see any parallels in terms of the slogan. Even back then, hopes of a Green Federal Council were illusionary. Nobody expects anything of the sort nowadays. Even the environment is just one of many election issues this year. The Greens are expected to perhaps gain a few seats, but not to have the kind of resounding success that the SVP had. In fact, I don't see any parallels with 20 years ago.

Haven't the Greens got even better chances of success than they had 20 years ago?

You could say that the Greens are now an established party and still have potential.



Prof. Hans Hirter

Twenty years ago, people still doubted whether they could make a breakthrough. On the other hand, they were the only party

that espoused environmental protection. Today they all do, so there is no longer any reason to vote for the Greens.

Isn't it also the case that the Greens are seen as less of a classic left-wing party than they were? Doesn't the party have a broader base now?

No. I think the Greens have a more clearly left-wing position than they had in the past. Back then the party was still a motley group of defectors from a variety of parties, even centre-right ones. You can see from their activity in the National Council that they are no less left-wing now than when they were founded. But it's true that many voters consider the Green Party less left-wing than the SP. Perhaps that's partly because it isn't saddled with the “burden” of the trade unions.

Environmental issues are also less ideological and more acceptable nowadays. Even centre-right parties and companies are addressing the issue. Does that help the Greens?

It's true that no-one can afford not to take the environment seriously anymore. But that has also earned the Greens competition from other parties. The Green Party no longer has a monopoly on the environment. The majority of voters don't like ascetic purity in environmental policies anyway and prefer the

SWISSINFO LAUNCHES ELECTION PLATFORM

Swissinfo's new content for the 2007 election year is multi-medial, independent and – most importantly – targeted specifically at the Swiss abroad.

In addition to an election special and an election blog, the previously separate swisspolitics Web site will be integrated into swissinfo and its content expanded.

The federal elections are the central domestic political topic of 2007. Swissinfo has therefore put together a major election special which will be further enhanced in July by the addition of the online “Smartvote” tool and the SRG

election exchange. Although the election is also being reported in all the other Swiss media, swissinfo's content differs in one key respect: swissinfo has a remit to supply specifically the Swiss abroad with information. In addition to providing information on the 2007 federal elections, swissinfo encourages the Swiss abroad to discuss their concerns, the election issues and the candidates on the World Wide Web. Together with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, it has set up an election blog in German, French and Italian to serve as an international discussion platform. In or-

der to get the ball rolling, the editorial team has posted a series of hypotheses on a variety of issues (integration, crime and e-voting). Readers can respond to these articles either in their own name or using a pseudonym. The only conditions are that the comments are respectable and factual and in no way slanderous. In the second stage, a feature for posing questions to politicians will be added to the communication platform. Candidates for seats in the Federal Assembly will then be able to present themselves briefly and reply to questions from the Swiss abroad. These question-

and-answer sessions will also be part of the 2007 election blog.

Finally in late August or early September, swissinfo will organise live chat sessions with selected candidates at different times of the day. At this stage, the would-be national councillors will be able to answer questions immediately rather than some time after they are posted.

LINKS • swissinfo: election special (www.swissinfo.org/eng/elections/index.html?siteSect=1530) • Election blog (<http://wahlen.swissinfo.org/>) • swissinfo: Politics (www.swissinfo.org/eng/politics/index.html.html?siteSect=1500) • Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (www.aso.ch/)

approach the CVP or the FDP takes to the matter.

What effect will the SP's defeat in Zurich have on the National Council elections?

It is significant inasmuch as the existing trend was simply more pronounced in Zurich. The SP is having difficulty holding onto its supporters everywhere, and has been losing votes to the Greens throughout the country. That may also be the case in the forthcoming National Council elections.

What other campaign issues apart from the environment will the electioneering focus on?

There will be a wide range of issues. The SVP will probably focus on foreigners and the minaret ban, maybe also relations with the EU, depending on how the so-called "tax row" plays out. The CVP will try to win votes with family-friendly policies. The left-wingers will undoubtedly enter the fray with phrases like "fat-cat salaries" and "low taxes for the rich". The FDP will have difficulty positioning itself and has an uphill struggle ahead. The Liberals will probably continue to lose votes, whereas the CVP seems to have recovered and will hold on to its share of the vote. The FDP is well on the way to becoming a "10-percent party", as is the case in other European countries, and is gradually changing from an establishment and people's party into an economics party for higher earners.

Can't liberal ideas be conveyed attractively anymore?

When liberal ideas are put into political and economic practice, the results are often difficult for many to accept. Take for example the globalisation of the economy, job cuts, the slimming down of the state and the increase in the pension age.

Do you then think that the SVP will achieve its objective of winning an extra 100,000 votes?

That would indeed be a major coup for the SVP, especially since the turnout won't be any larger than four years ago. The shifts in the centre-right camp are likely to be by about a half to one percent, which the FDP will probably lose to the Greens or the EVP.

In other words, nothing will change after these elections either?

That's what I assume. There will be minor shifts within the left-wing and Green camp.

How do you explain this incredible stability in Switzerland?

The stability is primarily due to the fact that the Swiss people can also vote on specific issues through referenda and therefore correct parliamentary decisions. That's why there's no need to change allegiances at every election. Even when there is relatively high unemployment and economic problems, the majority of Swiss people see no reason for seeking protection from left-wing parties. They are aware that political life is not determined exclusively in Berne. That's how we differ from other countries.

Do the federal councillors have more influence on the elections than they did in the past?

That's difficult to say. Sure, Federal Councillor Blocher campaigns, but I don't think that the federal councillors have a great influence.

What do you think about popular election of the Federal Council?

I'm against it. Federal councillors should govern and lead their ministry well during their four-year mandate, not campaign in order to secure their personal re-election. In any case, there's no country anywhere in the world where the people elect their ministers.

So we can expect the federal elections to pass without incident?

Yes, I believe so. Everyone has staked out their territory and there will be no surprises. The elections will be boring, which in turn reflects the quality of

our political system. We don't need the kind of electioneering banter that you get in other countries.

What would you say to a foreigner who asked you to name the greatest political problems in Switzerland? The minaret ban and dangerous dogs and the removal of assault weapons from private households?

Just like every other small western and northern European state, Switzerland really doesn't have any major problems to solve in comparison to other countries. That's why we can spend lots of time arguing about dangerous dogs, minarets and service weapons. These are "wealth problems". However, prosperity also creates new social problems. For example, young people have to learn that not everything is free. The willingness and will to work must be promoted once again in all areas as a matter of urgency. At present we have a kind of "wealth-related decline" in this respect. This is something that we have to combat.

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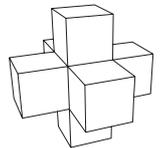
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- Rasche Einführung des E-Votings, insbesondere für AuslandschweizerInnen

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How Swiss citizens abroad can vote

On 21 October 2007, all Swiss citizens of voting age who are resident abroad can join their domestic compatriots in determining the composition of the National Council and the Council of States for the next four years. What is the procedure for voting? We explain how it works.

The National Council, or large chamber of the Swiss parliament, has 200 seats and represents the Swiss resident population. The 200 seats are divided between the cantons according to their respective populations. There is one seat for about every 36,000 inhabitants.

Each canton forms a constituency, so there are 26 constituencies across Switzerland. Each constituency has the right to at least one seat in parliament. As the canton with the highest population, Zurich sends 34 national councillors to Berne, while the cantons of Uri, Glarus, Obwalden and Nidwalden as well as the two Appenzells each have just one representative in the large chamber.

Since 1919, national councils have been elected for four-year terms using a electoral system known as proportional representation, in which seats are allocated to parties according to the number of votes they re-

ceive. This enables even minorities to obtain seats, in contrast to majority or “first-past-the-post” systems, in which minorities have no chance of winning a seat in parliament. Majority elections are held in the cantons which have only one seat on the National Council. Here the relative number of votes is decisive, in other words, the seat goes to the candidate who receives the most votes.

The Council of States, or small chamber, represents the political voice of the cantons. Most cantons send two representatives to the Council of States. Because of historical cantonal divisions, however, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Basel Land, Basel City, Nidwalden and Obwalden each send just one (bringing the total to 46). The councillors decide independently, not as instructed by their cantons.

Elections to seats in the Council of States are subject to cantonal regulations. For this reason, Swiss small-chamber elections are not held everywhere on the same weekend as National Council elections. The small-chamber representatives for the cantons of Zug, Appenzell Innerrhoden and



The entrance to the National Council chamber.

Grisons are elected earlier. With the exception of Jura, all cantons elect their councillors of state on the basis of a majority of votes. In most cases, an absolute majority (i.e. candidates need to receive more than 50% of the votes cast) and a second round of voting are required.

Because small-chamber elections are subject to cantonal legislation, foreign-resident Swiss citizens may take part in the elections in those cantons which grant them the right to vote at the cantonal level. At present, these are the cantons of Berne, Basel Land, Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Solothurn, Schwyz, Ticino and Zurich.

Active and passive voting rights

Citizens have the right to vote (active voting rights) and be

elected (passive voting rights) if they have Swiss nationality, have reached the age of 18 and have not been declared mentally ill or incapacitated. People resident outside Switzerland may also stand for election.

The Swiss abroad may vote actively in elections in the canton and constituency where their electoral community is located. However, they may stand for election in any canton, provided they have been put forward. Even so, each candidate can only stand for election in one canton.

The run-up to the election

The individual parties submit their proposed candidates to the relevant cantonal authority, which checks the proposals and gives the representative of the signatories a deadline by which any defects in the submission must be remedied. The amended proposals are called lists. The number of candidates on each list is limited to the number of National Council seats available for the constituency in question. No name may appear more than twice. Nobody may be a candidate in more than one constituency anywhere in Switzerland. If not, the system of proportional representation – in which

FOPH PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

The Federal Office of Public Health in Berne has published a series of personal hygiene recommendations for use in the event of a pandemic. These hygiene measures could reduce the risk of infection and even slow the spread of a flu pandemic. The FOPH also recommends you purchase a store of fifty protective masks (surgical masks) per person right away.

In summary, the FOPH recommends taking the following hygiene measures if a pandemic occurs:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap;

- Use paper handkerchiefs when coughing or sneezing, dispose of them afterwards ;
- Avoid shaking hands;
- Wear protective masks if recommended to do so by the authorities.

Details of the recommendations can be consulted at www.bag.admin.ch

Further information on pandemic preparedness can be found at www.eda.admin.ch, “Services”, “Living abroad”.



candidates from different lists or the same list may appear twice – would not function. This so-called prohibition of multiple candidacy is designed to prevent the proposed candidates from standing for election on several lists in the same constituency or in more than one constituency. Each proposal must be signed in person by a minimum number of eligible voters resident in the relevant constituency and bear a designation at the top of the document for ease of identification. No eligible voter may sign more than one proposal.

Additional votes

If a party list contains fewer valid names of candidates than the number of seats available in the constituency, the blank lines are assigned to the party in whose name the list was submitted as additional votes. Party votes can therefore be votes for candidates or additional votes.

Combined lists

Different parties can combine their lists within a constituency in order to benefit from their joint voting power. Whenever two or more lists are combined, they are initially treated as a single list when seats are allocated. Thereafter, the seats are

divided between the parties forming the combined list according to the rules of proportional representation. This gives smaller parties better prospects of obtaining a seat.

Within a combined list, only combinations of sublists are permitted. Such sublists have the same main designation, the only differences being an additional note to identify the sex or age of the candidates, the wing or grouping of the party, or the region.

Election materials

The voting documents consist of the printed party lists and blank ballot papers. Eligible voters in cantons in which only one national councillor is elected (Uri, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Appenzell Innerrhoden and Appenzell Ausserrhoden) do not receive printed ballot papers, only blank ones.

A brief guide to voting

The Swiss abroad may cast their vote for a list containing the names of candidates from a particular party. This list may not contain more names than available lines. No name may appear more than twice on the list.

The following are examples of possible cast party lists:

List 1: Party A

01.01 *Anne Prima*

01.02 *Jacques Secundus*

If this party list is placed in the ballot box as is, each of the candidates receives one vote. The party receives as many votes as the number of available seats in the constituency. Party votes are made up of votes for candidates and additional votes.

List 2: Party B

02.01 *S raphine Tertius*

02.02 *Charles Quartus*

Here, one name on the printed list has been deleted. In general, cast ballot papers must contain at least one eligible candidate. A candidate whose name has been deleted receives no votes. However, even though one of the names has been deleted (blank line), party B still receives a second vote in the form of an additional (party) vote.

List 3: Party C

03.01 *Pierre Quintus*

03.02 *Jean Sextus*

03.01 *Pierre Quintus*

You may also delete a name on a list and enter the name of another candidate already listed. This is known as accumulating. This candidate then receives two votes. Your list may not contain more names than available lines. By listing a candidate twice, you give him an advantage over candidates you have deleted or who are listed only once. However, this has no effect on the number of votes cast for the relevant party, which is decisive when allocating seats. No candidate may be named three or more

times. Inverted commas, "ditto", "idem" or other similar expressions are not permitted.

List 4: Party D

04.01 *Jules Septimus*

04.02 *Sophie Octava*

03.01 *Pierre Quintus*

You may also add names from another list (in this case list 3) to a printed list (here list 4). This is known as split voting. However, you may only add names of candidates that appear on one of the lists you are sent. In this example, party D loses a vote and the deleted candidate also loses out. By contrast, the candidate added from another list benefits, as does his party (both of whom get a vote). Split lists may not contain more candidates than may be elected in the constituency.

Free or blank lists

List no.... Party...

04.01 *Jules Septimus*

01.01 *Anne Prima*

If you do not wish to vote for a party list, you may write the names of candidates yourself on a blank list. These candidates must appear somewhere on the party lists, although they need not belong to the same party.

If you put a party name at the top of a ballot paper, the list becomes a party list. Blank lines are then assigned to this party (as additional votes).

Lists without a party name are known as free lists. The votes go to the parties of the candidates whom you wish to elect and who appear on the ballot paper. By contrast, the blank lines on this list are not



In the chamber of the Council of States.

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assigned to any party, and are lost. Here too votes may be accumulated or split. Please note that you may only write down as many names as the number of National Council seats available to your canton.

Important

1. Only official ballot papers are valid.

2. Ballot papers must be completed or altered by hand. Changes must be clear and unambiguous. Names must be written out in full. Designate the candidates in such a way that there is no doubt as to their identity (ideally by stating their party). Please also add their candidate number.

3. Ballot papers may be neither signed nor attributable in any other manner.

4. Ballot papers containing slanderous remarks will be declared invalid.

5. Ballot papers may not contain more names than the number of National Council seats available to the canton.

6. Cast ballot papers must contain at least one valid candidate name. Only the names that appear on the printed ballot papers are valid.

7. The procedure for postal voting differs from one canton to another. Eligible foreign-resident voters are therefore recommended to carefully read through the instructions contained in the envelope sent to them by their constituency.

8. Any foreign-resident voters who wish to cast their vote in person at the polling station in their community should notify their electoral community of this in writing or by personal appointment. If the electoral community receives notification at least six weeks before the election, it sets aside voting materials for the non-resident voter concerned. In this case, these voting materials must be

collected from the voter registration bureau of the electoral community during opening hours.

9. Do not cast more than one National Council ballot paper.

Voting

Your electoral community sends you the voting documents in the official language of your choice before the date of the election.

These comprise:

- The ballot papers;
- The Federal Chancellery's voting instructions;
- One or two envelopes addressed to your electoral community, depending on your canton, so that you can cast your ballot in secret;
- A separate voting card, if the voting documents envelope does not suffice to identify you.

The election and voting procedures are laid down by cantonal legislation. There are 26 different regulations! We therefore recommend that you read your electoral community's instructions carefully. This ensures that your vote will count in full. If you have any questions about voting, please contact your political community directly.

Changes of address should be sent to the Swiss embassy or consulate at which you are registered.

Related election links

www.parlament.ch/e/home/page/wahlen-2007.htm
www.ch.ch, "Authorities"
www.bk.admin.ch/aktuell/abstimmung/nrw/index.html?lang=de
www.tellvetia.ch



In the National Council chamber.

No construction that damages the Swiss environment or landscape

In June 2006, the initiative committee "Helvetia Nostra" launched the popular initiative "Against the unbridled building of constructions that damage the environment and the landscape" (see Swiss Review 5/06). The aim of the initiative is to give the Swiss Federation greater powers in key urban and regional planning issues.

The initiative aims at adding a fourth paragraph to Article 75 of the Swiss Federal Constitution, stating that constructions which damage the environment or landscape, such as industrial

complexes, airports, shopping centres, sports stadiums, amusement parks, multi-storey car parks, etc., may only be erected if they are of overriding importance and permit adherence to the principles of sustainability. Generally binding guidelines are to define the potential locations and dimensions of such constructions.

This constitutional amendment would also require changes to the Constitution's transitional provisions. A new clause 8 in Article 197 of the Transitional Provisions of the Federal Constitution would require the Federal Council to issue a decree defining the necessary implementing provisions and plans if the relevant law does not come into force within two years of the approval of the amended Article 75, paragraph 4.

POPULAR INITIATIVES

The following initiatives have been launched since the last issue:

- "For a healthy climate" (until 29 November 2008)
 - "Against the construction of minarets" (until 1 November 2008)
- Signature forms for current initiatives can be downloaded from the Federal Chancellery site: www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis_1_3_1_1.html

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Expatriate candidates

Never before have so many foreign-resident Swiss voters stood as candidates for seats on the National Council. They also include four high-profile members of the Council for the Swiss Abroad.



Peter Simon Kaul, born 1956, is a self-employed businessman living near Dresden. He is standing for the SVP in Zurich canton. Kaul is married and has four children. Why is he standing for election? "My candidature will help to raise awareness of the needs of the Swiss abroad among the political parties and the general public, and to promote and strengthen mutual understanding. We need to build bridges and come closer, exchange experiences and work out how best to use the skills we have acquired abroad for the benefit of our common homeland. As an independent, self-sufficient and sovereign state in an increasingly global world, Switzerland faces great challenges. We could do even more to put the experience and skills we have gained abroad at Switzerland's disposal. A Swiss expatriate seat on the National Council would greatly help in this respect. It would give us a hotline to Switzerland's decision-making bodies as well as an opportunity to talk to members of parliament directly. It is this belief that has prompted me to stand for election to the National Council in my home canton of Zurich."



Edgar Studer, born 1940, is married and a father of three. He has lived in Finchampstead in England since 1997. Amongst other positions he has held in the past, he led a social security office in Schaffhausen. Studer is standing as an SVP candidate in Schaffhausen. The former member of the residents' council in Neuhausen am Rheinfall justifies his candidacy thus: "In my work on the Council for the Swiss Abroad, I hear politicians time and again use well-chosen words to stress how important we are for Switzerland's image abroad. Unfortunately, day-to-day political life is very different. For example, voluntary AHV contributions for Swiss expatriates living within the EU have been scrapped on dubious grounds and not replaced. In addition, consulates

have been and are still being closed without replacement, and Switzerland's foreign presence has been restricted and weakened. Such action hurts Swiss companies wherever they may operate around the globe. At the same time, the expatriate Swiss community cannot afford to just sit back and observe the political goings-on back at home. Surely the Swiss abroad are better placed to recognise and understand developments and connections from afar. We, the Swiss abroad, want to help uphold freedom and democracy in Switzerland. And that is what I stand for."



Rolf Schudel, born 1943, is divorced and has a daughter. He lives and works in South Africa, where he is a self-employed businessman and the president of SVP International. One of his main concerns is for Switzerland's image abroad. As a national councillor, Basel-born Schudel would promote self-assured foreign policies and the maintenance of banking secrecy. He is well aware that the present system makes it very difficult for Swiss expatriates to be elected as national councillors. He therefore wants to reform the electoral system to, amongst other things, give the Fifth Switzerland its own constituencies as a way of overcoming the current discrimination against the Swiss abroad.

Shortly before our copy deadline, it came to our attention that another member of the Council for the Swiss Abroad, Ron Favarger from Geneva, would be standing. Favarger, a self-employed businessman living in Canada, will be standing as a SVP candidate in Geneva canton.

As this issue of the Swiss Review went to press, the SVP had announced that it would be putting forward a Swiss abroad list in Schaffhausen, Geneva and Zurich cantons.

The following SVP candidates will be standing: Zurich: Peter Simon Kaul (51), businessman, Radebeul, Germany. / Inge Schütz (57), the head of the commercial section of the Swiss embassy in Stockholm, Sweden. /

Mario Valli (61), general manager, Edenvale, South Africa. / Hans Peter Bieri (42), head of the visa service of the Swiss embassy in Cairo, Downtown Cairo, Egypt. / Walter Müller (62), businessman, Greenpoint, Cape Town, South Africa. / Ueli Maurer jr. (29), business manager, Borgen, Norway. / Karl Bachmann (54), paramedic, Tranva, Croatia. / Yvonne Ochsner (44), restaurant owner, Whitehorse Y.T., Canada. / Hubert Brumann (55), IT entrepreneur, East London, South Africa. / Markus Stöckli (38), sales agent for Bolivia, Chile and Peru; Quito, Ecuador. / Dr. Nicolas Szita (37), university lecturer, London, Great Britain. / Heinz Moll (56), journalist, Prague, Czech Republic. / Norbert Ehrbar (47), gastronomy expert, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Schaffhausen: Rolf B. Schudel (63), businessman, President, SVP International, Vico Morcote, Switzerland (otherwise based in South Africa) / Edgar Studer (67), former welfare secretary, Berkshire, Great Britain.

Geneva: Ron Favarger (71), businessman, Toronto, Canada. / Dominique Miglio (41), hotel owner, Bangkok, Thailand. / Pierre Goldschmid (74), retired businessman, Bruy, France.

FDP International will also be putting up a list in Zurich.

The following FDP International candidates will be standing: Helen Freiermuth (49), instructor, Gainesville, USA (in Canada from the summer). / Gil Schneider (49), businessman, Singapore. / Hansueli Meili (45), business consultant, Yoyakarta, Indonesia. / Urs Wäfler (28), software engineer, India (in Switzerland from the summer).

The following CVP candidate will be standing in Berne: Felix W. Niederhauser (57), export manager, Rotterdam, Holland.

The following candidate will be standing for the Green Party in Fribourg: Raphaël Thiérmard (38), responsible for communication at ECOLO, instructor ETOPIA, Neufchâteau, Belgium.

The up-to-date list of Swiss abroad candidates for the federal Election can be found at www.aso.ch



When will the first expatriate be elected?

Parliamentary elections are also Federal Council elections.

A bicameral system based on the American model and a government in which the most important parties are represented proportionally. These are the main characteristics of the Swiss political system. Although the Swiss people do not elect the members of the government directly, they determine the party-political breakdown of the Federal Council. By René Lenzin

The political system in Switzerland is one that guarantees stability. Ever since the introduction of proportional representation in 1919, the four political parties that make up the current government – the Christian Democrats (CVP), Free Democrats (FDP), Social Democrats (SP) and the Swiss People's Party (SVP) – have almost always accounted for at least 80 percent of the votes cast. Nevertheless, there have been significant shifts among the parties in the Federal Council over the past 16 years. Between 1991 and 2003, the SVP more than doubled its share of the votes, advancing from a junior partner to the strongest party overall. During the same period, the CVP and FDP consistently lost ground, while the SP made small gains and recovered the position it had held in the 1970s.

The electoral successes of the Swiss People's Party eventually lead to the "magic formula" that had applied since the 1950s, even though the SVP subsequently "pinched" a seat from the CVP on the Federal Council. Instead of two CVP seats, two FDP seats, two SP seats and one for the SVP, since 2003 the CVP has had one, the FDP two, the SP two and the SVP the remaining two. According



te Swiss national councillor

to the thinking behind the magic formula, the Federal Council is to reflect the relative strength of the different parties taking into account not only their share of the vote but also the number of seats each holds in the Federal Assembly. Because the CVP and FDP traditionally have more seats on the Council of States than their share of votes in National Council elections suggest, they

maintain a disproportionate weighting in Parliament despite steadily losing ground.

Few electoral rules

In contrast to the cantons, the members of the national government are chosen not by the people, but by Parliament. Because the elections for the Federal Council take place in the first session after the National Council elections, the latter are also an indirect straw poll for the composition of the government. Indeed, the growing polarisation and personalisation of politics has increased this role of the legislative elections. You could therefore argue that parliamentary elections are also Federal Council elections.

The formula for the composition of government is not set out in any decree. In theory, the MPs are free to choose members of other parties or even independents, although there are a few hard-and-fast rules. For instance, the Constitution states that care must be taken to ensure that all regions and linguistic groups are represented appropriately. At present, there are five German-speaking and two French-speaking members of government, but not a single Italian Swiss. Following the lifting of the relevant ban and the introduction of a constitutional amendment, there are now for the very first time two federal councillors from the same canton (Zurich): Christoph Blocher and Moritz Leuenberger.

The procedure for Federal Council elections is laid down in law: seats are allocated individually and in succession according to the length of time the previous incumbent has spent in office. Seats contested by existing members of the Federal Council are allo-

cated first. This system of uninominal voting is often criticised because it enables individual parliamentary groups to do deals with or conversely exact revenge on each other. Party lists are suggested as an alternative, which would enable the Federal Assembly to choose all seven Federal Councillors at the same time. However, such a change to the voting system has not been approved by a majority of MPs.

Another regular feature is the call for popular election of the Federal Council. The SVP in particular considered calling a referendum on the issue after it failed to get a second seat despite increasing its share of the vote. Since Christoph Blocher's election, the SVP has dropped the issue again. The greatest problem with a popular vote would be to ensure the balanced representation of the various regions and language groups.

Council of States: counterbalance or privilege?

National Council elections take place on the same day throughout Switzerland, with the 26 cantons acting as the constituencies. Seats are allocated according to the number of inhabitants in each canton. Zurich gets the most seats (34), followed by Berne (26) and the Vaud (18), while at the other end of the scale, Appenzell, Glarus, Nidwalden, Obwalden and Uri each get only one. By contrast, elections for the Council of States are organised by canton, and take place on the same day as the National Council elections in most cantons. Exceptions include Zug and Appenzell-Innerrhoden, whose regional representatives are selected not at the ballot box but by their regional authority. The two chambers of the Federal Assembly have equal power. This means that legislation can only come into force if approved by both.

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What are your party's main issues?

In 2007, the SVP's election slogan will be "My home, our Switzerland". The SVP wants a booming economy that creates secure jobs, lower taxes and less bureaucracy as well as a democratic, independent and cosmopolitan Switzerland that looks not only to the EU. Crime must be tackled consistently, and the population throughout the country must be given adequate protection. The SVP is also in the front line in the battle against asylum fraud and the abuse of the welfare state.

The SP Switzerland campaigns for a social, open and environmentally friendly Switzerland. Our central concerns are for social justice and equal opportunities for all. To achieve this we need better conditions for working parents. The SP supports active and concerted foreign policies and favours rapid negotiation for entry to the European Union. With regard to climate change, renewable energy sources and greater energy efficiency need to be promoted. We have already successfully introduced the incentive tax on heating fuel, and are now seeking a similar one on petrol.

The FDP wants to give Switzerland a boost. It has therefore drawn up four projects that are of central importance for the future of Switzerland:

An intelligent Switzerland: investing in talent, curiosity and ideas

A growing Switzerland: profitable, tolerant and creative

A just Switzerland: more opportunities for all

An open Switzerland: integration and networking

What does your party want to achieve in Parliament over the next four years?

The SVP wants to lead Switzerland back onto the road to success. This will be centred on lower taxes and less state expenditure, a reform of the welfare state, the prevention of abuses of the asylum and welfare systems as well as the creation of ideal conditions for conducting business in Switzerland. Switzerland must not forget its libertarian principles: hard work and responsible behaviour rather than dependence on the state. The SVP is dedicated to protecting the people's democratic right of co-determination.

A socially just Switzerland: expanding day-care for children, increasing the number of apprenticeships, securing the welfare state, a flexible pension age that everyone can accept, and affordable health insurance.

An open Switzerland: active involvement in the United Nations, increasing public expenditure on development work, and the start of membership negotiations with the EU.

An environmentally friendly Switzerland: Buyback prices for renewable energy, measures for improving energy efficiency, a CO₂ incentive tax, no new nuclear power stations.

Knowledge shapes our future and creates wealth (for instance by promoting research)

Fiscal competitiveness: low taxes and a simple taxation system

Lower consumer prices thanks to competition

Environmentally and climate-friendly policies

Enabling mothers to work: more childcare

Capitalising on the benefits of experience: creating incentives for working longer

Why should the Swiss abroad vote for your party over any other?

The SVP defends the interests of the Swiss abroad, who should also be represented on the National Council. SVP International will be campaigning with several party lists to provide the Fifth Switzerland with a platform and all the necessary support. Upholding Swiss values and a commitment to a free and independent Switzerland are at the heart of our endeavours. Open-mindedness, responsibility and competitiveness: that's what the SVP stands for. If you care about Switzerland and want to help your country advance, you only have one choice on 21 October: the SVP!

The SP is the party that represents active, concerted foreign policies. This is why the SP played a key role in parliamentary votes on opening Switzerland up to the outside world (Schengen/Dublin, freedom of movement, cooperation with the East). Our foreign minister, Micheline Calmy-Rey, tackles these issues in a consistent manner within the Federal Council. Through its parliamentary efforts, the SP is working for better representation of the Swiss abroad, for example in the form of a guaranteed representative in the federal parliament.

The FDP is actively involved in promoting the interests of the Swiss abroad. For example, thanks to the FDP, the Swiss abroad now benefit from freedom of movement throughout the European Union. We are also campaigning for the rapid introduction of e-voting. Every year, FDP Switzerland International, the international section of the FDP, presents its Swiss Abroad Award to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of the Swiss abroad. The aim of the award is to raise awareness among the Swiss population about the significance of the Fifth Switzerland.



We are working for a family-friendly Switzerland

We are working for full employment in Switzerland

We are working for a socially secure Switzerland

We are working for an ecologically sustainable Switzerland

Tax cuts for families, better conditions for working parents: all-day schools and childcare. Companies should be required to provide more home-based jobs, part-time work for managers, maternity and paternity leave.

Switzerland needs open export markets, flexible employment legislation, innovativeness, an internationally attractive tax climate, first-class infrastructures and excellent levels of education. Our welfare state must be adapted to take account of recent social changes. We want to invest in energy efficiency and new technologies to tackle global warming.

Our party leader, Christoph Darbellay, and Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard embody the CVP and Switzerland's centre-left resurgence. Anyone who wants a family-friendly Switzerland, a Switzerland with full employment, a socially secure Switzerland and an ecologically sustainable Switzerland should vote for the CVP. The CVP takes the concerns of the Fifth Switzerland seriously, but also expects the Swiss abroad to become actively involved. We therefore welcome members of the Fifth Switzerland who would like to become candidates for the National Council elections. Contact us at www.cvp.ch.



1. *Climate:* We want to move away from oil, scrap nuclear power and switch completely to renewable energy sources by 2050.

2. *Economics:* We want the economy to become more ecological and invest more in environmentally friendly technologies.

3. *Equality:* We want men and women to have the same rights and opportunities, and we want equal opportunities for all in education and training.

4. *Peace:* We want a halt to military exports and greater cooperation on development.

The most important measures are those that combat global warming: effective tools for promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources as well as the introduction of an all-inclusive incentive tax. In terms of social policy, we want measures to overcome (youth) unemployment and create a stronger AHV with a flexible retirement age from 62 onwards. And we want Parliament to define foreign policies that promote human rights as well as social and ecological rules for globalisation.

Green is the colour of the 21st Century. The Greens work to protect both our planet and human rights. If you want to maintain Switzerland's glaciers and its wonderful landscapes, you should vote green. If you want Switzerland to continue to have good public transport and a good education and healthcare system, you should vote for the Greens. In other words, if you want to help Switzerland become more ecological, social and cosmopolitan, vote for the Greens.



The EVP wants to secure the quality of life in Switzerland through: *Stronger families.* The EVP wants to reduce the financial burden on families and support them where necessary. We therefore want a new form of child benefit to replace all other payments and deductions and which is funded from tax revenues. At the same time, we want to scrap the discrimination against couples caused by separate taxation and individual AHV pensions.

A just economy. We want Switzerland to have a just attitude towards money; less debt, fairer wages both at the top and the bottom of the scale, a simple tax system without loopholes, and fair trade. Those are our key issues.

A healthy environment. The EVP wants prompt action to reduce Switzerland's dependence on non-renewable energy sources. To this end, it wants to introduce ecological tax reforms and a CO₂ tax on petrol. An intact environment is our legacy for future generations. That is why we need measures to prevent land overuse and urban sprawl.

The EVP sees itself as a party of values. It wants to pursue practical, people-oriented policies based on the Gospel. The EVP is neither a member of a block nor tied to any special-interest group. This enables us to always act in the interests of all – including those without a voice and the oft-forgotten Swiss men and women living abroad. As such, the EVP consistently opposes poverty and the persecution of Christians around the globe and fights to ensure that the fundamental Christian values of the Swiss Constitution will remain the guiding principles of politics in Switzerland.



The Liberals promote intelligence, innovativeness and creativity. We therefore focus especially on the quality of vocational training and excellence in research. We support a fiscal competitiveness which ensures a good management of public funds and guards against punitive taxation. The Liberals also want to see the eventual abolition of federal direct taxation.

The Liberals believe that the Swiss healthcare system is and remains one of the best in the world. In order to rein in spiralling expenditure, the Liberals want to reintroduce competition and thus offer the insured and patients alike a choice in terms of hospitals, medicines, health insurers, etc. With regard to asylum and foreign policy, the Liberal Party believes that our asylum practices should be coordinated with those of our partners in the European Union. At the same time, Switzerland has to prevent abuses of its hospitality.

The Swiss abroad constitute an important electoral force for our party because we sense that many of them share the liberal values of liberty and responsibility. We also want to ensure that the Swiss abroad are given the best opportunity to exercise their civic duties. It is therefore up to our MPs to take the interests of the Swiss abroad into account. The Liberals are also in favour of introducing online voting for Swiss citizens living abroad.

The election manifesto for the Swiss abroad

The Organisation for the Swiss Abroad represents the interests of fellow Swiss citizens living outside Switzerland. In view of the general elections taking place this autumn, the OSA is presenting the political parties and the relevant politicians with a list of concerns and wishes for the new legislative period. This election manifesto was agreed by the Council of the Swiss Abroad at its April 2006 session.

Politics

- Greater involvement of the Swiss abroad in political debates, especially during the opinion-forming phase, primarily within the framework of the international sections of the political parties as well as over the Internet.
- Promoting candidates from the Swiss abroad community for elections to Federal Council seats.
- Greater involvement of the Fifth Switzerland in the legislative procedure.
- The earliest possible introduction of electronic voting; including the Swiss abroad in future pilot testing.
- Simplifying the ability to exercise ones political rights from abroad, especially by centralising the electoral register for the Swiss abroad at cantonal level and scrapping the obligatory four-yearly renewal of voter registration.
- Ensuring that the Swiss abroad are kept adequately informed, especially through the further development of swissinfo/SRI and the expansion of the Swiss Review (increasing its size and frequency).



On the roof of the Federal Parliament building

Mobility

- Upholding, developing and implementing the Agreement on the Free Movement of People with European Union Member States and extending this free movement to countries that subsequently join the EU.
- Ensuring that the Swiss abroad are adequately represented by Swiss foreign missions by maintaining and where necessary expanding the network of consulates and securing the provision of high-quality services.
- Promoting and upgrading professional mobility, for instance within the framework of exchange programmes; recognizing the economic, political, cultural and social benefits of mobility for Switzerland.
- Facilitating mobility through the conclusion of international agreements, especially with regard to social security (e.g. with Australia and New Zealand), double taxation and the recognition of diplomas.
- Implementing the agreements that clear up the status of cross-border commuters

(e.g. the problems associated with unemployment insurance in Italy).

Education & training

- Maintaining and expanding the existing network of Swiss schools abroad in order to offer young foreign-resident Swiss citizens an opportunity to be educated to Swiss standards so that they can easily continue their education in Switzerland.
- Promoting collaboration between institutions other than the Swiss schools abroad which are nonetheless involved in educating young Swiss citizens, as well as supporting such institutions.
- Securing grants for young Swiss abroad to come to Switzerland to pursue their education/training.
- Extending the recognition of foreign diplomas in Switzerland and of Swiss diplomas abroad.

Switzerland's international presence

- Expanding the international presence and image of Switzer-

land abroad, amongst other things by developing the network of diplomatic and consular missions.

- Cooperating systematically with the Swiss abroad and their institutions, which given Switzerland's international presence increases the antenna and multiplier effect.
- Greater cooperation between and coordination of the various parties marketing the country abroad.
- Systematic consideration of the international consequences of national decisions and the effects statements have on perceptions and the image of Switzerland.
- Raising awareness among the Swiss people to global competition and promoting competitiveness within Switzerland.
- Using the infrastructures and network of Swiss schools abroad as platforms for Switzerland's international presence; founding new Swiss schools in countries like China, India and Russia.



Maintaining contact with the motherland

- Promoting and supporting programmes that encourage dialogue between the Swiss abroad and both their home country and Swiss citizens living in Switzerland (e.g. through holiday camps for foreign-resident Swiss children).
- Improving the legal status of state-recognised institutions for the Swiss abroad in accordance with Art. 40 of the Federal Constitution, in particular replacing the decree on financial support for Swiss abroad institutions (which expires on 31 December 2007) with a federal law.

Political lobbying for the Swiss abroad

The SP parliamentary group has put forward no fewer than three political initiatives for the benefit of the Swiss abroad. These will soon be considered in Parliament.

SP National Councillor Mario Fehr wants the Federal Council to create the necessary constitutional and legislative conditions to allow direct representation of the Swiss abroad in the Federal Assembly. There are good grounds for his proposal. By the end of 2006, a total of 111,249 foreign-resident Swiss citizens had registered to exercise their political rights in Switzerland. This makes them a very powerful force that should be given a stronger voice in political debate in Switzerland. Several countries give their foreign-resident citizens separate representation in parliament. For example, Portuguese citizens temporarily or permanently living abroad can elect four deputies by postal voting. Italy's expatriates choose six of the seats in the Senate and

THE OSA'S POSITION

Compared with the foreign-resident citizens of other countries, the Swiss abroad have a high degree of political codetermination rights. However, the importance of the Swiss Diaspora for Switzerland as a whole continues to be underestimated at home. There is therefore a need to strengthen the means whereby the specific needs of the Fifth Switzerland are met and their presence is taken into account.

The OSA has always striven to give the Swiss abroad the same status as their domestic compatriots wherever possible. It has consistently campaigned for equality and against the discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation of expatriates in all the relevant areas. For this reason, it supports all suggestions that qualify individual political codetermination in favour of institutionalising a collective special position. Furthermore, sufficient attention must be paid to achieving systemic conformity within the constitutional framework of Switzerland. Finally, it would be politically wise to carefully gauge what Swiss-resident citizens think of the idea of granting expatriates decision-making and codetermination rights.

12 of those in the House of Representatives. Mario Fehr believes that the opinions and interests of the Swiss abroad could be better represented and more directly tied into the political process by giving foreign-resident Swiss citizens two seats on the Council of States and as many as six extra representatives on the National Council.

Councillor Fehr also wants all cantons to allow the Swiss abroad to vote in small-chamber elections. At present, the Swiss abroad are excluded from choosing councillors of state in most cantons because small-chamber elections are cantonal.

Carlo Sommaruga from Geneva proposes amending the Constitution and all the other relevant legislation so that the Swiss abroad can be represented first on the Council of States and later on the Federal Council in the manner that best suits our institutions. There are several ways in which this could be made possible: either through regional elections (as the 27th canton) or by choosing Swiss abroad representatives through an electoral college.

Outgoing National Councillor Remo Gysin, who is also the chairman of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, would like the Federal Council to conduct and publish the findings of a statistical analysis of the voting patterns of the Swiss abroad during referenda and elections. Foreign-resident Swiss citizens can currently participate in referenda and elections in only five cantons: Appenzell Innerrhoden, Basel City, Geneva, Lucerne and Vaud.

The Swiss abroad parliamentary group

The Swiss abroad community is constantly growing. If they were a canton, the 645,000 foreign-resident Swiss men and women scattered around the globe would be Switzerland's third-largest; less populated than Zurich and Berne, but with more inhabitants than Vaud canton.

Encouragingly, the rise in the number of Swiss abroad is exceeded by the rate of growth in the number of registered voters. Whereas only 105,000 people had registered to exercise

their political rights in Switzerland just a year ago, the figure now stands at 111,000. When the Swiss abroad were granted the right to vote and take part in referenda 15 years ago, no more than 20-25,000 potential votes were expected to come from abroad.

Switzerland's politicians are increasingly taking note of this, and taking an ever-greater interest in the situation and needs of their internationally mobile compatriots. This "prise de conscience" with respect to the significance of foreign-resident Swiss citizens led to the creation of the Swiss abroad parliamentary group two years ago. This brings together more than 80 members of the National Council and the Council of States – fully a third of the National Assembly – all of whom have indicated a specific interest in the needs of the Fifth Switzerland by joining the group.

Since then, this interest in the Swiss abroad has expressed itself in a number of parliamentary initiatives:

Swiss schools abroad: Together with no fewer than 45 co-signatories, Genevan SNP National Councillor André Reymond, a member of the Council for the Swiss Abroad, tabled a parliamentary question asking the Federal Council to explain the importance of Swiss schools abroad in enhancing the perception of Switzerland and outline the support that the state would be willing to give to set up new schools in up-and-coming countries like China, India and Russia. In its answer, the Federal Council stated that Swiss schools abroad enjoyed an excellent reputation, were extremely well known and provided Switzerland with a lasting and wide-ranging net-



work of contacts around the world. The government would be pleased if new schools were established, and would gladly provide advice. However, the initiative should be taken by the Swiss abroad themselves.

Dual German-Swiss nationality agreement: Following discussions within the board of the OSA during last year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Basel, National Councillor Remo Gysin (SP/BS) tabled a parliamentary question asking when the national government planned to ratify the agreement that it had signed with Germany several years ago on national service for dual citizens. This clearly prompted the Federal Council into action, and it said the agreement would soon be put to Parliament for approval. The assembly would discuss the bill at its autumn or winter session.

Health insurance for the Swiss abroad: CSA member and Vaud FDP National Councillor Yves Guisan and 47 co-signatories proposed a motion to assess the way health insurance contributions paid by Swiss

citizens living within the EU are calculated, and the right to choose where to seek treatment.

Cross-border commuters and unemployment insurance: Councillor of State Filippo Lombardi, another member of the CSA, tabled a question on the problem of discrimination against Swiss cross-border commuters by Italian unemployment insurance regulations. In this he urged the Federal Council to apply to the Italian government or the relevant bodies at the European Union to ensure that Swiss cross-border commuters who lose their jobs are treated the same as their Italian counterparts, as required by the Agreement on the Free Movement of People signed by Switzerland and the EU.

E-voting: In the wake of a meeting of the parliamentary group, SP National Councillor Susanne Leutenegger Oberholzer (Basel Land) tabled a motion demanding the rapid introduction of e-voting and the involvement of the Swiss abroad in future pilot

testing. In parallel to this, the OSA approached the cantons to encourage them to introduce e-voting as quickly as possible.

In its reply, the Federal Council pointed out that the nationwide introduction of e-voting in all 2700 communities was very complex and time-consuming and that it would require changing cantonal legislation through referenda in most instances. The introduction of e-voting had to be dealt with carefully, it added, and it could not give any definite introduction date. For this reason, the Federal Council asked for Ms Leutenegger Oberholzer's motion to be rejected.

The issue had already been raised during parliamentary question time, when National Councillors Markus Hutter (FDP/ZH) and Yves Guisan (FDP/VD), referred to a newspaper interview in which the head of the political rights section of the Federal Chancellery had espoused the view that e-voting would not be introduced for another 30 years. In reply, Federal Chancellor Annemarie Huber-Hotz said that the cantonal and national parliaments would need to make time-consuming legislative and probably also constitutional changes before e-voting could be introduced for referenda, elections, the signing of initiatives and other votes. However, she said that the introduction of e-voting for referenda was the top priority. The ball was now in the cantons' court, with the National Council supporting the issue.

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad Winter 2007/2008

Whether your children are skiers or snowboarders, beginners or experts, our winter camps offer a great opportunity for 8- to 14-year-olds to have a super holiday!

Winter camp in Lantsch (GR)

Date: Thursday 27 December 2007 to Saturday 5 January 2008. *Number of places:* 48
Cost: CHF 900 (excl. ski and snowboard hire)
Registration deadline: 15 October 2007

Winter camp in Flumserberg (SG)

Date: Saturday 2 February to Saturday 9 February 2008
Number of places: 24.
Cost: CHF 700 (excl. ski and snowboard hire). *Registration deadline:* 15 December 2007

Twenty places for the youth ski camp in Lenk on 2-9 January 2008 will be given away. Application forms for participation in the draw will be available at www.aso.ch in September.

Registration

Discounts are available in justifiable cases. Precise details on the winter camps and application forms will be available at www.aso.ch (under "Youth", "Discover Switzerland", "Holiday camps") from September 2007 onwards. On request, we can also send you our information brochure by post.

ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Our services:

- Legal Department
- Youth Service
- Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS)
- Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA)
- Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

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Two female presidents on Lake Geneva

Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey has had ample opportunity to practice her Spanish. She welcomed Chilean President Michelle Bachelet during the latter's two-day official visit to Switzerland. The two women visited the Ecole Polytechnique de Lausanne (EPFL), the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN Human Rights Council. And Ms. Calmy-Rey also spent a few days in Spain, where she met her Spanish counterpart as well as the country's monarch, Juan Carlos.

Deadly flooding in Switzerland

Switzerland was battered by violent storms on the night of 8 June. In the Huttwil (BE) region, many streams and rivers broke their banks, damaging some 500 houses. Three people lost their lives, including a woman who drowned in her own house. The damage is estimated at CHF 40 million. The storms hit the cantons of Lucerne, Basel, Thurgau, Schaffhausen and Zurich.

Lötschberg opened

Ten years after the project was started, the Lötschberg base tunnel was officially opened by Transport Minister Moritz



Leuenberger on 15 June. The train took just 17 minutes to drive through what is now the world's third-longest tunnel (34.6km).

Swiss guests welcome

A survey of 15,000 European hotels has found that the men

and women of Switzerland are hotel owners' third-favourite guests. The most popular guests were those from Japan, while American tourists were ranked second.

Voting at 16

Glarus canton has taken a pioneering step in lowering the voting age to 16 for elections at cantonal level. This Swiss premiere has reopened the debate on the voting age in the other cantons as well as at federal level. Young Socialists in Fribourg have also launched a popular motion on this issue.

Victory for the wealthy

The trial centring on the Swissair debacle ended with the acquittal of all 19 defendants. The district court in Bülach (ZH) deemed none of the charges to be justified, and awarded damages worth a total of around CHF 3 million. Swissair's last CEO alone received CHF 488,000 in compensation. The outcome was greeted with dismay, and many wonder if the verdict was just. Former Swissair employees have their doubts. They are now pinning their hopes on a series of civil suits.

Unconstitutional

The Federal Court has ruled that depressive taxes in Obwalden are unconstitutional. The taxation system, which was adopted by referendum in December 2005 despite the fact that it favours the rich, has been rigorously opposed by National Councillor Josef Zisyadis from Vaud. He even took up residence in the half-canton to pursue his campaign. Incidentally, in the year following the introduction of the new taxation system, the number of companies settling in Obwalden increased fivefold year-on-year and the population increased by 1.5 percent.

Stubbing out smoking

According to the Federal Office of Health, the number of smokers in Switzerland has fallen by a quarter of a million in the last five years. Whereas fully 33% of the Swiss smoked in 2001, the figure had fallen to 29% by 2006.

Swiss school in Barcelona celebrates opening of new building

On 15 June, the new building of the Swiss school in Barcelona was officially opened in festive style under the motto "Another step – Un paso más" in the presence of Federal Councillor Pascal Couchepin and Catalan Education Minister Ernest Maragall. The various speeches given at the opening attested to the importance and wide-ranging influence of Swiss schools abroad. Councillor Couchepin particularly pointed to multilingualism as well as the economic and cultural ex-

changes between Spain and Switzerland. Armin Ritz, the Swiss ambassador to Spain, said he was pleased to announce that Swiss school-leaving certificates (matura) were now officially recognised in Spain thanks to Councilor Couchepin's negotiations with the authorities in Madrid. Representing the school's patron canton, Municipal Councillor Bernhard Pulver from Berne delivered his message not only in Castilian Spanish, but also in perfect Catalan, the language spoken in Barcelona, which he learnt in part at Swiss schools abroad. Headmaster Toni Wunderlin, who has headed the Barcelona school for the past seven years and who played a decisive role in the new construction and all the associated organisation, proudly presented a review of the 88-year history of the school, which currently has 660 pupils. ALAIN WEY

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Vote SVP, Vote for Switzerland!

Dear fellow citizens living abroad,

On 21 October, 2007, elections will be held. We, the Swiss citizens living abroad can also exert our influence on Switzerland's future; personally, I will support the Swiss People's Party's electoral list of citizens abroad, since:

- **The SVP is committed to Switzerland's freedom and independence.**
- **The SVP defends traditional Swiss values.**
- **The SVP wants Switzerland to remain an attractive destination to live, work and do business.**
- **The SVP represents the interests of Swiss citizens living abroad.**

Therefore, choose the SVP's electoral list of citizens abroad and speak out for the interests of Switzerland and its citizens living abroad!

With warmest regards

Rolf Schudel, Johannesburg (SA)
President SVP International

www.svp-international.ch





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