

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 2011 / NO. 4



2011 Parliamentary Elections  
Special Edition



Lavaux, UNESCO World Heritage, Lake Geneva Region

## Tastes and colours.

The familiar tastes of Switzerland are cheese, chocolate and wine, but there is much more besides...

Beyond the great classical Swiss specialties, our little country has many other gourmet delights. In Geneva, why not sample a gratin of cardoons, or wild artichokes, a vegetable classified AOC (of designated origin), accompanied by a Genevan vintage wine? Geneva Canton has Switzerland's third-largest vineyard area after the Cantons of Vaud and Valais. In Zug a cherry tart awaits you, washed down with a glass of kirsch. If you are in the Jura, do not miss the "Tête de Moine" cheese, pared into delicate rosettes. This is no more than a brief selection of all the delicious surprises that await you in Switzerland.

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## Changes and reforms

**T**HE ELECTION CAMPAIGNING IN SWITZERLAND is now in full swing. The parliamentary elections on 23 October, which this special edition of "Swiss Review" focuses on, may result in fundamental changes to Switzerland's political system. Professor Georg Kohler, a philosopher specialising in politics at the University of Zurich, believes it is quite possible that government will no longer be based on concordance after the Federal Council elections in December owing to a new distribution of power within parliament. In an interview on page 12 onwards, he also says that this does not bode well for the future. However, Kohler believes the key challenge for Switzerland is to implement urgently required reforms while, at the same time, protecting Switzerland's identity.

In this election edition, we have, of course, also given the main political parties the opportunity to set out their positions on various issues. And as lots of promises are always made during election campaigns, we look back over the past four years. We show you how parliament in Berne voted on proposals directly concerning the Swiss abroad.

We also have some changes to announce in the editorial team of "Swiss Review". Rolf Ribli, who has been closely associated with this magazine for decades – firstly as a member of the editorial board and then as editor – has now decided to enjoy his retirement. In Rolf Ribli we are losing a colleague who has made a major contribution to the face of "Swiss Review" over the years and who will certainly be very missed by readers. We thank him for his efforts and wish him many happy hours in his beloved vineyard.



Barbara Engel

Two new employees joined the editorial team at the start of June: Marc Lettau and Manuel Gnos. Marc Lettau lives in Berne and has worked for many years as an editor in various departments at the daily newspaper "Der Bund". He has family roots in Bulgaria and a close relationship with the Swiss abroad community as some of his family have lived in Tasmania for many years. Marc Lettau's first article for "Swiss Review" looks at the part-time system in Swiss politics. Manuel Gnos was head of

the online editorial team at "Der Bund" for ten years. He now works as a freelance journalist and as an organiser of cultural events at Café Kairo in Berne. He will not just be working as a journalist but will also be supporting the editorial team in their use of new media. We have already introduced our first change – you can now read "Swiss Review" on an iPad or Android tablet.

Another new feature is that information from the Federal Palace and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) will be towards the back of "Swiss Review" from now on. This should make it easier for you to find this information and the "OSA advice" section.

I would finally like to urge you once again to take part in the elections, as a large turnout from the Swiss abroad will lend more weight to your concerns.

BARBARA ENGEL

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**Cover image: Peter Gut, the Zurich caricaturist, has contributed illustrations to this special edition of "Swiss Review". A perceptive, humorous observer, he provides an offbeat perspective on political events in Switzerland.**

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### Stauffacher would turn in his grave

Switzerland is a unique country in the world and must remain so. The referenda on banning minarets and the extradition initiative clearly show that the Swiss have had enough of multiculturalism. What benefits does the EU bring? It has proven itself to be a money-pit institution. Accession would restrict our freedom. There are so many negative aspects to highlight. It is obvious what this idiocy will lead to. Stauffacher would turn in his grave if he could see how we again find ourselves in thrall to the EU and are allowing ourselves to take orders from Brussels.

BERNHARD BALMER, SCHOPFHEIM

### Overlooking the people

I read the article on SRG in astonishment. I and many others simply see it as brainwashing. Having our radio and television stations under the management of de Weck and Matter, with Schawinsky also on board, is an absolute catastrophe. It could not be any more left-wing. "Arena", like all political programmes, is a laughing stock! It's good that we have alternatives. Most people in Switzerland, I am aware, have been turning to them since this new management team took over at SRG. They would certainly benefit from getting closer to the people. And why all this constant reverence to Mr Kreis? You cannot simply overlook the Swiss people!

HEIDI NAJADI, BY E-MAIL

### Tacky commercial channel

I recently spent a week in Switzerland and was able to "enjoy" Swiss TV. This tacky commercial channel is unworthy of Switzerland. The programmes are short, the adverts are long and obtrusive, and the coverage of news from abroad is brief and superficial. After all the adverts, the weather forecast is constant-

ly featured. Whether the programmes are left-leaning or right-leaning is insignificant – the commercials take top priority. I find it very hard to believe that the people accept this. I hope they don't have to pay anything towards it.

RUTH SCHENKER, ANTWERP

### Thank you

We would like to offer the editorial team our sincerest thanks for the production of "Swiss Review". The latest edition (June 2011) was extremely interesting, current and entertaining, and it packed an incredible amount of material into a very small space with the feature on Max Frisch, "Built up and sold off", the article on SRG, the call for transparency in relation to party and election campaign donations, the analysis of the Fukushima effect, the look back at the right to vote for women, the piece on the open-air summer festivals and the profile of Fabian Cancellara. The "Swiss Review" team deserves to be applauded for getting all of this into a single, riveting edition.

R.+R. FIECHTER, LLORET DE MAR

### The free movement of persons and the Swiss abroad

The termination of the agreement on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU, and consequently all the bilateral agreements, would primarily affect young Swiss people abroad who embarked on education or training in Switzerland after 1 June 2002. The following example illustrates the point: young Swiss abroad have until now been able to rely on EU recognition of educational and training courses undertaken in Switzerland. If the agreement on the free movement of persons with the EU were terminated, these educational and training courses would no longer be recognised automatically in the EU. It is primarily young people who would be penalised.

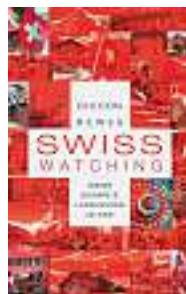
UDO ADRIAN ESSERS, KÜSSNACHT  
(PREVIOUSLY AACHEN)

SWISS DRINKING RITUALS are complex when observed from a British perspective. It is not simply a matter of casually saying "cheers" to the group before taking a sip, no, a protracted ritual has to be performed – direct eye contact, a chink of the glass, a toast of "good health", addressing your companions by their first name followed by a kiss depending on the circumstances. Drinking can only begin once the entire group has completed the ritual, which can take some time. There is something else the perfect guest at a Swiss home should be aware of – you are a guest and must behave as a guest. Do not refill glasses yourself or take plates into the kitchen without being asked to do so. The host may interpret this as a subtle criticism of his or her hospitality.

Diccon Bewes has an intimate understanding of Swiss customs, rituals and psyche. The British travel writer, who works in Switzerland, has written a delightful book on the nation at the heart of Europe. It holds up a mirror to the Swiss, serves visitors as the perfect compendium and is compulsory reading for foreigners seeking to integrate. The book's title, "Swiss Watching", pretty much says it all. The author is a very keen observer. This book is in a league of its own. It is an exceptionally good travel guide which inimitably explains the country's topography, economy, society, everyday life, political system and history. The author leaves no stone unturned. Diccon Bewes shows exactly what makes Switzerland tick with Swiss precision and British humour in a highly amusing and kind-hearted way. He has a better insight into Switzerland's idiosyncrasies than many Swiss people themselves and provides no end of quirky details from a country that prides itself on tradition and identity as well as on producing groundbreaking innovation.

He constantly lightens up the text with personal reflections, such as an account of a trip to Ticino to visit a chocolate factory, describing the southern canton as the most contradictory entity "in a country full of anachronisms and contradictions" – definitely not Italy, but on closer examination not really Switzerland either. The author keeps his readers interested with poignant comparisons: "The 26 Swiss cantons are the size of British counties but have the power of American States." And the Kleine Scheidegg, where travellers change onto the Jungfrau railway, reminds him more of London's Piccadilly Circus than a tranquil alpine retreat. Bewes is particularly struck by the compactness of Switzerland's topography. There are only 70 kilometres as the crow flies between the country's highest (Dufour peak, 4634 metres) and lowest (Ascona, 193 metres) points. The author says: "That's equivalent to having a height difference of over 4400 metres between Leeds and Sheffield." This book is excellently researched and reads wonderfully well. As well as being packed with material, it contains a heart-warming sense of irony. It allows readers to discover what a truly extraordinary and rather exotic country Switzerland is.

JÜRIG MÜLLER



DICCON BEWES, *Swiss Watching: Inside Europe's Landlocked Island*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London/Boston 2010, 310 pages. (Available in German as of March 2012, by Malik Verlag, Munich)



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### Ursula Deplazes

Researcher from Graubünden, living in Rome



“Networking plays an important role among the Swiss abroad – both personally and professionally.”



### Urs Steiner

Teacher from Berne, head of the Swiss School in Peru



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### Daniel Keller

Manager from Zurich, living in Hanoi



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**Retrospective.** Franz Gertsch is an unassuming artist who does not like the limelight. The 81-year-old is nevertheless one of Switzerland's most important artists today. This resident of Rüscheegg (canton of Berne) achieved international fame in the 1970s with his hyper-realistic portraits and drawings. These works are much sought after today by art collectors worldwide. He also produced large-format woodcuts that are technically unique. The "Kunsthau Zürich" is exhibiting a wonderful retrospective of Gertsch's work together with his recently completed "Four Seasons Cycle".



Franz Gertsch



Johanna I 1983–1984, 330 x 340 cm, acrylic on cotton



Silvia III, 2003–2004, 315 x 290 cm, mixed technique on cotton



Spring 2011, 325 x 480 cm



Summer 2009, 325 x 490 cm



Autumn 2008, 325 x 490 cm



Winter 2009, 325 x 480 cm

## Farewell to part-time politics

The notion of serving on a part-time basis is deeply embedded in Swiss politics. The defining image of politicians is one of men and women who volunteer for public service alongside their regular jobs. However, part-time politicians have become rare beasts, particularly at national level. Numbers are even declining in the communes, where a close relationship with citizens is imperative. Switzerland's part-time democracy is on the point of being consigned to the history books. By Marc Lettau

With national elections looming, politicians from all sides are omnipresent as they vie for Switzerland's highest legislative positions. The basic picture people have of the typically Swiss system of democracy is probably along these lines: the rifle club's trophies are at the back of the hall in a glass cabinet, the communal council are discussing matters at the front of the room and the 50 or so citizens attending the communal assembly are listening attentively. They nod the items on the agenda through, approving them all, though not without asking a few critical questions here and there. The reorganisation of the school system is applauded, the dog licence fee is increased, investment in snow clearance is agreed, 10,000 Swiss francs are to be contributed to the renovation of the football club's café as the club is the "village's most important social institution", and the solidarity contribution to the cantonal capital's cultural institutions is grudgingly approved.

### Part-time politics in the communes

The communal council at the front of the hall is relieved to receive the approval of "the people". However, it is also a part of "the people" itself. None of the members of the communal government is a trained political leader. All have very different professions, and they give up their free time to hold political positions and sacrifice their evenings to perform political duties away from the spotlight. The financial reimbursement is generally modest. At the end of a term in office, there is at most a good bottle of red wine and a bouquet of

flowers for partners neglected because of politics.

Politicians are generally part-time in Switzerland's 2,800 or so communes where politics affects people's everyday lives most directly and contact with the state is closest. 94% of communal government members work on a purely part-time basis. They are politically responsible – essentially during their free time and evenings – for around a third of all state services provided in Switzerland. Four out of five communal presidents are also "part-timers" – men and women whose experience comes from normal everyday professional and family life. Members of local government can only expect regular working hours and decent salaries in communes with populations of at least 50,000. But the communes have fewer than 1,200 inhabitants on average, and the part-time system has a strong influence on how Swiss politics views itself. Part-time politicians are seen as being close to the people. They do not simply toe the party line, they are also mindful of achieving consensus.

### One example: Walter Zürcher from Merlach

Walter Zürcher, mayor in the Fribourg commune of Merlach, just about fits the typical profile of a part-time Swiss politician. Zürcher has served on the communal government for 35 years. He explains that he wanted to have an influence over the place where he grew up. He entered politics as a young man despite never having joined a party. Zürcher, who is now of retirement age, does not see politics as a means of personal advancement. He reveals almost apologetically that he has never been drawn to "higher polit-

ical office", has never wanted to stand for the cantonal parliament and has never dreamt of becoming a National Councillor. He has instead focused on "remaining approachable and listening to and understanding the people". The mayor is delighted that communal assemblies in Merlach are attended by 20% of the citizens on average. That is a relatively high figure. He also sees the fact that people continue to discuss matters over wine and nibbles after the communal assemblies and that "these discussions often last longer than the entire meeting" as a sign of endorsement.

### An oath in the summertime

Zürcher is similar to the type of "modern politician" envisaged by the founding fathers of modern-day Switzerland. The Swiss Constitution (1798) imposed de facto by France conclusively extended the part-time principle from compulsory military service to politics. The constitution stated that every citizen was obliged to perform military service as a "born soldier of the fatherland". Everyone of full age also had to take an oath to "serve the fatherland and to protect freedom and equality as a good and loyal citizen with great rigour and zeal and to espouse a legitimate abhorrence of self-indulgence" in the "summertime" in the presence "of parents and the authorities". Despite the brevity of the Helvetic Period, its impact on the structure of modern Switzerland is unmistakable. Giving individual citizens key positions in government for a specific term of office became common practice. This represented a rejection of a form of government where power was held by magistrates from a ruling class.

### Losing its sheen

However, this part-time democracy is under great strain. Issues to be resolved at all

levels of state – communes, cantons and federal government – have become both more numerous and increasingly complex. Far-reaching global issues, such as the migration of refugees, climate change and energy policy in the post-Fukushima era, are having an impact right down to the lowest levels of government. At the same time, citizens have far greater expectations. People who are politicians “on the side” are often no longer able to meet them. The upshot is a constant transformation of the political landscape. Communes are being merged and becoming larger. They are also reducing the size of their governments. Both factors are resulting in more professional structures. The canton of Glarus provides the most striking example. Last year, it had 25 communes. Today, only three remain.

Reto Steiner, professor of business studies at the University of Berne, predicts that hundreds of communes will disappear over the next few years. Perhaps even the picturesque Ticino commune of Corippo will be unable to escape this trend in the long term. This village, situated on a mountain slope in the Verzasca Valley, is Switzerland’s small-

est commune with a population of 18, and every adult sits either on the communal council or on a committee. This is part-time democracy in its purest form.

#### Full-time politicians in Berne

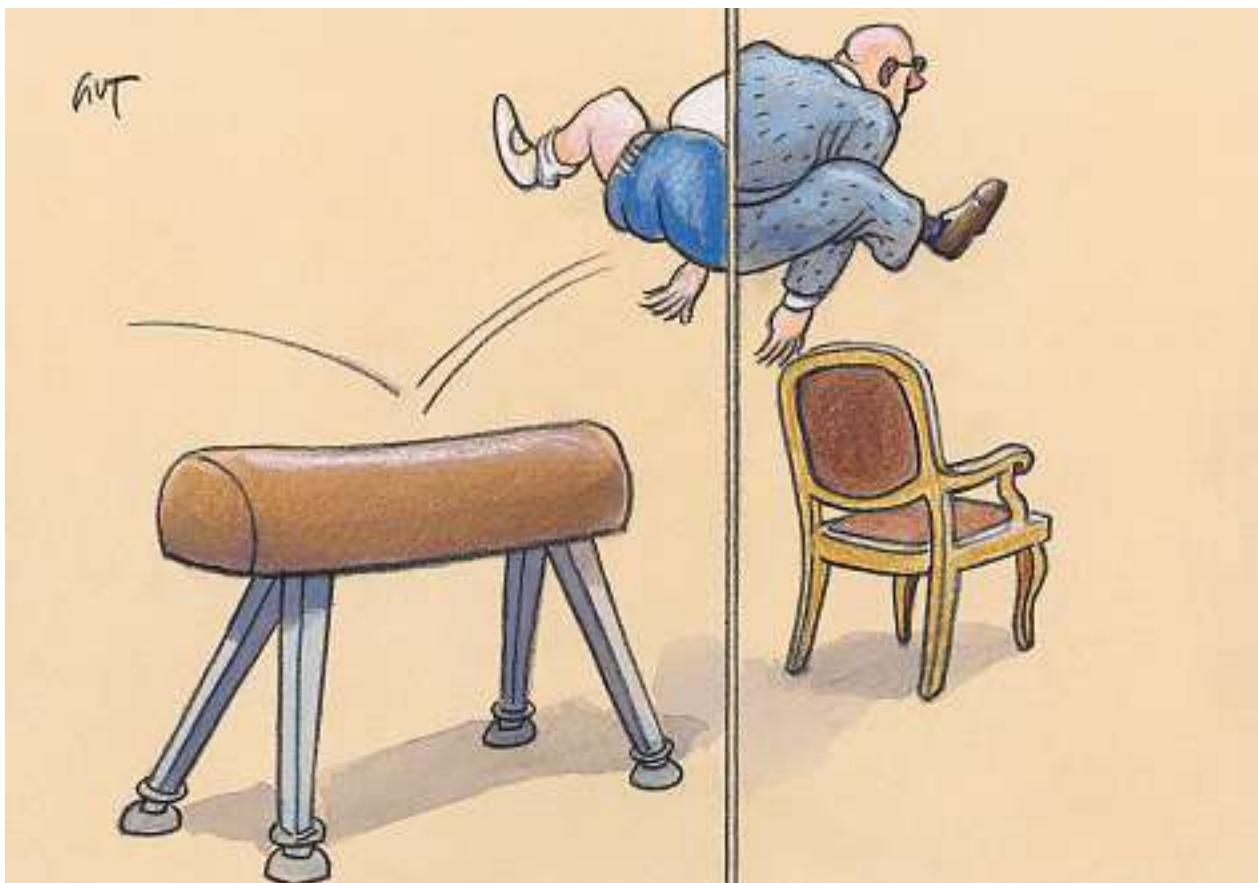
Part-time democracy has come under much greater pressure at cantonal and national level than in the communes. Recent studies confirm that while people frequently like to make reference to the part-time principle in politics, it is nevertheless losing its meaning. The “true part-time politician” has in fact become a rare beast in the federal capital. All the members of the smaller chamber, the Council of States, are professional politicians without exception. If they do hold a paid position in addition to their political mandate, this is generally directly related to it. The picture is similar in the larger chamber, the National Council. A study supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation last year showed that National Councillors spend 57%

of their working hours on their political mandate on average. This indicates that politics is also the main profession of National Councillors. The researchers said that the label of “part-time politician” was only in any way applicable to around 10% of all the members of the National Council.

#### No part-timers – is that concerning?

No part-time politicians at all in the Council of States and only 10% in the National Council. Is that a worry? The fact that national politics is constantly moving away from the ideal of a part-time democracy is certainly causing concern and distrust, above all because of money. Since a political career in Berne is no longer a part-time pursuit but a highly demanding position that provides a livelihood, the amounts of money invested in electoral campaigns are increasing. Ambitious candidates have long been investing tens of thousands of francs in their personal campaigns, depending on the canton. Individual cantonal parties demand

*Part-time democracy still serves as a moral compass under the cupola of the Federal Palace.*



contributions of up to 40,000 Swiss francs for a good position on the electoral list alone. Tim Frey, general secretary of the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP), told "Swiss Review" that anyone not investing at least 50,000 to 100,000 Swiss francs in their electoral campaign in the canton of Zurich "would be omitted from the list from the outset and not even used to make up the numbers". Political commentators estimate that 100 million Swiss francs will be spent in the run-up to this year's National Council and Council of States elections. In 2007, spending totalled around 50 million Swiss francs. This rapid increase is fuelling fears – or allegations, depending on your viewpoint – that politicians are becoming more and more dependent on economically powerful interest groups.

#### Initiative for greater transparency?

Part-time democracy still serves as a moral compass under the cupola of the Federal Palace. From time to time, parliament has itself applied restrictions and approved attempts to counter the corruptibility of politics. The transparency initiative for which signatures are currently being collected follows in the tradition of such corrective measures. This popular initiative, primarily launched by younger politicians, calls for members of the National Council and Council of States to disclose all their supplementary income. It focuses on the over 2,000 board membership mandates

held by federal parliamentarians. Lukas Reimann, a 29-year-old National Councillor for the Swiss People's Party (SVP) from St. Gallen, who is the driving force behind the initiative, told "Swiss Review" that a response to the "glut of mandates" was urgently required. He said: "Too many parliamentarians focus on the interests of their financial patrons rather than on those of the people and the nation." Pressure from lobbyists is growing, and they are becoming increasingly bold in their efforts. This is "logical to some degree" as "the more the state

*Great expectations –  
part-time politicians are  
often no longer able to  
meet expectations.*

wants to regulate, the greater the lobbying efforts become", including those by the banking, healthcare, energy and telecommunications sectors. Does Reimann ultimately want to help save the part-time principle in politics through this initiative? Yes, to a certain extent, he explained. He does not see part-time politicians as a thing of the past, but instead as the "ideal". Anyone involved in politics can still uphold the part-time philosophy despite all the professionalisation "by not completely distancing themselves from the people and not becoming part of a

detached elite". Reimann believes the disclosure of supplementary income is an important, overdue corrective measure in this respect. He revealed: "The market for influence over national politics is now worth billions."

#### "De-professionalisation"

What is the viewpoint of a typical exponent of the market so severely criticised by Reimann? Kuno Hämisegger, an economist on the payroll of the Swiss Bankers Association and one of Switzerland's most high-profile lobbyists, concedes that Reimann is correct in one respect. The lobbying market in Switzerland is growing at an "explosive" pace. In addition to traditional lobbyists, there are now also a vast number of "strategic consultants". He says that this is "not a problem as long as it is clear who stands for what". Hämisegger is "completely opposed" to Reimann's solution as his initiative is based on a very demeaning, insulting picture of the corruptible politician. This perception is fundamentally inaccurate, he argues. It is only because of lobbyists that federal politicians are able to make independent and well-founded political decisions on highly complex issues.

Does this mean that federal politics could not function competently without lobbyists? Hämisegger says that the extensive links between politics and the information market are not the consequence of the professionalisation of politics but the direct result of its "de-professionalisation". The part-time democracy was originally expected to integrate all population groups and professions into federal politics and to take advantage of their expertise. However, the knowledge acquired from their original profession plays an increasingly insignificant role for today's "full-time politicians". According to Hämisegger, "they leave their professional careers, become 'de-professionalised' and find themselves in highly complex political roles where they have to go to a great deal of effort to acquire the knowledge required for decision-making". This is complicated by the fact that very few politicians devise solutions themselves. Hämisegger explains: "Most are not the creators but rather the salesmen of political products which they may have helped define in certain areas." When experts exchange their knowledge – and their interests – with politicians today, this is referred to as lobbying, but this is "certainly not the opposite of transparency". And the lobbyist con-

#### **FDP AND CVP HAVE THE MOST MANDATES BY FAR**

The members of the federal parliament currently hold 2,045 mandates on boards of directors or other management bodies, 15% more than a year ago. The faction FDP.The Liberals holds the most mandates with a total of 583, closely followed by the faction made up of the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP), the Evangelical People's Party (EVP) and the Green Liberal

Party (GLP) with 565 mandates. Together, these two factions hold 56% of all mandates. Through these mandates, the FDP and CVP represent corporate capital totalling 11 billion Swiss francs. According to a study by the company Credita, this corresponds to 92% of the capitalisation of all mandates.

Paul-André Roux (CVP) is the record holder on the National Council. The financial expert from Valais sits

on 58 boards. The list in the Council of States tops Felix Gutzwiller (FDP) from Zurich with 24 mandates.

However, not all mandates are the same. According to the study, the federal politician who represents the most capital is Council of States member Jean-René Fournier (CVP) from Valais. With "just" 11 mandates, he represents companies with capital of 4.7 billion Swiss francs. (MUL)

cludes: "Part-time democracy is probably on the way to being consigned to history." But the "highly populist" transparency initiative does not protect one single noble ideal. If politicians are constantly obliged to perform a "striptease", "ordinary people" will be deterred from entering politics, leaving the field open to "freaks, populists and narcissists".

#### Is "younger" necessarily "better"?

Reimann, the youngest member of the National Council since his election, also advocates the election of more young politicians as a means of "combating back-scratching politics". In contrast to older politicians, those of the younger generation do not sit on boards of directors in their scores and tend to pursue their political ideals more. He also argues that the younger generation is underrepresented. Is it the youngsters then who will help save

some of the key principles of part-time politics in the modern age with their fresh and upstanding approach? National Councillor Evi Allemann (Social Democratic Party (SP), Berne), who was the youngest councillor until Reimann's election, has a different

view. She says that the youngsters are not generally "part-timers" but instead dedicate themselves entirely to their political mandate. But Allemann does agree that younger politicians "tend to be more independent because

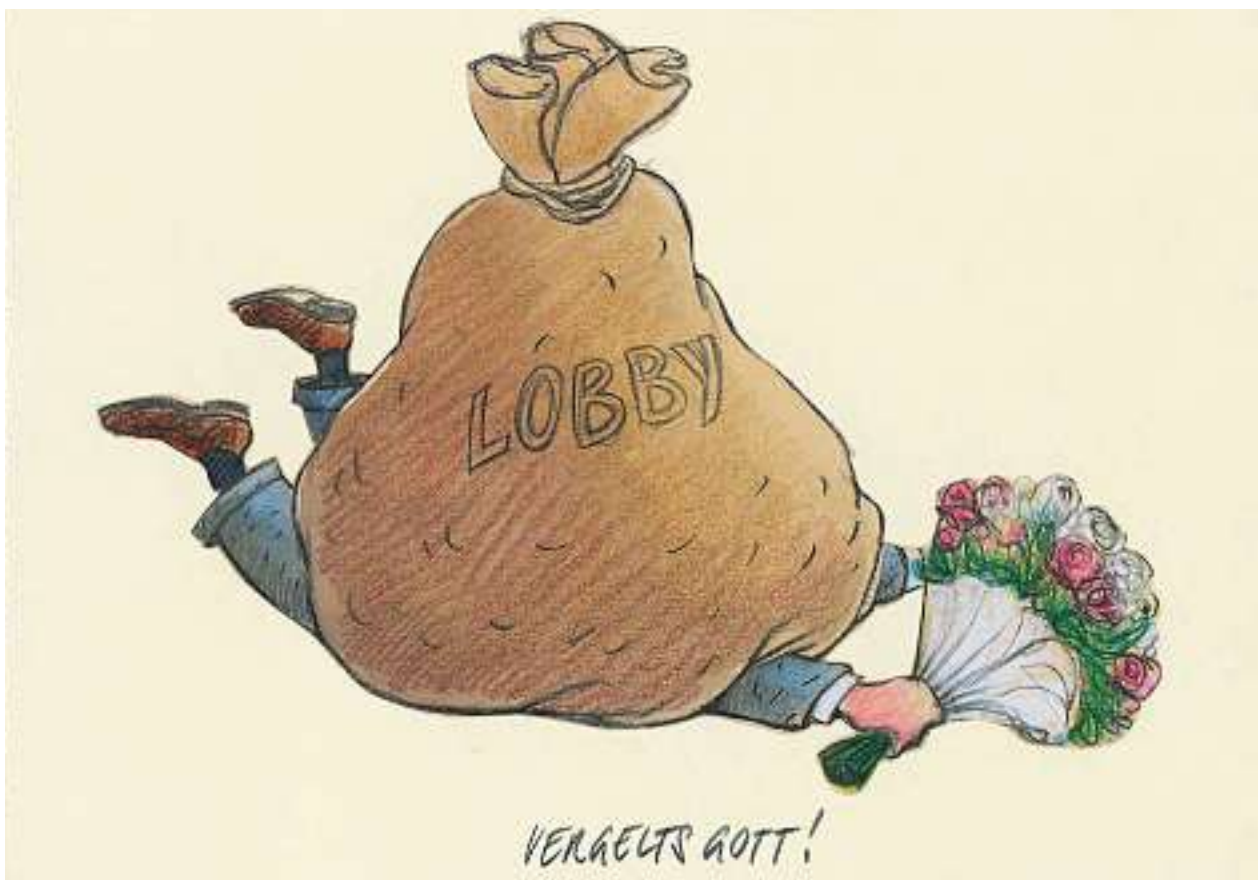
they sit on fewer boards of directors". There are therefore fewer financial ties. However: "There is a disproportionately high number of young National Councillors who are not typical part-time politicians." Anyone who wants to be involved in national politics today has to organise their political work very professionally and has "no real time for a regular job that bears no

relation to the mandate".

#### A multitude of part-timers?

Is part-time democracy just a myth? Will more rigorous transparency rules save some key aspects of part-time democracy? With regard to the debate on these issues, it should be pointed out that everyday life in Switzerland – outside the world of politics – is shaped by voluntary work like in no other country. In addition to those who dedicate their free time to politics, hundreds of thousands of people are committed to voluntary social work in associations. The number of such associations in Switzerland is unparalleled. While exact figures do not exist, there are well over 300,000. Around half of the resident population is involved in some kind of association. One in four people carries out voluntary work for an institution. Such a high number of associations and such extensive voluntary commitment are indicators of a society's great capacity for self-organisation and aptitude for part-time systems.

*Too many parliamentarians focus on the interests of their financial patrons rather than on those of the people.*



May the Lord reward you!

## “Between an inferiority complex and delusions of grandeur”

Switzerland is faced with a major problem. It must find a way of introducing urgently needed reforms while at the same time maintaining its identity, explains Georg Kohler, a professor of political philosophy. Christoph Blocher currently remains the dominant figure in Swiss politics, and Kohler sees him as a major player. An interview with Georg Kohler by Barbara Engel and Marc Lettau.

“SWISS REVIEW”: *Political commentators have been saying for quite a while now that the 2011 election campaigns will be the most expensive of all time and dominated much more by polemics than objectivity. Only around three months now remain until the elections. What is your view of the campaigns?*

PROFESSOR GEORG KOHLER: Fears clearly exist over polemics and a lack of objectivity. However, I don't think things have been that bad so far. It is clear though that much has changed in terms of political expression. I believe that Switzerland's traditional political culture has been put in jeopardy.

*What are the reasons for this?*

Money plays a major role even though this is always contested. If the balance of power is even and stands at around 50:50, winning another one or two percent of the vote then becomes crucial. And this is more often achieved through mobilisation rather than argumentation. Mobilisation requires money, and money is currently distributed very unevenly in Swiss politics. There are people in the nationalist-conservative camp who are willing to spend billions, and we are talking billions, on publicity campaigns and their political objectives.

*On the topic of public awareness, one event, Fukushima, has attracted a great deal of attention. Will Fukushima have an impact on the elections or is its effect just short-term?*

I anticipate Fukushima having a certain influence on the elections in the autumn. But predicting that is like trying to look into a crystal ball. One thing that does seem clear to me is that the so-called green-liberal movement is a long-term

trend. This movement – essentially middle-class and pro-market but with concerns about the finite nature of resources and consideration for the common good – is now “profiting” from Fukushima. Conversely, Fukushima has proven a setback for the nationalist-conservative camp, which supports nuclear power.

*According to the latest polls, what you refer to as a setback has so far only had a minimal impact on popularity with voters.*

That's true, but we must not forget that while the nationalist-conservatives have managed to win over 50% of the vote at some referenda, to win more than 30% in elections is very difficult. The fact is that anyone not currently voting for the nationalist-conservatives, in other words for the Swiss People's Party (SVP), is against them. This also means that the presently fragmented centre parties share one thing, a common opponent. Anyone claiming that the nationalist-conservatives have majority support among the people is mistaken. That is only the case in certain areas. On the other hand, I believe the distaste of those who do not vote SVP is growing rapidly.

*You mention the fragmented centre. What do you expect from the centre parties?*

The middle ground is congested, not because parties have been pushing into the centre from the right or left, but because new movements and parties have emerged. The prospects of the traditional centre parties are varied. Take the CVP, which was ultimately bound together by its religious origins. When you consider its old electoral base, you see that there are strong centrifugal powers at play, with an urban, Christian-socialist faction on one side and a tra-

ditional, rural faction on the other. The FDP is a party that has been in decline for 30 years. It now faces strong competition from the Green Liberals. There is clearly an aversion to this old gentlemen's party. I see the development of the BDP running parallel to this. After all, this is the break-away of the moderate factions of the SVP. It is no surprise that the BDP has emerged in the traditional SVP strongholds of Berne, Grisons and parts of Glarus.

*The electorate wants answers about Switzerland's political future but the centre parties' policies are unclear and provide no answers.*

The key question is how to preserve the Swiss identity while at the same time introducing changes that jeopardise much of what could be called Swiss basic consensus. There is no easy answer to this. Looking back, the Swiss approach worked extremely well between 1950 and 1990, during the Cold War when we were officially neutral but, of course, protected by NATO. We were highly successful with this policy of systematic schizophrenia.

*Has no political party set out a new way forward since then?*

It has become evident to many people that many issues are supranational rather than national and must also be resolved at this level. A good example of this is the Swiss army. It still exists but is no longer fit for purpose in its current form. It must urgently join an alliance because the opposition forces have become too powerful. The successful schizophrenia between the picture portrayed – the small, autonomous, practically self-sufficient state of Switzerland – and the reality that we are fully integrated into the international context worked until 1990 “under the cover” of the Cold War. After that, the contradiction was laid bare. There is now a need for direction and identity. The parties are



### PROFILE

Georg Kohler studied philosophy and law in Zurich and Basel. He was professor of philosophy at the University of Zurich from 1994 to 2011. He is now a guest professor at Dresden University of Technology. His specialist research field is political philosophy. Kohler lived in Vienna between 1981 and 1991 and in Munich from 1992 to 1994. He has published numerous books including "Scheitert die Schweiz? Eine szenische Befragung" (1998), "Über das Böse, das Glück und andere Rätsel. Zur Kunst des Philosophierens" (2005), and "Bürgertugend und Willensnation. Über den Gemein-sinn und die Schweiz" (2010).

faced with the challenge of finding and explaining a new path. None has yet been successful. And Christoph Blocher and his Swiss People's Party still support Switzerland's perception of itself between 1950 and 1990. This bears no relation to the modern political reality but many people like to hear it and it placates them. And now that the EU finds itself in difficulty, it is being robustly argued that we were on the right track.

*Money is currently distributed very unevenly in Swiss politics.*

*The SVP's electoral campaign portrays a Switzerland facing major external threats. Where do you see the greatest threat or danger to Switzerland?*

Switzerland's main threat comes from an inability to undergo reform. However, a look back at history shows that Switzerland has always succeeded in duly reforming or adapting itself in the past. If I were to define Switzerland's psychological state,

I would say that it fluctuates between an inferiority complex and delusions of grandeur. We also have to acknowledge that our sense of unity primarily stems from the fact

that we do not want to belong to anyone else, not to Germany, Austria, France or Italy. This is a relatively precarious unifying force. But we should never forget that the country is held together by the legiti-

mate belief that it is a true democracy. There is unfortunately also an element of *schadenfreude* in some circles when others are not faring well. This can then be exaggerated – outside states are dangerous and only want our money because they are in such a mess themselves.

*And what impact will this psychological state between an inferiority complex and delusions of grandeur have on the forthcoming elections?*

I don't think we will see any radical changes, with things moving in a completely new direction. But there are dangerous cracks in the system. Social tensions have arisen as a result of the polarisation strategy – and we do not just have people on the right seeking polarisa-

tion, counterparts have also emerged on the left. Then there is the centre, which has not yet found and organised itself. The current tactics of hyperbole in the fight for votes could result in splits that could jeopardise the concordance system for the long term.

*So you believe it is possible that the system of concordance government could collapse after the elections and we could end up with a coalition government and an opposition?*

I believe it is possible that concordance could be over for the time being after the elections and that from 2012 we could have a centre-right or centre-left coalition and an opposition. But this would not work well. It could result in a dangerous deadlock situation in view of Switzerland's basic structures with its political institutions and people's rights. But sometimes the only way to learn is by making mistakes. I refer to such situations as "learning catastrophes".

*What is the likelihood of this occurring?*

If the SVP wins well over 30% of the vote, there is a really big chance. The key issue could then be a personnel one. What should happen to BDP Federal Councilor Evelyne Widmer-Schlumpf? Depending on the decision, either the SP or the SVP would leave the Federal Council. That would really be something.

*The centre parties, which like to portray themselves as the advocates of a common-sense approach, would therefore become relatively insignificant?*

We are not in a period of clear relationships or clearly changing relationships. We are in a phase of significant upheaval and flux. Amidst all these different forces, it seems to me that one trend or development is clearly on the increase - there is a realisation that a policy of unrestricted exploitation of natural resources will cause us problems. There is also growing support for the view that we cannot continue with a financial system that creates more and more money out of nothing. I have faith, at the end of the day, in mankind's

rationality and in the fact that we are beings capable of learning. The question is whether we can react quickly enough.

*You have already said that Switzerland can achieve little alone. How do you see Switzerland's relationship with the EU long-term?*

I would firstly like to say that should the EU, which is currently facing major issues, break up, this would cause Switzerland massive problems. We would not be unaffected. If the EU continues to exist, and I assume it will, it is also clear that

*There is a realisation that a policy of unrestricted exploitation of natural resources will cause us problems.*

Switzerland's position will become weaker. We can already see this happening. Condemnation and criticism of the EU, such as that recently expressed by our foreign minister, Micheline Calmy-Rey, is completely inappropriate, in my opinion. If we think about it logically, it is obvious that the EU does not need to use any "instruments of torture" against Switzerland. It would be enough for Brussels to do nothing at all. It is a basic fact that we want more from the EU than the other way round. Figuratively speaking, the EU elephant could simply trample on the bilateral approach and then we would really have a problem.

*With a coalition government and an opposition, as you have described, wouldn't we inevitably fall into this situation?*

I can imagine the great realist Christoph Blocher, if he were leading a centre-right government from the forefront or from behind the scenes, saying: "OK, let's do what has to be done." I deem him totally capable of doing this. However, this would not resolve Switzerland's major issues. The question of reform, involving restrictions on direct democracy, still remains.

*You portray Christoph Blocher as the almost all-powerful player in Swiss politics.*

All I can say is that Christoph Blocher will have control over the party for as long as he lives. This is obvious and it's a situation that may go on for a few years yet. If he were to disappear as the figurehead, the

strength of the party would immediately be halved. The SVP has all the advantages and disadvantages of a political party heavily dependent on a leader. However, history tells us that a vacuum always appears once a strong political leader with this type of charisma is no longer there. Blocher is irreplaceable. The SVP is held together by Blocher and his money. But let's be clear about it: Blocher is a democrat; there is no other option in the Swiss institutions. It is highly likely that there will be a learning catastrophe in his party after his departure. Blocher therefore poses a much greater danger to his party than to Switzerland.

*What impact will current political developments have on Swiss people living abroad?*

Abroad, of course, the Swiss like to maintain old clichés about their homeland. However, in my experience, people who move abroad are usually flexible, interested and capable of recognising new circumstances. They are people who support necessary changes to the Swiss system. And many of these Swiss abroad live in European countries and know very well that these countries have not lost their sovereignty to the EU. Anyone claiming that the EU states are just vassals of Brussels is mistaken.

*The tone of the election campaigning has become much harsher in recent weeks. An advertisement by the SVP with the title "Ivan S. should be allowed to carry on raping. This is what the left, do-gooders and their experts want." stands out in particular. Do we simply have to get used to this kind of political culture?*

Absolutely not. This advertisement is malicious, inaccurate, rabble-rousing and extremely dangerous. We must not continue down this path. However, this is the exception rather than the rule. If this were to occur more regularly then I believe that everyone who values Switzerland's political culture would have to make a stand. Such a brutalisation of tradition should not be accepted lying down.

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## The Germans as the new scapegoats

Foreigners and immigration have always been popular election campaign issues. However, this time it is not exotic foreigners who are at the centre of the debate but our European neighbours, who, thanks to the free movement of persons, are arriving in Switzerland in unprecedented numbers.

By René Lenzin

The figures speak for themselves – the number of permanent foreign residents in Switzerland has increased from 1,406,430 in 1999 to 1,714,004 at the end of 2009. The proportion of foreigners therefore stands at 22%. If temporary residents and asylum seekers are included, the number of foreigners in fact amounts to 1,802,300 or 22.9% of the population. In addition, there are also around 215,000 cross-border commuters who travel to work in Switzerland during the working week. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office had not yet produced definitive figures for 2010 at the time of going to press. However, it is already clear that the proportion of foreigners has risen again.

The constant increase in immigration reflects Switzerland's economic success and the attractiveness of its labour market. However, it also stirs up fears of inundation with foreigners and overpopulation. The environmental movement Ecopop, which wants to restrict immigration through a popular initiative, is addressing these fears. The initiative launched at the beginning of May calls for the growth of Switzerland's resident population to be restricted to an average of 0.2% per year. In recent years, the figure has stood at 1.3%. However, politicians are also addressing these concerns, particularly in the current election campaign where foreigners have become a major issue.

### Nine out of ten come from the EU

And this issue has a name – the free movement of persons. The headlines are focusing less on foreigners of exotic appearance with foreign-sounding names and much more frequently on immigrants from the European Union. There has been a disproportionately high increase in their numbers since the agreement between Switzerland and the EU on the free movement of persons entered into force in mid-2001. The average annual rise in the foreign resident population has since increased from 26,000 to 37,400, as a

recently published federal government report shows. Citizens of the EU and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) have accounted for 89% of the growth during this period, whereas previously it was almost exclusively foreigners from outside these states who immigrated.

The highest growth rates over the past decade have been among German and Portuguese citizens. The number of Germans in Switzerland increased from 87,000 to 119,000 between 1992 and 2001 or by 3.3% per year on average, whereas the rise between 2002 and 2010 stands at 17.6% per year. 277,000 Germans were living in Switzerland at the end of last year. The number of Portuguese was almost the same. Their average annual increase rose from 3.7% before the free movement of persons to 8.7% after it.

### Protective measures

This new immigration structure has also changed the political debate. The traditional approval from the left and the unions of greater openness or even EU accession has decreased significantly. In terms of immigration policy, these political factions are now primarily pushing for protective measures for the middle classes against foreign competition in the labour and housing markets instead of greater integration support for poorly educated foreigners. At the other end of the political spectrum, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) considers itself vindicated in its traditional scepticism about immigration. It is calling for Switzerland to regulate the number of immigrants again. It is proposing the renegotiation of the agreement on the free movement of persons or its termination altogether.

The Federal Council and the centre parties – the Free Democrat-Liberals (FDP) and Christian Democrats (CVP) – reject this proposal. They are ready to take stronger action against any abuse of salary and employment conditions, but they emphasise,

in particular, the positive aspects of the free movement of persons, which provides Switzerland with skilled labour and has contributed to the economic success of recent years.

### Immigration continues during downturn

The previously mentioned federal government report confirms the immigration of highly qualified workers. Experts say that this trend started before the free movement of persons but has subsequently intensified. Half the foreigners in employment who immigrated to Switzerland between June 2002 and May 2009 have a degree. Another third have school-leaving qualifications or have completed vocational training.

However, the report also indicates that not all aspects of the free movement of persons are working as anticipated. Although net immigration fell during the recent economic crisis compared to the previous boom phase, the immigration surplus remained at a "relatively high level by long-term comparison" in 2009 and 2010. No clear conclusions can yet be drawn about the impact on unemployment. This is highest among foreign nationals from outside the EU/EFTA. The report says that this phenomenon is not new and neither can it be attributed originally to the free movement of persons. However, the additional recruitment pool is making it more difficult for this group to find employment again. The same applies to the regions with high numbers of cross-border commuters. There were "indications that it was becoming more difficult for job-seekers to find positions" there.

A clear majority has always supported the free movement of persons in several referenda. The October elections will show whether the people will continue to pursue this course or back those who are calling for rigorous "entry controls" or even limitations on immigration.



## Switzerland could end up shooting itself in the foot

Calls have been made from various sides for Berne to continue negotiating with the EU in the debate on the free movement of persons. More radical factions believe that if this approach were to fail, the whole agreement should be revoked. Owing to the “guillotine clause”, this would torpedo the entire “bilateral I” set of agreements and would leave Switzerland in a more isolated position. By Peter Winkler

One of the negotiating partners rolls his eyes: “That is inconceivable.” The other snorts: “That’s an extremely bad idea, especially in the current climate.” The first is a Swiss diplomat who deals with the EU on a daily basis and knows how Brussels works inside out. The second is on the staff of José Manuel Barroso – President of the EU Commission – and specialises in relations with Switzerland. The pair often take up opposing positions on specialist issues but they agree here – a demand from Switzerland for follow-up negotiations on the bilateral agreement on the free movement of persons would have little prospect of success and could do significant damage.

Such a demand would be very difficult for the EU to accept and would also come at an extremely bad time for various reasons.

### Shaken to its foundations

The euro crisis has shaken the EU to its foundations. The euro, like the free movement of goods and persons, is one of the cornerstones of the single market and is the most advanced part of European integration. Let us not forget that the first aim of reconciliation after the Second World War was to deliver tangible economic success, with political union to be achieved later. Tensions over the free movement of persons arose at the same time as the euro crisis, with the Roma issue in

France, the Franco-Italian row over Tunisian economic migrants and finally Denmark’s decision to reintroduce border controls. The EU Commission, which regards itself as the custodian of treaties and the guardian of integration achieved thus far, responded angrily to these attempts to undermine the free movement of persons even though externally this was only perceived as a verbal reproach in some quarters. It is inconceivable that the Commission would support a non-member state in such circumstances over a proposal that would only weaken the freedom of movement principle.

### Impasse over bilateralism

A stalemate has been reached in the negotiations over bilateral relations. The reason is very evident. The EU wants Switzerland to implement new developments in EU law more quickly and systematically to prevent an increasing distortion of competition between the Member States and Switzerland. It also wants to resolve differences in the interpretation of bilateral agreements and disagreements over their application in an institutionalised way. The only option to date has been the joint committees in which both partners – put simply – can voice their disagreement.

Switzerland is struggling with the EU’s proposals and opposition is widespread for various reasons. However, all EU institutions – Parliament, Commission and Council – are insisting on them. For Switzerland to worsen the deadlock by making new and indeed unattainable demands of the EU would hardly be expedient.

### Additional EU demands

There is another argument against undoing the agreement on the free movement of persons. The EU would like Switzerland to adopt the changes introduced by the EU Citizens Directive of 2004. The Federal Council declared that it had no intention of doing so at the meeting of the joint committee in mid-June. One reason is that under the 2004 directive the right of residency and entitlement to welfare benefits would no longer be dependent on gainful employment, which is the rule that currently applies. The EU would almost certainly put its proposals back on the table in follow-up negotiations, which would leave Switzerland involved in negotiations that it has sought to avoid.



INITIATIVE GEGEN MASSENEINWANDERUNG

Christoph Blocher is aiming to get back into parliament through his “stop mass immigration” popular initiative. Even in his own party not everyone is behind this.

PETER WINKLER was the NZZ’s correspondent in Brussels until May 2011 and has since then been reporting from Washington.

## Withdrawal from nuclear power – many questions remain unanswered

Switzerland's five nuclear power stations cover around two fifths of annual electricity production. The Federal Council plans to decommission them gradually by 2034 without replacement. Energy efficiency and the expansion of renewable energies are to meet the shortfall. The debate on the future of power generation is well underway and also heating up the election campaign. By René Lenzin



Switzerland's national government is planning to meet future energy requirements without domestic nuclear power. It is obvious what has led to the adoption of this new strategy – Fukushima. Until the reactor accident in Japan, the majority of the Federal Council wanted to keep the nuclear energy option open and commence proceedings for the construction of new nuclear power plants. However, the wind has changed since Fukushima. At the end of May, the Federal Council decided upon a gradual withdrawal from nuclear power – apparently, the four women in the Council were largely behind this decision. The government nevertheless regards the five Swiss nuclear power stations as safe enough to allow each to remain in operation for 50 years. They will, however, subsequently be shut down without replacement. This means that Beznau I in the canton of Aargau will be decommissioned in 2019, followed by Beznau II and Mühleberg in the canton of Berne in 2022, Gösigen in the canton of Solothurn in 2029 and Leibstadt, also in the canton of Aargau, in 2034.

Energy Minister Doris Leuthard said that new nuclear power stations were highly unlikely to win support in a referendum

after the Fukushima disaster. A decision therefore had to be made rapidly to enable Switzerland to embark upon a change in energy policy in good time. Leuthard believes that the gradual withdrawal from nuclear power is “technically feasible and economically viable”. However, the Federal Council has yet to explain in detail how the plan will work. It aims to set out its strategy in a draft bill by next year.

The key elements are:

- Expansion of hydropower, even though its potential is limited by already high levels of usage.
- Expansion of renewable energies (solar, wind, geothermal) and fossil-fuel-based power production (combined heat and power plants, gas-fired combined cycle power plants).
- Greater energy efficiency through more economical systems and better insulation of buildings.
- Expansion of the power grid: deployment of smart grids in Switzerland for better use of decentralised production and optimal connection to the European grid.
- Networking between and expansion of existing public and private energy research centres.

As part of the transformation of power generation, the Federal Council is promising to boost innovation in the cleantech sector and to create many new jobs. However, the alternative energy future comes at a price. National government estimates that the economic cost of power plant renovation and construction as well as expenditure on measures to reduce electricity demand will amount to between 0.4 and 0.7% of gross domestic product. Whether these assumptions and figures prove correct is one of the many questions raised in relation to the withdrawal from nuclear power. The Federal Council's plans must firstly win majority support – in parliament and among the population.

Federal Council has overcome the first hurdle, with the National Council approving its withdrawal proposals in June. A coalition made up of Social Democrats (SP), Greens, Christian Democrats (CVP), Green Liberals and Conservative Democrats (BDP) supported the plans. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) opposed the withdrawal. The Free Democrat-Liberals (FDP) abstained on the grounds that it was too early for a scientifically well-founded decision to be made.

### Will the withdrawal succeed politically?

The ban on the construction of new nuclear power stations was finally backed by a two-thirds majority on the National Council. This was a clear result, but majorities are fragile. This became evident when the Council began to lay the foundations for achieving its objective. The SP and Greens want to withdraw more quickly than the Federal Council and believe that Mühleberg nuclear power station, which is unsafe in their eyes, should be decommissioned immediately. The CVP and BDP want to restrict opportunities for objecting to the renovation and construction of power stations.

It remains to be seen whether the withdrawal coalition will hold firm in the Council of States as the smaller parliamentary chamber is regarded as being more supportive of nuclear power than the National Council. At the time of going to press, it was still unclear whether the Council of States would address the issue in September or wait until after the elections. If both Councils approve the withdrawal plans and then the Federal Council's implementation measures, a referendum will then have to be held.

### Will the change in energy policy work?

Switzerland consumed almost 60 billion kilowatt hours (KWh) of electricity in 2010. Federal Council estimates indicate that consumption will increase to 90 billion KWh by 2050 if the general conditions remain the same.

This would mean that Switzerland would not only have to replace nuclear power but massively increase production or imports as well. These figures highlight the scale of the challenge facing the country, especially since electricity consumption has increased constantly in recent years. In 2010, it was 4% above the previous year and 14% higher than in 2000. Additional consumption is partially explained by lower temperatures and resultant increases in heating costs in some years. However, the main reason is economic growth and population increase.

Hydropower is Switzerland's main source of electricity. It accounted for 56.5% of electricity produced in Switzerland in 2010. 38.1% came from nuclear power stations. This is the proportion that would have to be replaced by 2034. Renewable energies – excluding hydropower – contributed just under 2% to electricity generation. Half of this came from solar and wind power. While these energy sources are achieving high growth rates, they are unlikely to produce

the quantities required to withdraw from nuclear power within the foreseeable future. Switzerland will therefore probably be unable to avoid using gas-fired combined cycle plants or significantly higher imports to cover the shortfall temporarily. The issue of environmental protection arises in both scenarios as gas-fired power stations produce CO<sub>2</sub> and imported electricity would hardly come exclusively from clean sources.

#### Will Switzerland actually withdraw?

Addressing the National Council, Energy Minister Doris Leuthard was confident that the withdrawal can succeed: "The plan is essentially in place. It is now a matter of fine-tuning to ensure the specific proposals enter the consultative stage next year. We have 30 years. We must create an additional nine terawatt hours of electricity every decade. We can and will achieve this. But we must get things underway now", she explained. But where will this path take us? Will it really

lead to a nuclear-free future? Leuthard herself leaves many questions unanswered: "Who can foresee how technology will develop? If atomic fusion were to prove successful in 30 years' time and should the benefits of nuclear power again prove convincing, the law could be amended again", she told the "NZZ am Sonntag" four days after the Federal Council's withdrawal decision. However, today's decisions have to be made on the basis of established facts, which are against "new, costly investment in existing nuclear technology".

Withdrawal only to embrace nuclear power again later? That is a scenario for which neither the supporters nor the opponents of nuclear power have much appetite. The former say it would be too expensive and would involve a loss of technology that could not be recovered. The latter argue that we should never again rely on dangerous, uncontrollable nuclear power. This is an issue that will provide for plenty of debate during the election campaign.



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Conservative Democratic Party (BDP)



Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP)



FDP.The Liberals

**Are you in favour of a withdrawal from nuclear power as proposed by the Federal Council?**

Yes

Yes

Yes

**How should Switzerland's energy supply be secured in the future?**

Security of supply is a major issue for the BDP. We support both a more efficient use of energy and energy production in our own country whereby particular importance should be attached to reducing CO2 emissions. As the promotion of renewable energies allows the value chain to be kept largely within our regions, innovative projects concerning the use of alternative sources of energy with relaxation of construction and protective legislation where appropriate should be supported.

By significantly increasing the generation of renewable energies. The CVP is backing hydropower as the key resource for ensuring a secure power supply. By expanding the power grid with smart grids. Through a massive increase in energy efficiency in all areas of consumption to take advantage of the savings potential, which remains high, especially in terms of building renovations. As a transitional solution to prevent supply bottlenecks, the CVP will not oppose the decentralised construction of combined wind and gas power plants.

The FDP supports the switch to renewable energies. Future energy supply must aim to meet four objectives: security of supply, safe energy production for people and the environment, competitive prices and climate protection. The FDP's strategy is based on three pillars: larger market, a renewable energies campaign and improvement of energy efficiency. This will prevent shortfalls in supply over the next few years.

**What approach should Switzerland adopt towards the EU – close collaboration and openness or "going it alone"?**

The BDP is opposed to EU accession, but unequivocally supports the bilateral approach and is in favour of the agreement on the free movement of persons with the EU. In its own interests, Switzerland should maintain solid, pragmatic and friendly relations with the EU, but must represent its own interests assertively and with self-assurance. The BDP's policy on Europe supports efforts to ensure the economic and social stability of the continent as this is clearly in Switzerland's interests.

The CVP wants neither EU accession nor to "go it alone". It supports the Federal Council's policy on Europe. It advocates the continuation and extension of the bilateral approach, which has proven that it has majority support and is successful. Key elements here are the retention of our room to manoeuvre, the assurance of appropriate market access and legal certainty. The CVP regards the automatic adoption of EU law as out of the question. Termination of the free movement of persons is not up for discussion either.

The bilateral approach is the ideal path for our country. We reject EU accession. These agreements offer major benefits for our country without jeopardising Switzerland's independence. The lowest rate of unemployment in Europe (2.9%) proves that. The bilateral approach now needs to be consolidated further. The FDP rejects the automatic implementation of EU laws and a relaxation of cantonal and federal fiscal sovereignty.

**What does your party intend to do for the Swiss abroad?**

The BDP is aware of the importance of the Swiss abroad and is willing to listen to their concerns. As the party is still in its infancy and is not yet represented in every canton, it has not yet formulated comprehensive positions on the concerns of the Swiss abroad. This is likely to take place over the next four years.

We support the Swiss schools abroad and we are fighting to maintain the services of swissinfo. We are in favour of the simplified exercising of political rights for the Swiss abroad and of reasonable health insurance premiums for Swiss citizens resident in the EU. We believe in strong civic integration of the Swiss abroad through better political information.

FDP.The Liberals has supported key issues for the Swiss abroad in recent years. We have, for example, constantly advocated the rapid implementation of electronic voting at elections and referenda (e-voting). A further example is our commitment to a comprehensive consular and diplomatic network and an increase in the number of honorary consuls. The free trade agreement with the developing nations is also of major significance to the Swiss abroad. These issues are central to the modern and open Switzerland that the FDP.The Liberals is striving for.



Green Party (Greens)



Green Liberal Party (GLP)



Swiss People's Party (SVP)



Social Democratic Party (SP)

Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<p>The Greens' policy on future energy supply is based on savings, energy efficiency and renewable energies. It aims to ensure that all five Swiss nuclear power stations can be decommissioned by 2029 without a new one having to be built. The Greens also call for this in the nuclear power withdrawal initiative launched in the spring. The reduction in consumption would be more than enough to replace the output of the Mühleberg and Beznau 1 + 2 nuclear power stations. The expansion of renewable energies will produce as much power by 2029 as the Gösgen and Leibstadt nuclear power stations produce today.</p>	<p>The Green Liberals focus on three areas – energy efficiency, renewable energies and energy foreign policy. We are opposed to new nuclear power stations and in favour of the gradual withdrawal from nuclear power. In terms of energy efficiency, there is tremendous untapped potential. Renewable energies should be promoted in a targeted way, e.g. with the lifting of the restriction on power grid feed-in remuneration. The Green Liberals are creating the right incentives with the popular initiative "Energy tax instead of VAT". Investment is also required abroad, e.g. in wind parks in northern Europe and solar plants in southern Europe.</p>	<p>Switzerland will continue to maintain an energy mix in the future. The share of renewable energies will certainly rise, but they cannot replace nuclear power owing to insufficient storage capability and their dependence on natural factors. An energy source with similar capabilities would be required to meet the base load in the event of a withdrawal from nuclear power. Only fossil fuel power stations (gas, coal, oil) with their well-known disadvantages (dependence on foreign countries, emissions) are currently available for this purpose.</p>	<p>Our cleantech initiative provides the solution to future energy supply. The cleantech initiative aims to meet at least half of Switzerland's total energy requirements with renewable energies from 2030 and plans to reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency measures. With investment in renewable energies and clean technologies (cleantech) we will create a new, sustainable sector of the economy and regional jobs in Switzerland.</p>
<p>Switzerland "going it alone" is a political illusion owing to its geographical position and economic and social integration. Aside from these practical constraints, there are also good reasons for close collaboration with the EU: ecological, economic and social issues are increasingly beyond the influence of nation states. The Greens therefore support political openness. EU accession is only desirable for the Greens if Switzerland's direct democratic processes are retained.</p>	<p>Switzerland lies at the heart of Europe and is closely integrated with the EU politically, economically and culturally. The Green Liberals believe that Switzerland is jointly responsible for Europe since Switzerland's prosperity is based on output and international networking. The bilateral approach has proven itself in the past and should be developed further. It best meets the desire for networking as well as autonomy. However, a shared future requires an openness to different approaches.</p>	<p>The SVP is the only party to have always vehemently opposed EU accession. It supports the bilateral approach, but not unconditionally. Such agreements should not be about bringing Switzerland closer to the EU but about Switzerland's interests. The foreign policy of every country is based on national interests. The same must also apply to Switzerland. Switzerland has much to offer and must negotiate accordingly. No agreements should be concluded that undermine Switzerland's sovereignty and independence.</p>	<p>The SP wants to maintain and strengthen Switzerland's agreements with the EU. A key element is the expansion of the support measures for the free movement of persons on the labour and housing markets and in education. The SP also supports new energy and agricultural agreements and greater tax fairness, also in relation to the EU. The bilateral approach is clearly questionable from a democratic point of view. The SP does not want Switzerland to be a passive EU member without decision-making rights, but to fight within the EU for a social, democratic and united Europe.</p>
<p>We will maintain our commitment to the Swiss abroad. For example, Antonio Hodgers, a National Councillor from Geneva and chairman of the Greens faction, is a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad. All our Council of States members signed the initiative for a Swiss Abroad Act in the 2011 summer session (OSA's electoral manifesto calls for this law). We support measures aimed at facilitating the exercising of political rights from abroad. We intend to set up a platform for the Swiss abroad on our website.</p>	<p>Being a small and young party, the Green Liberals only have limited resources available, which is why we are concentrating primarily on Switzerland. We are nevertheless aware that the community of the Swiss abroad is Switzerland's fourth-largest "canton", so to speak, and is therefore important and worthy of recognition.</p>	<p>SVP International, our section for the Swiss abroad, is very active and can participate on all party committees and influence their policy like a cantonal section. SVP International will run with its own lists in nine cantons in the 2011 elections. The electorate abroad will therefore be able to vote for candidates who are Swiss abroad in the cantons of Zurich, Geneva, Grisons, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau, Solothurn, Schaffhausen and Schwyz. The SVP is fighting politically to maintain Swiss values and Switzerland's independence.</p>	<p>The SP wants to strengthen the voice of the Swiss abroad in Swiss politics and offers them international electoral lists to stand for the National Council. An SP proposal also calls for the immediate comprehensive introduction of e-voting. The SP is opposed to making savings at the expense of the Swiss abroad – public service aspects of consular services, the quality of the Swiss schools and top-quality information through "Swiss Review" and swissinfo should not be compromised.</p>



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# Meine Schweiz, meine Familie, unser Erfolg.

www.cvp.ch



**FDP**  
The Liberals  
International

## Bilateral Treaties Yes – Joining the EU No For the love of Switzerland.

Take a look at  
our candidates,  
they stand for  
these claims.

The Bilateral Treaties are the fundament for Switzerland's independence and economic strength. Additional free trade agreements secure our country's access to new and growing markets. This creates jobs at home and sustains public welfare. **FDP.The Liberals International** campaigns for the Fifth Switzerland - without political theater.  
[www.fdp-international.com/de/wahlen-2011](http://www.fdp-international.com/de/wahlen-2011)

### FDP.The Liberals International fight

- > for a systematic continuation of the bilateral approach
- > against joining the European Union
- > for additional free trade agreements
- > hard but fair: clear restrictions for unqualified immigrants

## Elections 2011:

**Vote the SVP International electoral list of citizens abroad!**

In the following cantons we present own list of expatriates:



Aargau



Basel-Stadt



Geneva



Graubünden



Schaffhausen



Schwyz



Solothurn



Zurich

Further information about our candidates and our party can be found

[www.svp-international.ch](http://www.svp-international.ch)



www.svp-international.ch



**The Swiss vote SVP – in Switzerland and abroad**

## Swiss Solidarity

Switzerland's humanitarian visiting card

Swiss Solidarity (or Glückskette, as the foundation is called in Switzerland) has been helping people in need in Switzerland and abroad since 1946. After tragic events, it appeals via the media to the people of Switzerland for donations. It then finances and monitors aid projects realized by 31 Swiss partner relief organizations. In 2010, Swiss Solidarity was engaged in 247 projects in 47 countries with a total value of 167.7 million francs.

### How does Swiss Solidarity work?

- Swiss Solidarity supports humanitarian relief projects in Switzerland and abroad.
- Working together with the Organization for the Swiss Abroad and the Schnyder von Wartensee Foundation, in cases of hardship Swiss Solidarity can also assist Swiss people living abroad who have fallen victim to natural disaster.
- Swiss Solidarity finances relief projects for emergency aid, rebuilding and helping the return to an independent life.

You too can help throughout the world and carry on Switzerland's humanitarian tradition.

Information at [www.glueckskette.ch](http://www.glueckskette.ch) or [www.swiss-solidarity.org](http://www.swiss-solidarity.org).



Swiss Solidarity |  
[www.swiss-solidarity.org](http://www.swiss-solidarity.org) |

ASO (Organization for Swiss Abroad) is a partner of Swiss Solidarity

## Promises and reality

There are always plenty of major announcements and promises made during election campaigns. Many of these are often quickly forgotten again in day-to-day political life. We have therefore produced a summary of the voting at the National Council over the past four years on proposals directly affecting Swiss citizens abroad.

In the table below, proposals voted on in the previous legislature (2008-2011) are divided into two groups – issues that directly concern

the Swiss abroad and those that might have an impact on the Swiss abroad. The voting behaviour of political parties and not of

individual members of parliament is shown. Exact figures are given where the voting was close.

Proposals with a direct impact	SP	Greens	CVP	FDP/Lib	BDP	SVP	Vote
Increase in the budget provided for by the Federal Council for Swiss schools abroad from 15.4 to 20 million Swiss francs. The SVP proposed that the budget only be increased to 17 million Swiss francs.	■	■	■	■	PARTY NOT YET FOUNDED	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL DEC. 2007
Political representation: Carlo Sommaruga (SP) called for guaranteed seats for the Swiss abroad in parliament through a parliamentary initiative. The number was not defined.	■	16:15 ■	■	■	PARTY NOT YET FOUNDED	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL SEPT. 2008
No reduction to the budget for “Swiss Review” by 0.5 million Swiss francs as put forward by the Federal Council (proposal by Carlo Sommaruga, SP)	■	■	17:13 ▼	▼	PARTY NOT YET FOUNDED	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL DEC. 2008
Legal basis for the funding of the various federal government duties in relation to the Swiss abroad (Federal Council proposal)	■	■	■	■	■	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL MARCH 2009
Additional budget to cover the shortfall in the pension fund of Swiss schools abroad (Federal Council proposal)	■	■	■	■	■	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL JUNE 2009
Abolition of the right to dual citizenship for newly naturalised citizens (proposal by Jasmin Hutter, SVP)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	■	NATIONAL COUNCIL MARCH 2010
Elimination of financial hurdles in re-naturalisation (proposal by Antonio Hodgers, SP)	■	■	22:12 ▼	▼	▼	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL MARCH 2010
Adjustment of invalidity insurance pensions for pensioners living abroad to the purchasing power of the place of residence (SVP parliamentary initiative)	▼	▼	15:15 ●	13:11 ▼	■	■	NATIONAL COUNCIL DEC. 2010
Appropriate remuneration for members of parliament elected to the National Council as Swiss citizens abroad	■	■	■	■	■	31:22 ▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL DEC. 2010
Facilitation of renewal of entry on the electoral roll – Swiss abroad who vote no longer have to renew their entry (parliamentary initiative by Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin, CVP)	■	■	■	■	■	■	NATIONAL COUNCIL MARCH 2011
Proposals with a possible impact	SP	Greens	CVP	FDP/Lib	BDP	SVP	Vote
Introduction of biometric passports	▼	▼	■	■	PARTY NOT YET FOUNDED	■	NATIONAL COUNCIL JUNE 2008
Continuation and extension of the agreement on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU	■	■	■	■	PARTY NOT YET FOUNDED	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL JUNE 2008
Treaty on administrative cooperation between Switzerland and the USA in relation to the banking affair	▼	10:7 ▼	■	■	■	▼	NATIONAL COUNCIL JUNE 2010

■ FOR ▼ AGAINST ● TIE

## Candidates from abroad

More candidates from abroad are standing at these elections than ever before. Some parties, such as the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and the Social Democratic Party (SP), have separate international lists in several cantons, while other parties are including candidates from abroad on their cantonal lists. Below we profile two female and two male candidates from abroad as a reflection of the wide spectrum of candidates.



**Marcel Lewandowski, aged 61, candidate for the BDP in Schwyz, lives in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He is a lawyer and a businessman.**

"My father emigrated from Switzerland and opened a bicycle factory in Brazil. So, I've always lived in Brazil, but my family has always maintained contact with Switzerland.

We had nannies from Switzerland – I've got two brothers and a sister – and we've kept our grandfather's house in Steinen, in the canton of Schwyz. I've always regarded Switzerland as home just as much as Brazil. I could easily imagine spending most of my time in Switzerland in the future. But I would also remain closely attached to Brazil as I have three children, a daughter and two sons, living there.

I'm entering politics here now because of my cousin. He made me aware that Swiss citizens abroad could stand for parliament. I looked at the parties and discovered that my ideas were very close to those of the BDP. I am not yet sure which issues I will focus on in particular. I still have to discuss that in greater depth with my party. For this reason I don't want to express a political position on issues publicly yet. However, I have a lot of experience in mediation and I work for two charitable foundations in Brazil. I have taken on two employees for the election campaign who are advising me – a campaign manager and a politics student. If I were to be elected, I would have to reorganise my entire life. I would rent an apartment in Berne and spend half of the year there. My wife is Brazilian but she was educated in Switzerland at a boarding school in Montreux. She would therefore

be happy to move to Switzerland. Among my children I would easily be able to find a successor for my business affairs in Brazil."



**Helen Freiermuth, aged 53, candidate for the FDP in Zurich, has resided in Yantai, China, since 2010 and lived in various other countries previously. She is a primary school teacher and has a business studies diploma.**

"I was politically active in the canton of Zurich in the 1990s, in school administration in Bassersdorf and on the audit committee of Freienstein-Teufen. I didn't actively seek out my first candidature for the National Council four years ago; I was approached by the party and won a surprisingly high number of votes. I have since been involved with FDP International, and my current candidature is simply a logical step. I am now working intensively on the election campaign. I am dealing with issues on my website ([www.helen-freiermuth.ch](http://www.helen-freiermuth.ch)), I am organising an e-mail campaign and I will spend a few weeks in Switzerland on two separate occasions before the elections to take part in election events and the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. I've also visited Switzerland frequently in recent years, perhaps four or five times a year.

If I were to be elected, attending sessions in Berne would not present a problem as both my daughters are grown up. I am only able to get involved in politics because I have the full support of my husband. I am not allowed to work in China; I am just a "travelling spouse", which is the official term in China. If I were elected to the

### All candidates online

The list of all candidates resident abroad will be published and constantly updated on the website of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) as the deadline for registering as a candidate only expires a few weeks before the elections in some cantons. [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) -> politik

### Candidates who sit on the Council of the Swiss Abroad

#### The following are standing for election to the National Council:

Antonio Hodgers, Greens, canton of Geneva  
Hans Kaufmann, SVP, canton of Zurich  
Peter Simon Kaul, SVP, canton of Zurich

Christa Markwalder, FDP, canton of Berne  
John McGough, SVP, canton of Zurich  
Roman Rauper, SVP, canton of Zurich  
André Reymond, SVP, canton of Geneva  
Audrey Ruchet Bach, SP, canton of Geneva  
Rolf B. Schudel, SVP, canton of Basel-Stadt  
Carlo Sommaruga, SP, canton of Geneva  
Reinhard Süess, SP, canton of Zurich

#### The following person is standing for election to the Council of States:

Filippo Lombardi, CVP, canton of Ticino

The names of all members of the "Swiss abroad" parliamentary group can also be found at [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) -> politik

### VOTING ELECTRONICALLY FOR THE FIRST TIME

Swiss citizens abroad who are registered on the electoral roll of a commune in the cantons of Aargau, Basel-Stadt, Grisons and St. Gallen can vote electronically at the elections on 23 October 2011. The Federal Council has approved applications from the four cantons to conduct an e-election trial. Around 21,500 Swiss abroad will be able to vote electronically. Citizens in Switzerland do not yet have this opportunity. Federal Chancellor Corina Casanova explained that the state chancellery sees e-voting as a key project and will extend it as quickly as possible if the tests are successful.

National Council, I would, of course, attempt to raise the issues of the Swiss abroad in parliament. I would primarily focus on working towards objectives rather than opposing others. I sometimes get the impression that we Swiss abroad are treated as second-class citizens by Switzerland. I often find dealing with the authorities difficult. I also believe that insufficient use is made of the potential of the Swiss abroad. My perspective from China is that Switzerland is wrapped up in itself and does not fully appreciate how important Asia has become.”



**Hans Peter Bieri, aged 46, candidate for the SVP in Solothurn, has lived in Bangkok, Thailand, since 2008 and previously resided in other countries. He is an administrative secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).**

“I’ve always held an interest in politics, which is why I co-founded SVP International in 1992. However, apart from that, I have not previously been politically active. When the party asked me whether I would like to stand for the National Council this year, I said yes. It didn’t take me long to make my mind up. I don’t believe that the Swiss abroad are really represented in parliament in Berne. Some politicians support the issues of the Swiss abroad but representation from abroad would clearly have greater weight. The key issues for me are the introduction of e-voting, the reintroduction of voluntary Old Age and Survivors’ Insurance (AHV) for all Swiss abroad and a constituency for the Swiss abroad, almost like a canton. This would also give them representation in the Council of States. I did not ask my employers whether they approved of my candidacy. I believe that, as a federal government employee, I am also entitled to exercise my civic duties. However, some issues are taboo for me. As an FDFA employee, I cannot, for example, publicly discuss foreign policy or department business. I am not concerned about that because foreign policy is not one of my issues. Immigration is the most urgent issue facing Switzerland, but that is not foreign policy, so I can get involved there. I am appalled that people were kept in the dark about the consequences of the free movement of persons. We must

continue to negotiate here – not renegotiate or terminate the agreement. If I were elected to the National Council, I would probably have to take a long unpaid holiday as I would have to give up my position abroad. But it is unlikely to come to that as I have little genuine hope of being elected.”



**Franziska Bieri, aged 34, candidate for the SP in Zurich, has lived in Sofia, Bulgaria, since 2010 and previously spent over ten years in the USA.**

“I’ve been a member of SP International for years and was asked whether I would like to stand for the National Council. I was interested in politics at grammar school in Biel, and politics was also a big part of my life while a student – I studied sociology and political science at Georgia State University in Atlanta. I’m currently living in Bulgaria because of my husband. He is an economist and comes from Sofia. We met when studying in the USA. As a lecturer and researcher, I now focus primarily on the issues of globalisation and the role of non-governmental organisations and international movements. I am familiar with Switzerland’s political problems as I spend at least a month in my homeland every year but I am, of course, not as au fait with the details as Swiss politicians. I have had a lively exchange with party colleagues in recent months. This has given me lots of new insights. The inside and outside perspectives are two completely different things. I will spend August in Switzerland to take part in election events, podium presentations and discussions. I am particularly looking forward to dialogue with other Swiss abroad. If I were elected, I would have to reorganise my life a little. During sessions, I could leave my seven-year-old daughter with my family in Switzerland. My husband is fully behind me. My key issues in politics are, of course, related to my experiences and background. I can definitely make an important contribution in terms of foreign policy and in the areas of globalisation, security and justice. I see the increasing gap between rich and poor as a major political challenge, both globally and in Switzerland.”

### **SMARTVOTE – AN AID FOR VOTERS ON THE INTERNET**

Smartvote is a scientific online electoral aid for elections in Switzerland, which can be used at communal, cantonal and national level. As it was for the 2007 elections, Smartvote is also a “Swiss Review” partner this year.

#### **Smartvote aims to:**

- improve transparency prior to elections and enable voters to make their decisions in a new targeted way
- increase people’s interest in politics
- highlight the potential of e-democracy and e-voting

The political profiles of the candidates are recorded and saved in a database based on a large number of questions on specific issues and viewpoints. Voters can complete the same questionnaire online and find candidates who, or parties which, most closely represent their political views and values.

A “smartspider” is created based on the answers. This is a graphical presentation of political views that looks like a spider’s web.

Smartvote, developed in collaboration with the University of Berne, was used for the first time at the National Council and Council of States elections in 2003. Vimentis is offering

a similar electoral aid for the 2011 elections. A comparison of both may prove interesting as the choice of issues and the style of the questionnaire will have an impact on the result.

Both Smartvote and Vimentis are submitting their questions to the political parties to allow them to express their opinion before the system goes live online.

[www.smartvote.ch](http://www.smartvote.ch)

[www.vimentis.ch](http://www.vimentis.ch) -> wahlen



## Youth seminar: "Parliamentary elections in Switzerland" 17.10. – 24.10.2011

OSA is encouraging young citizens, in particular all who have recently become old enough to vote, to take part in the elections on 23 October. In the week prior to the election weekend, OSA is holding a seminar that will provide a look behind the scenes of the election campaign. We will ask: How will the election work? How do politicians feel about the election campaign? What is their motivation, and what do the parties want to achieve? How is the media reporting the election?



Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey in discussion with young Swiss abroad

Young people will be given an introduction to the Swiss political system, they will meet parliamentary election candidates and will have the opportunity to discuss matters with them. Participants will experience the reporting by television, radio and the press up close. Finally, we will share the excitement of election day with the parties and subsequently analyse the results with experts.

## Return to Switzerland to study or undertake vocational training

**Many young Swiss citizens abroad take this step each year, leaving behind their family and friends to return to their homeland to study, start an apprenticeship or perfect their knowledge of one of the national languages. The Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS) provides information on the opportunities available to them.**

While aware of the excellent standard of education in Switzerland, these young people give various reasons for making this decision. It is often a case of wanting to familiarise themselves with Swiss culture. Reasons also include the desire for a change or even a taste for adventure. Depending on the circumstances, this is a natural step for some,

while for others the decision is made after lengthy consideration or is simply unplanned.

Whatever the case may be, it is essential to prepare properly for departure and arrival in Switzerland. The Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS) offers assistance here. It provides documentation and general information on educational opportunities in Switzerland. If necessary, it can also provide administrative support with applications for cantonal grants.

Under certain conditions, AJAS provides additional funding in the form of grants or interest-free loans. Please contact AJAS' secretariat, which is housed in the same premises as the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad:

*AJAS, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne  
Tel. +41 31 356 61 04, Fax +41 31 356 61 01  
E-mail: [ajas@aso.ch](mailto:ajas@aso.ch)*

## OSA advice

**I live abroad and I have contributed to Old Age and Survivors' Insurance. At what age can I draw an Old Age and Survivors' Insurance pension?**

The legal retirement age in Switzerland is 64 for women and 65 for men. The pension entitlement can be brought forward by one or two years. However, bringing forward the retirement age has an effect on the amount of the Old Age and Survivors' Insurance pension, which will then be reduced throughout retirement. Claiming the pension one year early results in a 6.8% reduction in pension and claiming it two years early means a 13.6% reduction until the normal retirement age. The level of pension reduction is then recalculated. It should be noted that the entitlement to draw the pension early is an individual right, which means that married persons can request early receipt of their pension independently of their spouse. The request for early payment of the pension should be made to the competent authority, which, depending on the place of residence of the person concerned, is either the local social insurance institution (clearly state that the request concerns early pension payment) or the Swiss Compensation Office:

*Swiss Compensation Office  
Av. Edmond-Vaucher, 18  
P.O. Box 3100, CH-1211 Geneva 2  
Tel: +41 22 795 91 11, Fax: +41 22 795 97 05  
Website: [www.zas.admin.ch](http://www.zas.admin.ch)*

We recommend that you submit this request three to four months before reaching the age when you would like to claim your pension. The receipt of the Old Age and Survivors' Insurance pension results in the termination of invalidity or survivors' pensions paid up to this point in time. No pension is paid for children during the early claim period.

Please note that while it is possible to claim the Old Age and Survivors' Insur-

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ance pension early, a request can also be made for it to be delayed by 1 to 5 years. This results in an increase in the pension amount.

For further details, please consult the Old Age and Survivors' Insurance website: [www.ahv-iv.info](http://www.ahv-iv.info).

To find out where you should submit your pension request, please visit the Central Compensation Office's website: [www.zas.admin.ch](http://www.zas.admin.ch) (click on "Swiss Compensation Office SCO" -> "Making an application" and then choose the corresponding link).

## Winter camps for children aged 8 to 14

Whether they are skiers or snowboarders, beginners or at an advanced level, Swiss children living abroad aged 8 to 14 will have a great time at our winter camps.

### Winter camp Sedrun (Grisons)

Date: Tuesday, 27 December 2011 to

Thursday, 5 January 2012

No. of participants: 48

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: Approx. CHF 150

Registration deadline: 30 October 2011

### Winter camp Arolla (Valais)

Date: Tuesday, 27 December 2011 to

Thursday, 5 January 2012

No. of participants: 36

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: Approx. CHF 150

Registration deadline: 30 October 2011

### Registration

Precise details on the winter camps and the registration form will be available from 15 September 2011 at [www.sjas.ch](http://www.sjas.ch) ("Our forthcoming activities"). Reduced contribution rates are available in justified cases. The form required can be requested on the registration form. We are also happy to post you our information brochure on request.

### Draw to attend JUSKILA

600 Swiss children, including a number of Swiss children living abroad, born in 1997 and 1998 will have the opportunity to attend Swiss Ski's big ski camp in Lenk free of charge. This will take place between 1 and 8 January 2012. To take part in the Jus-kila trip, Swiss children abroad must be

## REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE DRAW FOR JUSKILA (1 TO 8 JAN. 2012)

Please complete in clear print.

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

No., street: \_\_\_\_\_ Town/city, postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent(s)/guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Female /  Male Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Commune of origin in Switzerland (see Passport/ID): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address of parent(s)/guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of sport\*  Alpine skiing /  Cross-country skiing /  Snowboarding

Language of child  German /  French /  Italian

\*Please only tick one box. The type of sport cannot be changed after the draw.

Signature of parent(s) / guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the form, together with a copy of the Swiss passport of a parent/guardian or of the child, by 15 October 2011 (date of receipt) to:

*Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne*

*Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01, E-mail: [sjas@aso.ch](mailto:sjas@aso.ch)*

able to communicate in at least one of the three Swiss national languages (German, French or Italian). The draw only covers the camp itself (winter sports coaching, food and accommodation). Parents will be responsible for organising and financing travel to and from the camp. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the draw at the end of October.

*Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad  
Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne  
Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01  
E-mail: [sjas@aso.ch](mailto:sjas@aso.ch)*

## 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)

*Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne  
Phone +41 31 356 6100, Fax +41 31 356 6101,  
[info@aso.ch](mailto:info@aso.ch), [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch)*

## New host families sought in Switzerland

OSA is looking for families who would be willing to host our young people from all over the world. These guests will certainly be a breath of fresh air, introducing exciting intercultural exchange and variety into family life, and bringing with them experience of other ways of life. Host families provide the young visitors with food and accommodation while they cover

all other costs themselves. The stay with a host family is usually combined with an educational programme. However, two-week holidays without a fringe programme are also possible. Information on offers for young people can be found in the "Offers" section at [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch).



## KEY ELECTION INFORMATION

**It will all be over by noon on 23 October 2011. The ballot boxes for the election of the National Council and Council of States will close. Around 75,000 people will be on duty to ensure the results are recorded and communicated properly. 3,089 candidates stood for election to the National Council at the last national elections in 2007. That figure is set to be exceeded this time. The Federal Chancellery also anticipates more parties entering the election, which may result in a transformation of the party landscape.**

### The electorate – the key players

According to the federal constitution, the Swiss people are the nation's sovereign power, in other words the highest political authority. This includes all men and women of voting age with Swiss citizenship, which amounts to just under 5.1 million citizens.

### The Swiss abroad

Swiss citizens abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation (embassy or consulate) and entered on an electoral roll have been able to exercise their political rights at federal level from abroad since 1 July 1992. Swiss citizens abroad can choose to be entered on the electoral roll in their commune of origin or at a previous place of residence in Switzerland. They can vote in National Council elections (active electoral right) and also stand for election to the National Council themselves (passive electoral right). The legal basis is provided by the Federal Act on the Political Rights of Swiss Abroad.

By contrast, the Swiss abroad can only take part in Council of States elections if the cantonal law provides for a voting right for Swiss abroad at cantonal level. The following cantons grant the Swiss abroad the right to vote at cantonal level: Zurich (only for Council of States elections), Berne, Schwyz, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel-Landschaft, Grisons, Ticino, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Jura.

### Election of the National Council and Council of States for the next four years

The national parliament will be elected on 23 October 2011. This is the state's legislative authority, which has two chambers: the National Council representing Switzerland's entire population and the Council of States representing the 26 cantons. The National Council has 200 members and the Council of States 46. Together they form the United Federal Assembly.

The cantons are the constituencies at the National Council elections. Based on their size, the National Council seats (2011 the same as 2007 and 2003) are distributed as follows:

ZH	34	LU	10	TG	6	SH	2	AI	1
BE	26	TI	8	BS	5	JU	2	GL	1
VD	18	SO	7	GR	5	AR	1		
AG	15	BL	7	NE	5	UR	1		
SG	12	VS	7	SZ	4	OW	1		
GE	11	FR	7	ZG	3	NW	1		

National Council elections are based on a system of proportional representation, which means the seats are distributed in relation to the votes won. The cantons of Appenzell Innerrhoden, Appenzell Auserrhoden, Glarus, Obwalden, Nidwalden and Uri use a majority voting system because only one seat is allocated to each of these cantons.

Each canton sends two representatives to the Council of States irrespective of the size of its population, with the exception of the six half-cantons which only have one member each. The majority voting system applies in almost all cantons for the Council of States elections, which means that the person who wins the most votes is elected. The cantons of Jura and Neuchâtel are exceptions.

### Exercising the vote

Swiss citizens abroad, who are registered to exercise voting and electoral rights with the competent Swiss representation, will be provided by the electoral commune with the electoral documentation in the requested official language prior to the election. This includes:

- the ballot paper
- the Federal Chancellery's voting instructions and, if applicable, cantonal voting instructions
- depending on cantonal legislation, one or two envelopes from the electoral commune to ensure ballot secrecy and
- a separate voter identification card if the delivery envelope is not valid as voter identification.

Voting and electoral rights can be exercised in person or by post or even electronically in those cantons that already operate e-voting (see page 24).

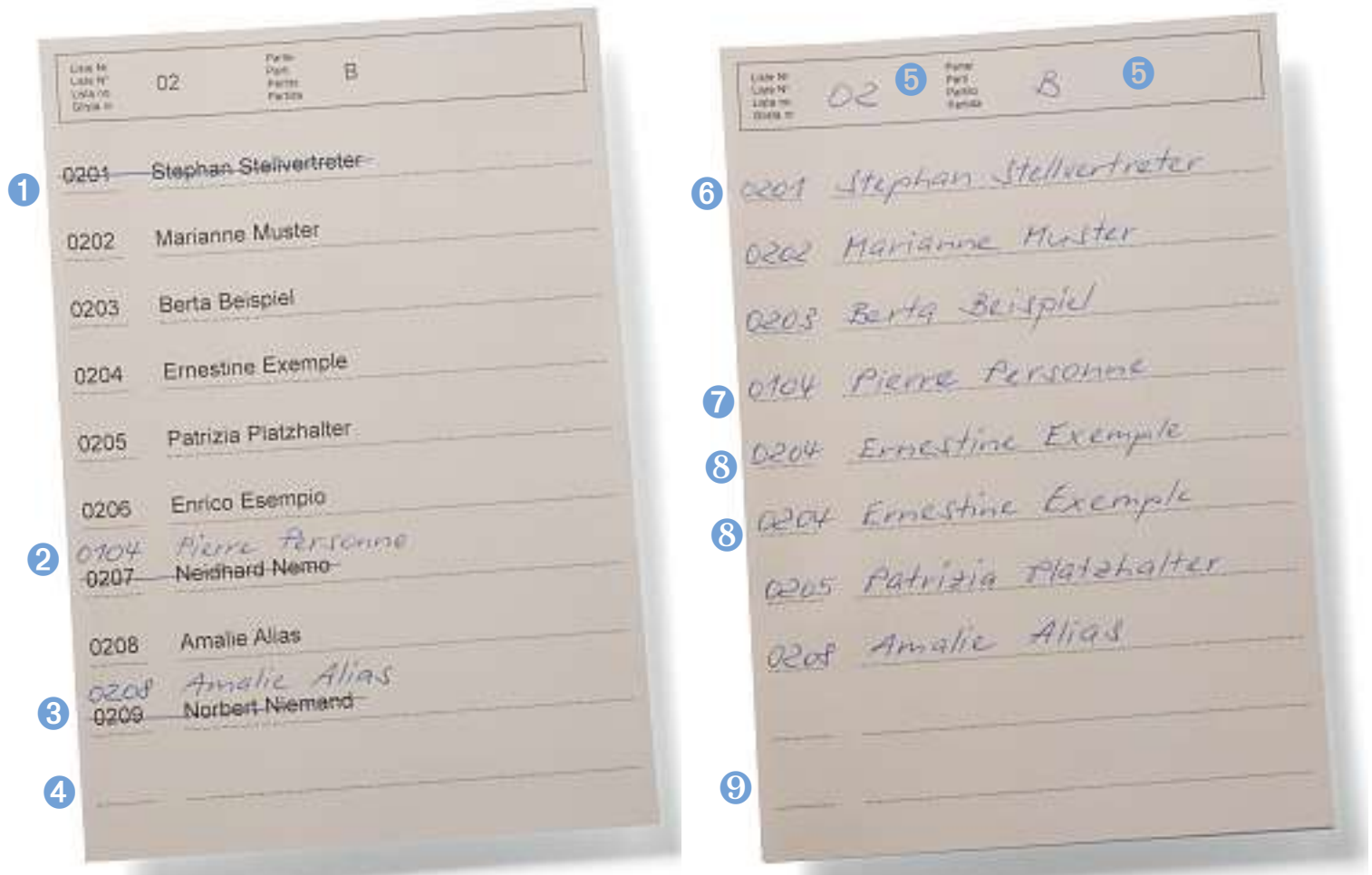
### Spoilt for choice

Voters have plenty of options available to them. There are more than a dozen different electoral lists to choose from in some cantons. In addition, there are also list or sub-list combinations. Maintaining a clear overview and making the right choice is not straightforward. It is therefore helpful to ask yourself a few questions before completing your ballot paper to avoid being overwhelmed by the mass of information:

- What is my view on the state, society and economy?
- Is there a party that represents this view?
- Do I want to rely on one party's recommendation and simply select a party list?
- Which people would best represent my concerns in parliament?
- Do I want a particular person to be elected to parliament? How can I increase his/her chances of election?

The websites of the parties and candidates provide information on agendas and visions. There are also electoral ratings by associations and interest groups as well as online electoral aids, such as

smartvote.ch and vimentis.ch (see page 25). You can also research the voting patterns and votes of current National Council members on the Swiss parliament's website.



#### From theory to practice

A pre-printed or blank ballot paper can be used to cast your vote.

#### Procedure with a pre-printed ballot paper of a party or group:

Names can be crossed out (1) and replaced with other candidates from any party (2, 3) (= *splitting the vote*). Names can also be duplicated (3) (= *accumulation*). At the end (4), the list must not contain more names than

there are seats available to the canton. Corrections must be made by hand (2, 3) and ideally in block letters.

#### Procedure with a blank ballot paper:

Enter a party name and the corresponding list number at the top (5). Lines left blank will then count for this party. If no party name is entered, blank lines and therefore valuable votes (9) will be lost. The ballot paper must contain at least one valid name

(6). To avoid errors, always include first names and candidate numbers (7). The chances of a candidate being elected are increased if the name is entered on the list twice (8) (= *accumulation*). Please note that simplifications, such as inverted commas or “ditto”, are invalid. Only persons who appear on a list for the canton concerned can be elected.

## Electronic voting – a third option for voting in referenda and elections

In a democracy, the people must have confidence in the authorities to hold elections and referenda in a proper and legally impeccable way. This confidence exists in Switzerland, and the postal vote was introduced on this basis in 1994. This new, more convenient method quickly

established itself and also had a slight positive impact on turnout.

Electronic voting (e-voting) now provides a third way to vote and constitutes a tool for 21st-century society. After a pilot phase, the Federal Council and parliament approved the gradual introduction of electronic voting in 2006/2007. Swiss citizens abroad eligible to vote were identified as the group that would benefit most and were treated as a priority. The Federal Chancellery has set



itself the target of enabling the majority of Swiss citizens abroad to take part in federal elections electronically by 2015.

#### The Swiss abroad eligible to vote: the primary target group

Electronic voting provides benefits that are particularly important for Swiss citizens abroad eligible to vote. It avoids delays, for example, that may arise with postal voting.

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) welcomes the introduction of electronic voting. For the time being, electronic voting is only available to Swiss abroad who reside in an EU state, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Northern Cyprus, San Marino, the Vatican City or one of the 45 states that have signed the Wassenaar Arrangement. This covers around 90% of the Swiss abroad registered to vote. (The Wassenaar Arrangement governs data encryption required for the transmission of data in electronic voting.)

Registered Swiss citizens abroad eligible to vote from the cantons of Basel-Stadt, St. Gallen, Grisons and Aargau will be able to cast their votes using the Internet in the forthcoming election.

## PUBLICATIONS

### The Swiss Confederation – a brief guide 2011

This richly illustrated brochure, which is published annually, provides a comprehensive but easy-to-understand insight into Swiss politics and its most powerful bodies, while also explaining the structure and duties of our state.

An electronic version and order form can be found at:

[www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch](http://www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch)



### Parliamentary elections 2011:

**An interactive introduction** (in German)

<http://www.parlamentswahlen-2011.ch/>

<http://www.ch.ch> (Votes/Elections)

Advertisement



### ELECTORAL STUDY AMONG THE SWISS ABROAD:

The Swiss Foundation for Research in Social Sciences (FORS) has been carrying out electoral studies since 1995. The project receives funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation.

For the Federal Assembly elections this year, the Swiss abroad will also be involved for the first time in the study. A representative survey will be conducted online by FORS among eligible registered voters, who will be contacted by e-mail. Participation is voluntary. Further details on this study can be found on the website: [www.selects.ch](http://www.selects.ch).

## Important

Please do not forget to make sure your representation has your correct address, telephone numbers and e-mail address. In countries exposed to risk (natural disasters or political instability), we also recommend that you notify the embassy/consulate of your mobile telephone number.

You can also register for delivery of "Swiss Review" (electronic or printed) and information updates from your representation at [www.swissabroad.ch](http://www.swissabroad.ch).

### POPULAR INITIATIVES:

The following popular initiatives have been launched since the last edition (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- Federal popular initiative "Stopp der Überbevölkerung - zur Sicherung der natürlichen Lebensgrundlagen" (Stop overpopulation to safeguard the natural foundations of life) (03.11.2012)
- "Familien stärken! Steuerfreie Kinder- und Ausbildungszulagen" (Strengthen families! Tax-free child and educational allowances) (03.11.2012)
- "Für Ehe und Familie – gegen die Heiratsstrafe" (For marriage and family – against the tax penalty for married couples) (03.11.2012)
- "Für den geordneten Ausstieg aus der Atomenergie" (For the organised withdrawal from nuclear power) (17.11.2012)
- "Für die Veröffentlichung der Politiker-Einkünfte" (For the publication of politicians' incomes) (08.12.2012)
- "Energie- statt Mehrwertsteuer" (Energy tax instead of VAT) (15.12.2012)
- "Gegen Masseneinwanderung" (Against mass immigration) (26.1.2013)

The complete list can be found on the Federal Chancellery's website: [www.bk.admin.ch/aktuell/abstimmung](http://www.bk.admin.ch/aktuell/abstimmung)

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■ The socialist Hermes Binner, the grandson of emigrants from Valais who arrived in Argentina in the 19th century, has announced his presidential candidacy. If he wins the election on 23 October, he will become the first Argentinean president to hold Swiss nationality.

■ **Patty Schnyder** from Basel has retired from tennis at the age of 32 after 17 years on the circuit. After being ranked 7th in the world in 2005, she experienced a slow but irreversible slide down the world rankings.

■ A freight train travelling from Italy to Germany caught fire in the **Simplon tunnel** at the start of June. Ten wagons were ablaze causing major infrastructural damage. It took around 50 firefighters over a day to bring the blaze under control. Work on damage to the tunnel will last several months. Rail traffic was able to recommence several days later.

■ Marcel Fässler from Schwytz became the first Swiss driver to win the famous endurance car race, the **"24 Hours of Le Mans"**. The race, which has been contested since 1923, found its way into the movies with Steve McQueen in 1970.

■ After an excellent performance, the Swiss national team lost to Spain in the final of the **European Under-21 Championship**. This is the closest a professional Swiss team has ever come to winning one of the most coveted trophies in football. The team's showing means it will take part in the 2012 Olympic Games for the first time in 84 years.

■ In 2010, the **Swiss tourism balance of trade** showed a surplus of CHF 4 billion. Foreign tourists spent CHF 15.6 billion (up 1.5% on 2009) on holidays and day trips in Switzerland compared with CHF

*"If the stage is small, the play is magnified."*

Alexis de Tocqueville, French philosopher, in his "Report on Democracy in Switzerland" (1848)

*"If a major disaster occurred and tens of thousands of people had to be resettled, I don't know where they would go at the moment, to be honest with you."*

Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer responding to a question about what would happen to the population in the event of a nuclear accident

*"Is it wiser to do nothing for ten or fifteen years and then to hope for majority support for a nuclear power station or to use the time now to start getting things underway?"*

Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard on the Federal Council resolution to withdraw from nuclear power

*"We are sorry to note that the EU is making life unnecessarily and unjustifiably difficult for us. Given the EU's current position, there can be no positive developments. However, we will not allow ourselves to be pressurised."*

Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the Swiss Confederation

*"We haven't done anything or made any threats. We have just said that we will wait. Perhaps that's what is out of the ordinary."*

Michael Reiterer, EU ambassador to Switzerland, in response to the statement by Swiss President Calmy-Rey

*"Our bankers are spoilt children who refuse to understand when they have to moderate their demands."*

Comment by Carsten Kengeter, head of UBS Investment Bank, during an internal conference call, according to the "Wall Street Journal"



She had set her sights on a medal at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Now the gymnast Ariella Kaeslin – Sportswoman of the Year three times from 2008 to 2010 – has announced her retirement at the age of just 23. "It was a fairytale career but my heart is no longer totally committed to the sacrifices required to compete at the top level of gymnastics", she told journalists when announcing her decision. Kaeslin is now looking forward to the following: "Having a lie-in and waking up in bed thinking about what I'd like to do today."

11.6 billion spent by the Swiss on holidays abroad.

■ Switzerland and the EU have signed an agreement which provides for the mutual recognition of **registered designations of origin** and protected designations of origin. This

completes the 1999 agreement on agriculture. In an initial stage, it will cover 818 traditional European and 22 Swiss specialities (gruyère and vacherin cheese, Grisons beef, etc.).

■ The former justice minister, **Ruth Metzler**, a federal coun-

cillor until 2003, will succeed Rolf Jeker as the head of the competence centre for Swiss foreign trade promotion (OSEC). The organisation has set up 22 Swiss business hubs worldwide since 2001 aimed at opening up commercial opportunities abroad for SMEs seeking to export.

■ There have been several significant movements in the positions of the **City Rankings** study commissioned annually by the magazine "bilanz". The top spot is now held by Zurich, followed by Zug, which came first in 2009 and 2010. There were lots of climbers in French-speaking Switzerland, with Geneva rising from 39th to 10th, Lausanne from 41st to 14th and Fribourg from 51st to 21st. 136 communes with over 10,000 inhabitants were assessed. The assessment criteria included: "employment market", "population development & housing market", "education", "culture & leisure time", "relaxation", "shopping infrastructure", "health & safety", "social issues", "mobility & transport", "attractiveness for taxation reasons, purchasing power & health insurance premiums" and "special attractions and administration". (AW / BE)

**Right of reply:** In the June 2011 edition of "Swiss Review", it was incorrectly claimed that I was a "leading candidate" for Swiss People's Party International. The fact is that SVP International has many qualified candidates in other cantons with international experience to whom the term "leading candidate" could be applied. The quotation attributed to me also said that I had "no idea" why I was standing for the National Council. This statement was taken out of context. Paul Accola

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