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Expatriate candidates

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parliamentary elections are also Federal Council elections.

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

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

The electoral successes of the Swiss People's Party eventually lead to the "magic formula" that had applied since the 1950s, even though the SVP subsequently "pinched" a seat from the CVP on the Federal Council. Instead of two CVP seats, two FDP seats, two SP seats and one for the SVP, since 2003 the CVP has had one, the FDP two, the SP two and the SVP the remaining two. According to the thinking behind the magic formula, the Federal Council is to reflect the relative strength of the different parties taking into account not only their share of the vote but also the number of seats each holds in the Federal Assembly. Because the CVP and FDP traditionally have more seats on the Council of States than their share of votes in National Council elections suggest, they

maintain a disproportionate weighting in Parliament despite steadily losing ground.

Few electoral rules

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

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

rich). Christoph Blocher's election, the SVP has dropped the issue again. The greatest problem with a popular vote would be to ensure the balanced representation of the various regions and language groups.

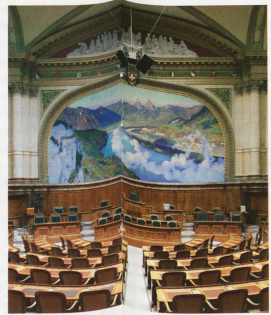
Another regular feature is the call for popular election of the Federal Council. The SVP in particular considered calling a referendum on the issue after it failed to get a second seat despite increasing its share of the vote. Since Christoph Blocher's election, the SVP has dropped the issue again. The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

Council of States: counterbalance or privilege?

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



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



When will the first expatriate Swiss national councillor be elected?

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What are your party's main issues?

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

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

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

An intelligent Switzerland: investing in talent, curiosity and ideas

A growing Switzerland: profitable, tolerant and creative

A just Switzerland: more opportunities for all

An open Switzerland: integration and networking

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fiscal competitiveness: low taxes and a simple taxation system

Lower consumer prices thanks to competition

Environmentally and climate-friendly policies

Enabling mothers to work: more childcare

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

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

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

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

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



We are working for a family-friendly Switzerland

We are working for full employment in Switzerland

We are working for a socially secure Switzerland

We are working for an ecologically sustainable Switzerland

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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