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Hand on heart, did you vote in June? If you did, on how many of the five federal proposals? I tried to form an opinion on all of the initiatives and referenda. I studied the voting documents, read newspapers, watched “Arena” on Swiss television and discussed the issues with family and friends.

Admittedly, it was arduous at times: Just the documents themselves, which included two hefty booklets, various information sheets and the ballot papers, namely for the five federal proposals – pro public service, unconditional basic income, the milch cow initiative, the amendment to the law on reproductive medicine and an amendment to the Asylum Act – plus, because I live in Baselland, six cantonal proposals ranging from supplementary childcare to the “Cantonal parliament resolution on the implementation of the pension fund law reform for the pension scheme of the University of Basel under the pension fund of the canton of Basel-Stadt – a partnership-based enterprise”. Finally, the envelope also contained three ballot papers from my commune of Schönenbuch. These concerned the re-election of members of the school board, the election office and the president of the communal parliament. That comes to 14 referenda and votes in total.

This is a lot. And when I think how the proposals at national level are stacking up this year, I completely understand why some people opt out. The electorate is overburdened at times. Even politically-minded people cannot have a genuine view on everything. I nevertheless tried to, and voted on 5 June. I hope you did, too. Being able to vote in this way remains a privilege that is only afforded to a few people. Direct democracy allows us as Swiss to actively participate in current affairs and politics. So, we must not shy away from the effort required, however great, and should even be grateful from time to time.

MARKO LEHTINEN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover photo:
Inside the new Gotthard
Base Tunnel (Photo NZZ)