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Pressure on voting rights for Swiss Abroad



I always vote, it gives me a feeling of belonging. I am happy not to be a “citizen of nowhere”, especially considering what happened in the Brexit referendum. Certainly, it is always good for outsiders to keep their counsel. But I don't view myself as an outsider.

Life (outside Switzerland for the last 30 years) has expanded my horizons. Surely this is a good thing, particularly at a time when nationalism and xenophobia are rearing their ugly head around the world. Indeed, maybe the UK would have avoided this debacle in the first place had all those British citizens who live abroad been able to vote.

DANIELA VAN DER HEIJDEN, FOREST ROW, UK

We have been living in Canada for almost 25 years. In all this time, we have never made use of our voting rights in Switzerland. I would have no problem at all if Swiss expatriates were no longer entitled to vote. What gives me the right to tell people living in Switzerland what they should and shouldn't do?

DANIEL SCHWIZER AND FAMILY, DIDSBURY, ALBERTA, CANADA

I think it is great that I can vote while living abroad. Because I am retired, I have plenty of time to view what is happening in Switzerland from afar. I am sure the same applies to others. Retirees like me also want to vote on issues such as school reform because it is our grandchildren who will be affected. We might be old, but we still have a lot of life experience.

MARKUS KÜNG, SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Swiss 'dual citizens' should not be able to vote when they live somewhere and vote in that new country if they have become naturalised. I have been in Australia since 1970 and this is my permanent home, hence I believe I have no right to tell Swiss people how to live their lives.

THERESE SALADIN-DAVIES, EMU PLAINS, AUSTRALIA

Some popular votes certainly affect me as a Swiss living abroad, and I would feel like a second-class citizen if I was no longer entitled to vote. We, the Swiss, are always keen to extol our country's democratic credentials – which is all the more reason for us to avoid introducing two classes of

voter. I have always followed a rule of thumb whereby I choose not to vote on issues that do not directly affect me. I did the same when I was still living in Switzerland. Swiss citizens should be able to make up their own mind either way though.

PATRIK MÜLLER, GERMANY

Swiss by marriage and French by birth, I lived in Switzerland for 28 years without ever voting in France, despite the border being just a few kilometres away. For the last 23 years, my husband and I have lived in France. We do not vote in Switzerland, but I do now vote in France. All of which is to say that we find it unacceptable to participate in the politics of a country in which we are not living. Only the residents of a country should be allowed to vote in it and this should be defined by law. I therefore find it completely logical that this subject should be put to the vote.

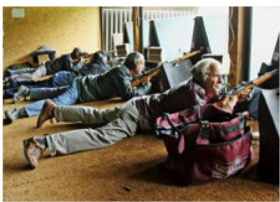
GINETTE MEMBREZ, DORDOGNE, FRANCE

Since retirement, I have been living in the Philippines. I would love to vote but my voting papers never arrive on time. I have now decided to stop receiving them and will wait until I am able to vote electronically. I basically don't have any voting rights at this time.

PETER SCHMUTZ, DUMAGUETE, PHILIPPINES

The question of whether voting rights for Swiss Abroad are justified in their present form generated a huge amount of debate among our readers. For more reader comments, visit www.ogy.de/stimmrecht

Tighter gun laws



If the suggested changes lead to one less death over the next twenty years it is worth the inconvenience of all those gun owners who have to jump through extra loops. At the end of the day it appears you can still keep your guns.

Try to look at it from the point of view of families who have been affected by senseless murders – and don't ever think it could not happen in Switzerland. New Zealand was in the same situation until two months ago – and the recent mass

murder has changed the landscape for ever down under. Nobody will stop you from using your semi automatic guns for sporting or leisure purposes – but it might just make it more difficult for an illegal buyer to purchase a weapon. It is a fact of life that there are bad fruit in every delivery of the harvest – be that in Switzerland or anywhere else in the world.

JOST SIEGFRIED, WHAKATANE, NEW ZEALAND

Firearms are not the problem in the horrible tragedy that happened in New Zealand, racism is. If firearms were not accessible, the extremist would have set the mosque on fire, or driven a truck through it; the firearms were just the means to an end. Restrictive laws impede good citizens in practising their hobby and living the way they wish.

DANIEL CONUS, BETHLEHEM, USA

The Swiss still don't get it. Without bilateral agreements with the EU, Switzerland would have had to shut up shop long ago. It's also about being able to compromise. The question of whether a few gun enthusiasts can keep their weapons is a pretty minor issue in the grand scheme of things. But what I do know is that fewer guns equals fewer potential problems with guns.

ROLAND SCHMIED, FRANCE

In my opinion, the Swiss government are giving the EU ever more opportunity to meddle with the rights and laws of our country. To date, no other country has managed to regulate and control things as well as we do when it comes to gun ownership. Remember that virtually every Swiss male has an army gun including ammunition at home.

URSULA RAUEN, SPAIN

'House rules' for our comments section

"Swiss Review" reports on events in Switzerland – and is keen to receive feedback from Swiss nationals living abroad. Therefore, letters, comments and other input are most welcome. The same applies to lively debate. The "Swiss Review" editorial team regularly gets contacted by readers asking why the comments that they have written online do not appear immediately on our website. This is not a technical problem. Comments are not published automatically. Instead, they are checked first by the editorial team before being manually approved. First and foremost, this is a routine procedure to eliminate obvious typing errors and thereby ensure that the automatic translation feature that many readers have enabled works more accurately. The editorial team will not and cannot publish any comments that are deemed under Swiss law to be racist, defamatory, insulting or offensive in any other way.

(MUL)

For the rules on posting comments, please visit ogy.de/comments

Readers can also join the debate in the online discussion forums of the platform for the Swiss Abroad, swisscommunity.org

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