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Voting by correspondence: an interim report

Since July 1 of last year, the new Federal Law on Political Rights for the Swiss Abroad has been in force; and this may be a good moment to provide an interim report and remind readers of the rules of procedure for the exercise of their new rights.

Voting by correspondence has been working well. But in order to uncover any procedural problems there may be and eliminate them, the Service for the Swiss Abroad carried out a survey at Swiss diplomatic posts at the beginning of this year.

Main problems

The result showed that voting by correspondence had come up against three main problems:

- Postal inefficiency
- Language of voting documents
- Double receipt of voting documents

Apart from low-standard postal services abroad, these problems lie with municipal authorities. A circular letter has been sent to these with suggestions about how services may be improved.

Voting process

To ensure secrecy, you should put your ballot paper in a closed **neutral envelope** – which your municipal authority is not obliged to send. This should then be returned in the **envelope provided**. For some authorities this **envelope is itself proof** of your right to vote. Where this is not the case, you must enclose your **voting card**.

Voting rights

If you are a Swiss Abroad wishing to exercise your voting rights, you should take account of the following:

● Registration for voting by correspondence

Register in person with your **diplomatic post** or use the **form** printed here. The diplomatic post will do the rest. You cannot receive your voting documents unless you register.

● Confirmation of registration

Your municipal authority in Switzerland will in due time confirm that you are registered as a Swiss Abroad voter.

● Elections and referendums

You will receive your voting documents at the **address** you have given, and these must be returned directly to your **municipal authority**.

● Popular initiatives

Signature lists may be obtained from **initiative committees**, the addresses of which appear in each Swiss Review. Such lists should be completed and returned to the **initiative committee**.

● Referendum demands

In view of the short period laid down (90 days), we cannot publish committee addresses in the Swiss Review. However, they appear in the **Federal Gazette**, which may be consulted at all diplomatic posts. Procedure for referendum demands

is the same as for popular initiatives.

Voter participation

It is impossible to provide statistics on the number of Swiss Abroad who vote,

Registration ratios as of July 1, 1993

Total	10.2%
Europe	11.7%
Africa	14.6%
America	6.1%
Asia	15.3%
Oceania	5.8%

since most municipal authorities do not distinguish them from resident voters.

But the **proportion** of those registering to vote (in per-

Registration form for Swiss Abroad entitled to vote

(please write legibly in block letters and send to your embassy or consulate)

Addressee

To the Swiss diplomatic post at

Sender

Family name

First name

Maiden name

Precise address abroad

Date of birth

Place of birth

Marital status

since

Place of origin

Canton

Post code

Family name/First name of father

Family name/First name of mother

On the basis of the Federal Law of December 19, 1975, and the Ordinance of October 16, 1991, on Political Rights for the Swiss Abroad, I wish to exercise my right to vote in federal elections and referendums and to sign popular initiatives and demands for referendums.

As voting municipality I wish to choose:

Place

Canton

Post code

* because this is my municipality of origin

* because I resided here from 19.... to 19....

(* Cross out where not applicable)

Place/Date

Signature



tage of those entitled to vote) appears in the box. By July 1, 1993, a total of **39,273** Swiss Abroad had registered. This represents three times the amount of those who voted during the old system which required presence in Switzerland. It means that the number of Swiss Abroad who have registered to vote roughly corresponds to the number of voters in six Swiss cantons or in the town of Lucerne. This first interim result is of particular interest since Swiss Abroad who actually vote – in contrast to those resident in

Change of consular district

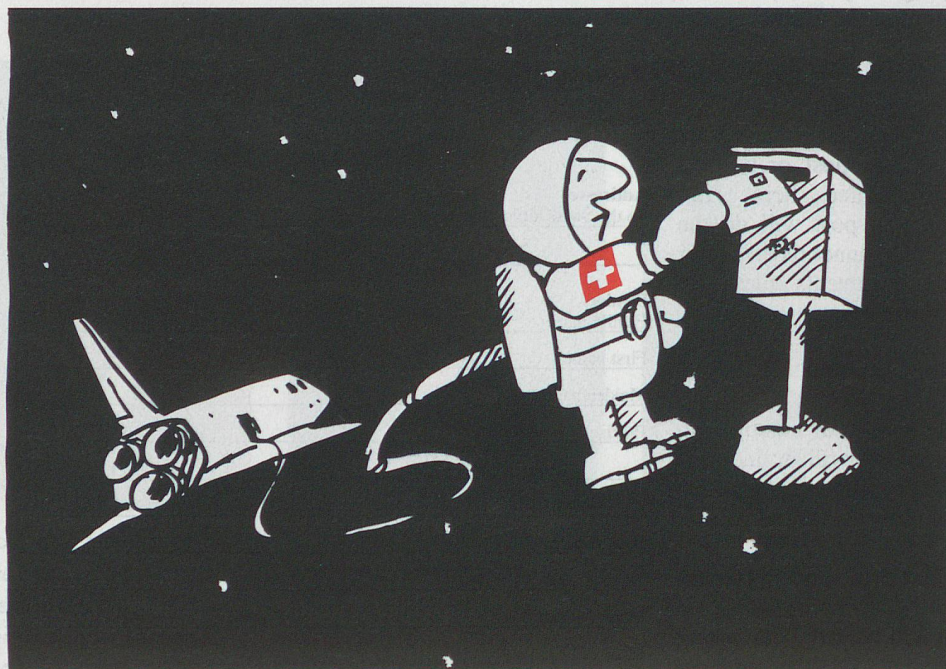
Any change of consular district leads to your **name being struck from your voting register** in Switzerland. When you arrive in your new district, you must **renew** your voter **registration**.

Switzerland – are very strongly motivated since they have to show their interest by registering before they can vote.
Paul Andermatt

Your change of address

Do not forget to notify **your diplomatic post** of any change of address. The form below may be used for this purpose. Swiss Review will then be automatically sent to the new address.

Name
First name
Date of birth
Old address
New address
Tel.
Valid until
Signature



(Grafik: Hugo Bossard)

Swiss Abroad statistics

The number of Swiss abroad has now topped the half million mark. At the end of June 1993, a total of **504,177** Swiss nationals were registered with diplomatic and consular posts.

Of this number, 346,242, or 68.7%, were dual nationals. Compared with the last such census taken in June 1992, the number of Swiss Abroad has risen by 11,452, or 2.3%. This increase is almost en-

tirely due to the large number of naturalisations.

57.2% of Swiss Abroad live in the European Community. France heads the list with 133,630, followed by Germany with 62,973, Italy with 35,423, the UK with 21,953 and Spain with 15,028. There are 60,925 Swiss Abroad resident in the USA. Numbers for Canada and Australia are 30,699 and 16,354 respectively.

ANP

Important reminder

Advisor to the Swiss Abroad

Please note: When ordering your Advisor do not forget to include a **sticky address label**. Failure to do this will cause undue delay.

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Current popular initiatives

The following popular initiatives are still open for signature:

For the protection of life and environment against genetic manipulation – until November 12, 1993.
Dr. Daniel Ammann, P.O. Box 8455, CH-8036 Zürich.

Residential property for everyone – until December 30, 1993.

Hanspeter Götze, Mühlebachstrasse 70, CH-8032 Zurich.

For a vote on EC entry negotiations – until January 21, 1994

Markus Ruf, Zähringerstrasse 19, CH-3012 Berne.

For media freedom without media monopoly – until February 18, 1994.

Peter Weigelt, P.O. Box 217, CH-8029 Zurich.

Swiss grass (to legalise soft drugs) – until April 27, 1994.

Roland Fink, P.O. Box 323, CH-9004 St. Gall.

For the protection of humans against reproduction technology – until May 24, 1994.

Guido Appius, General-Guisan-Strasse 77, CH-4054 Basle.

A Switzerland without a tax substitute for military service – until November 11, 1994

Régis de Battista, 15, rue des Pavillons, CH-1205 Geneva.