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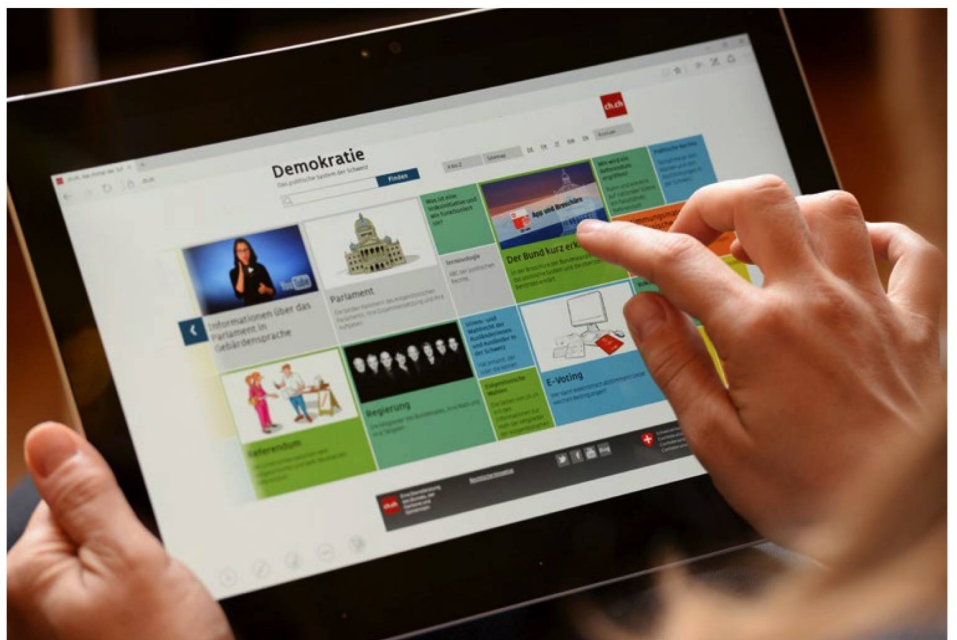
# ABC of the Swiss political system at a single click

How do I correctly fill out a ballot paper? Who do I have to contact if I haven't received the voting material? Can Swiss living abroad vote? Who can vote online? Who can launch an initiative? What is the role of a cantonal government or parliament? Who can stand as a candidate in federal elections, and how? ch.ch/democracy, the new content provided by ch.ch, gives you answers to these and other questions.

ch.ch, the official portal of the Confederation, cantons and communes, has expanded its content with the addition of ch.ch/democracy, and now offers a wide range of information dedicated to how the Swiss political system functions. Fresh content and lots of links to external websites of federal, cantonal and communal authorities are brought together on one single website, making it easier and faster to access information on the functioning of the Swiss political system at all political levels.

The wide-ranging content published on ch.ch/democracy gives useful, practical information explained clearly and simply for all citizens, both in Switzerland and abroad. The new portal is especially useful for Swiss living abroad as it contains information of particular interest, including explanations on how they can exercise their political rights. On ch.ch/democracy citizens will find questions and answers such as: How can I vote if I don't live in Switzerland? Who can use e-voting? Who can I contact to obtain voting material? Can Swiss people living abroad participate in all elections and votes? Can they stand as a candidate in elections in their canton of origin? What conditions need to be met?

Besides giving this practical information, the ch.ch/democracy portal explains how the Swiss political system functions and how it is organised. There are several pages explain-



ing federalism, the principle of subsidiarity, the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and the role of the Swiss courts. There are also descriptions of the various political parties and political movements in Switzerland.

ch.ch/democracy is continually being developed. We intend to add new and up-to-date multimedia content to address the needs and wishes of the portal's users both in Switzerland and beyond the country's borders.

The illustrations, graphics and video clips which augment the explanations in the texts

make ch.ch/democracy a dynamic and attractive website for younger citizens too. The public can also keep abreast of the latest news in our democratic system via [www.twitter.com/ch\\_portal](https://www.twitter.com/ch_portal), and so exercise their political rights more easily.

The site is available in five languages: Italian, French, German, Romansh and English.

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# Change at the Consular Directorate



**Peter Zimmerli – from Berne to Atlanta**

Dear readers,

I have been fortunate to serve as a bridge between you and the federal government over the past four years as the Delegate for Relations with the Swiss Abroad. I have always really enjoyed and attached great importance to my dialogue with fellow citizens, whether face-to-face at Congresses of the Swiss Abroad in Switzerland and abroad or through the federal government section of "Swiss Review". The time has now come for me to depart as I will take over the direction of the Consulate General in Atlanta in the USA at the beginning of August. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all the Swiss Abroad who enthusiastically represent Swiss values abroad.



**Simone Jenny Flubacher – in Berne**

Dear Swiss Abroad

I am very much looking forward to our future exchanges. This move takes me from dealing with preparations for emigration to addressing issues closer to you abroad. For 20 years I worked for the FDFA at various Swiss representations abroad. I returned to Switzerland at the end of 2012 where I set up the emigration advisory service at the Consular Directorate and dealt with various issues related to spending time abroad, emigration and returning to Switzerland. In July 2017, I will take over from Peter Zimmerli as the Delegate for Relations with the Swiss Abroad.

## Important notice

Please notify your Swiss representation of your email address(es) and mobile telephone number(s) and/or any changes to these and register at [www.swissabroad.ch](http://www.swissabroad.ch) to ensure you do not miss any communications ("Swiss Review", newsletter from your representation, etc.).

The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at [www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch). "Swiss Review" (or "Gazzetta Svizzera" in Italy) is sent free of charge to all households of Swiss Abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general, either in printed format or electronically (via email or as an iOS/Android app).

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## Federal referendums

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposals will be put to the vote on 24 September 2017:

- Federal Decree of 14 March 2017 on Food Security (direct counter-proposal to the popular initiative "For food security", which has now been withdrawn) (BBl 2017 2383);
- Federal Decree of 17 March 2017 on Additional Funding for AHV (Old-Age and Survivors Insurance) by increasing Value Added Tax (BBl 2017 2381);
- Federal Act of 17 March 2017 on the Reform of Retirement Provision 2020 (BBl 2017 2393).

Further voting date 2017: 26 November

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations of Parliament and the Federal Council, electronic voting, etc.) can be found at [www.admin.ch/votes](http://www.admin.ch/votes).

## Popular initiatives

The following new federal popular initiatives had been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- "For clean drinking water and healthy food – No subsidies for pesticides and the prophylactic use of antibiotics" (21.09.2018)
- "For a ban on financing war material manufacturers" (11.10.2018)
- "Close down the nuclear power station – take responsibility for the environment" (16.11.2018)
- "Jobs for Swiss residents first" (13.12.2018)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at [www.bk.admin.ch](http://www.bk.admin.ch) > under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

