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# Political Rights of the Swiss Abroad

Lucien Paillard

In conversation with Swiss Abroad one often finds that the difference between «Commune of Presence» (Anwesenheitsgemeinde, commune de présence) and «Voting Commune» (Stimmgemeinde, commune de vote) is not always clear.

For this reason, we shall try and make these terms clear by means of sketches rather than by a longish article.

## Commune of Presence

This is the Swiss Commune in which you wish to collect your voting papers. This Commune is **entirely your own choice**. For instance, you decide on a place where your relatives live, where you have a second place of residence or where you normally spend your holidays.

If you live near the Swiss frontier or you travel to Switzerland specially for a plebiscite, you will no doubt choose a Swiss Commune near the frontier.

Thus you have the choice – there are 3000 Swiss Communes at your disposal.



## Voting Commune

This is the Commune in which your ballot paper is counted.

You cannot choose this Commune as you like. That means:

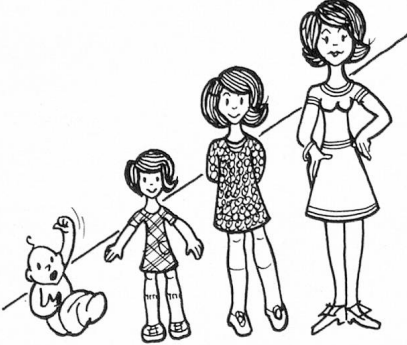
**A** page 18

**B** page 19

**A** In case you never lived in Switzerland, it can only be your or one of your Communes of origin.  
*Example (Valid for Swiss men and women living abroad)*

**Abroad**

Mrs Monica X was born in Guatemala, the child of Swiss parents whose Commune of origin is Brunnen, Canton of Schwyz



During all her schooling and training she has lived in Guatemala



She kept her Swiss nationality also after being married



**In Switzerland**

Now that she wants to make use of her political rights in Switzerland, she applies to the official local Swiss representation



As Commune of presence, she chooses Lucerne where she collects her voting papers



She fills in her ballot paper which was sent automatically from Brunnen to Lucerne, bearing her name

**IN LUCERNE**

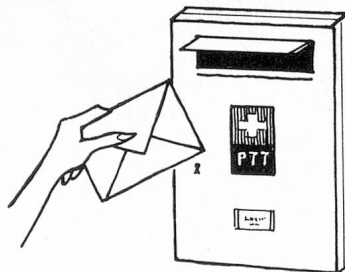


She puts it in an envelope addressed to her Commune of origin (Brunnen)

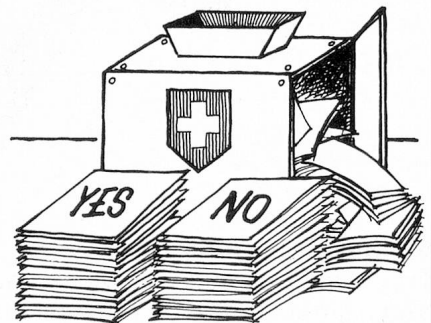
**FROM LUCERNE  
TO...**



She posts the envelope in a letter box and has nothing more to do



Her ballot paper is accepted at Brunnen and is counted with the papers of all the other voters



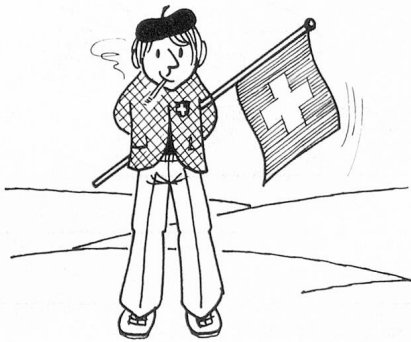
**B** Your Voting Commune may be your or one of your Communes of origin or one of the Communes you once resided in and where you deposited your papers on leaving for abroad.

*Example*

(Valid for Swiss men and women living abroad)

**Abroad**

Mr Robert Y was born at Murten. His place of origin is Muensingen. He is resident at Melun (France). Previously he had studied in Fribourg for four years and deposited his papers there



Now that he wants to make use of his political rights in Switzerland, he applies to the official local Swiss representation

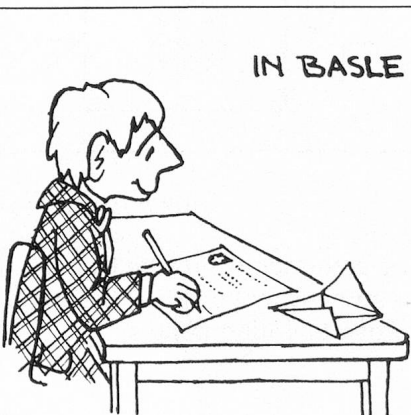


As Commune of Presence he chooses Basle where his parents live at the moment, and as Voting Commune he chooses Murten. He had the choice of three Communes: Murten, Muensingen and Fribourg

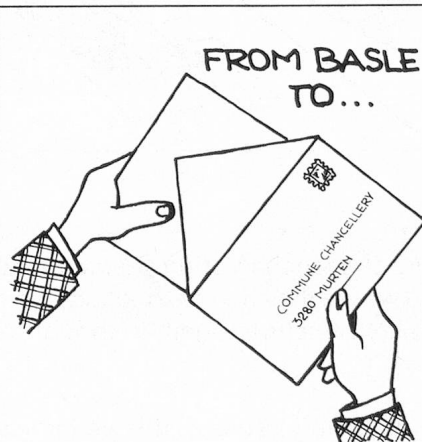


**In Switzerland**

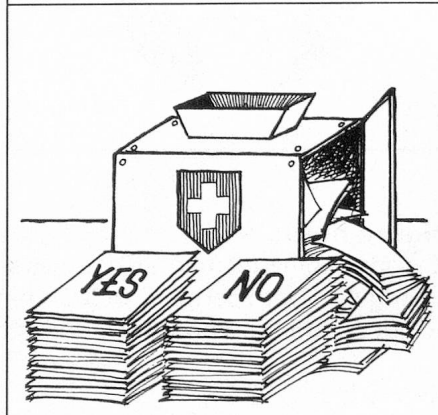
He collects his voting papers in Basle where it was sent from Murten, addressed to him. He fills in his ballot paper



He puts it in an envelope addressed to the Commune of Murten



His ballot paper is accepted at Murten and is counted with the papers of all the other voters



### Special case

Naturally, your Commune of presence may at the same time be your Voting Commune

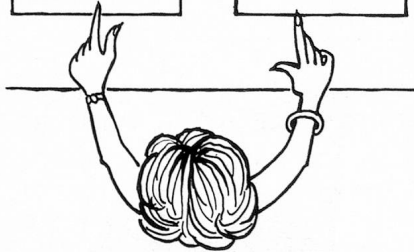
#### Examples

(Valid for Swiss men and women living abroad)

##### Abroad

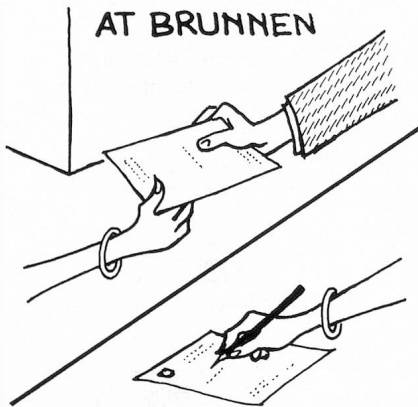
Mrs Monica X chooses to have her Commune of origin also as her Voting Commune

COMMUNE OF PRESENCE = VOTING COMMUNE  
BRUNNEN = BRUNNEN

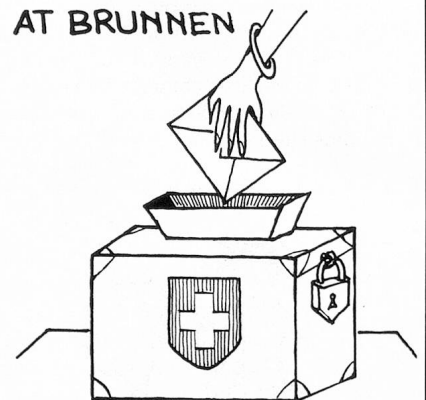


##### In Switzerland

She collects her voting papers at Brunnen, fills in the ballot paper, and instead of returning it by post



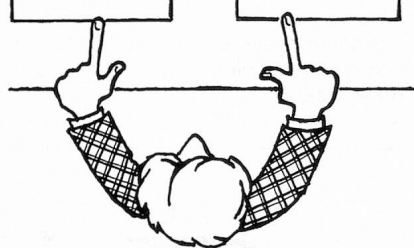
she puts it straight in the ballot-box



##### Abroad

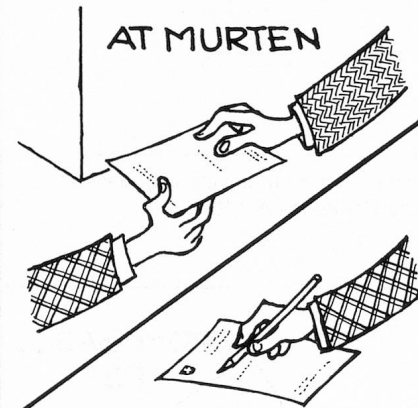
Mr Robert Y chooses as his Commune of Presence not Basle where his parents live, but the Commune of Murten which is his Voting Commune at the same time

COMMUNE OF PRESENCE = VOTING COMMUNE  
MURTEN = MURTEN

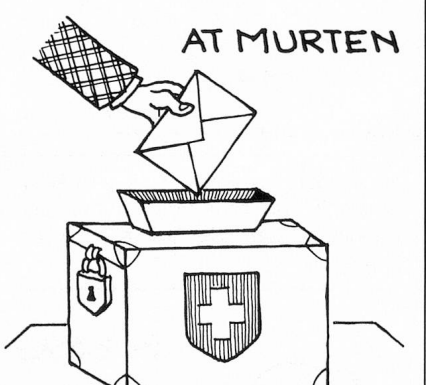


##### In Switzerland

He collects his voting papers at Murten, fills in the ballot paper, and instead of returning it by post



he puts it straight in the ballot-box



*Drawings by Skyll*

#### Please note:

It is advisable that married couples should choose the Voting Commune which is at the same time the Commune of origin of both partners, or a Commune where they had resided together. Thus administrative difficulties can be avoided, and they both have the possibility of acting together, though with separate voting papers.

#### Remark

Further details may be looked up in the following issues of this periodical: June 76, October 76, December 76, March 77 (with diagram) and March 78.