

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 10 (1983)
Heft: 3

Rubrik: Civics and politics

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Civics and Politics

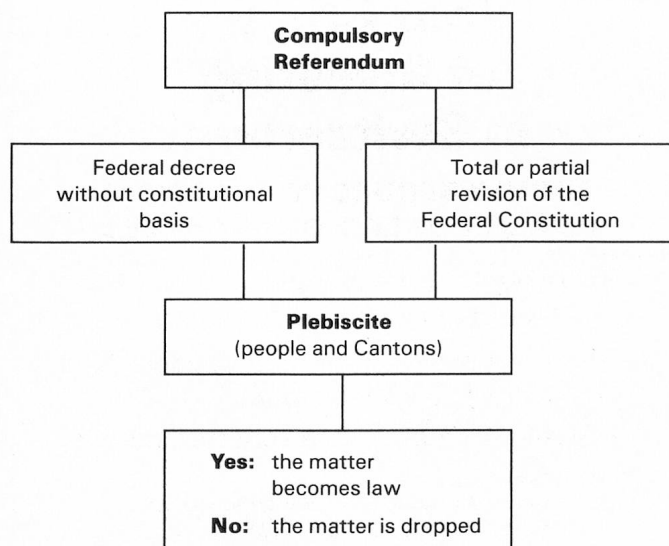
In a previous issue, we explained the procedure from the Initiative to the time a new law comes into force. We pointed out that the Initiative has the same function as a gas pedal in a car.

Conversely, the Referendum corresponds to the brake with which one can stop the legislative machinery abruptly. The semi-direct democracy can thus be likened to a car in which there is not only a gas and brake pedal for the driver (Government and Parliament), but also for the passengers (voters).

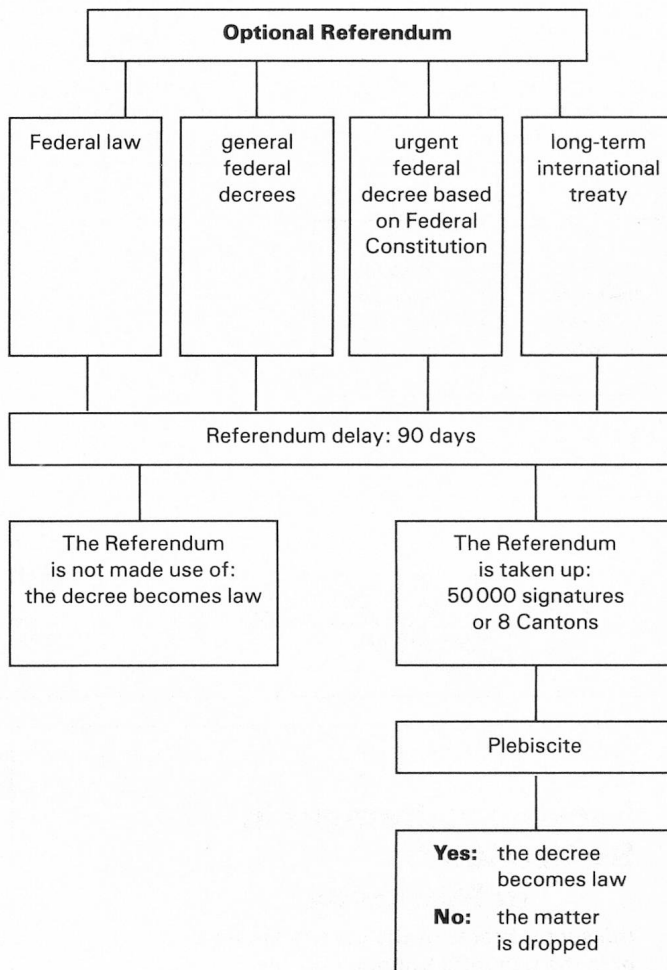
Experience has shown that the Popular Initiative has but little chance of being accepted in a plebiscite. In the State that is Switzerland, the brake, i.e. the Referendum, is much stronger than the motor. This right of the people is so important that one often speaks of a Referendum Democracy when referring to Swiss democracy.

With the Referendum, the people have a possibility of influencing the legislative work of the authorities at federal level.

Procedure: The most important laws (e.g. changes in the Constitution), must be submitted to a plebiscite. This is known as the **Compulsory Referendum**.



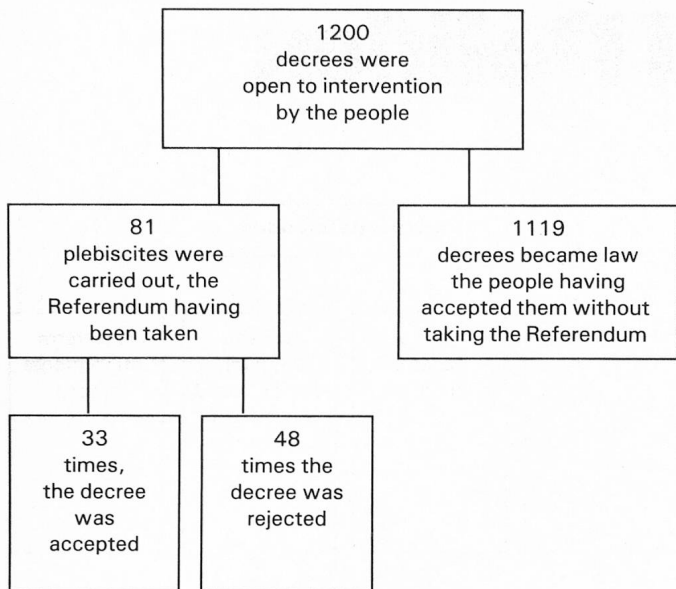
Further laws accepted by Parliament, come into force after a waiting period of 90 days, which is called Referendum delay. During this interval, a plebiscite can be demanded provided 50 000 voters or eight Cantons wish it. This is called **Optional Referendum**.



We have to mention the variant with two possibilities of Referendum: In an **urgent** matter, Parliament can act speedily and put the decree into force without using the Referendum delay. With this, the electorate cannot have a say in the matter. When, however, the federal decrees are of general import, they remain under the Optional Referendum and may lose their validity after one year from when Parliament accepted them, provided they have been rejected by the electorate in the meantime. The same applies to the federal decrees put into force on account of their urgency, if they go against the Constitution. They lose their validity after one year if they have not been approved by people and Cantons.

Referendum results

From 1848 to 1978, no fewer than 1318 decrees were accepted by Parliament. 118 of these came



under the category of «Compulsory Referendum» and were submitted to people and Cantons. 1200 were subject to the «Optional Referendum».

At the moment, the fear of the Referendum influences our legislation. Because of the risk that a submitted decree may be rejected, the legislators often compromise when working out new decrees. This is the reason why the Referendum as presented above, is taken so rarely.

Lucien Paillard

Ecole d'Humanité 6085 Hasliberg Goldern

Gemeinnützige Genossenschaft; Telefon 036 71 15 15; B.O., 1050 m ü. M.
Internat: familiäre Kleingruppen, Knaben und Mädchen, Primar-, Sekundar-, Realschule, Gymnasium. Flexible Kursorganisation (Fähigkeitsgruppen, nicht Jahrgangsklassen) ermöglicht u. a. Umschulung auf Schweizerische Schulverhältnisse.

English-speaking school system: CEEB and GCE preparation
 Gründer: Paul und Edith Geheeb. 150 Schüler, 34 Lehrer. Leitung: Natalie und Armin Lüthi-Peterson.



INSTITUT MONTANA ZUGERBERG

Leitung: Dr. K. Storchenegger
 6316 Zugerberg, Telefon 042 21 17 22
 1000 Meter über Meer

**Internationale Schule
für Söhne ab 10 Jahren**
 American School: 5th–12th Grade
Schweizer Sektion:
 Primarschule Klassen 4–6
 Gymnasium und Wirtschaftsdiplomschule
 Eidgenössisch anerkannte Diplom- und
 Maturitätsprüfungen im Institut
Ferienkurse: Juli–August

For your retirement in Switzerland in Montreux

the sunny shores of the Lake of Geneva
 or in the beautiful Vaudois Alps at

Villars s/Ollon

Attractive flats

with two, three or four rooms, with sauna
 and swimming pool
 at reasonable prices, in excellent position and
 with beautiful view.

Enquiries to the construction company:

Emile Kohli S.A.

1884 Villars sur Ollon, Telephone 025 35 15 33

Detach _____

Please send information to:

Swiss Nationals Your Chance of Investing in Switzerland

HIGHLY SECURE INVESTMENT QUALITY OF LIVE GUARANTEED

From our three residential programmes
 you can choose the following:

- ☐ Valais Alps ☐ Vaudois Alps
☐ Vaudois Jura
☐ Studio ☐ Flat ☐ Maisonette (2 floors)

Please write to:

**Atelier d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme
 Henri CEVEY S.A. – CH-1896 Vouvry
 Telex 456 167 CESA – Tel. 025 81 33 01**

Name:

Address:

..... Tel.

Business address:

..... Tel.