

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 11 (1984)  
**Heft:** 4

**Artikel:** Resultat of the federal plebiscite of 23rd September 1984 : Energy policy : twice "No" to the initiatives  
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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907704>

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## Energy Policy: Twice «No» to the Initiatives

The electorate and the Cantons rejected two Popular Initiatives on 23rd September. This clear verdict will be a positive argument in the discussion which will no doubt continue.

The Initiative «for a future without further atomic power stations» (Anti-Atomic Initiative) wanted to prohibit the building of new atomic power stations and the replacement of the five existing ones (Beznau 1 and 2, Muehleberg, Goesgen and Leibstadt). The initiators – some 50 ecological organizations under the patronage of the Swiss Energy Foundation – submitted amongst others the following arguments: nuclear energy is not economic, new atomic power stations are unnecessary, the problem of radio-active waste disposal had not yet been solved satisfactorily.

The Initiative submitted by the same organizations «for a safe, economic and ecologically viable energy supply» demanded a whole lot of measures to save energy, to promote replaceable indigenous sources of energy and to avoid new technological installations. To finance these measures, an energy tax on fuel, oil, coal, gas and electricity was proposed. The Federal Council as well as Parliament had rejected both Initiatives, having in mind the necessary sufficient energy production for our country; the energy policy of Confederation and Cantons would have been altered fundamentally, the situation in the labour market would have deteriorated, the safety of energy provision in our country would have suffered, and extraordinary far-reaching interference by the State would have been inevitable.

In short, the initiators went much too far.

### Results

The electorate followed the recommendations of Government and Parliament.

The two Initiatives were rejected by 55% (931287 no against 773524 yes: Anti-Atomic) and 54,2% (916384 no against 773727 yes: Energy). Fifteen Cantons and four Half-Cantons voted against in both cases, and only five Cantons and two Half-Cantons accepted.

The unanimity of the voters was very interesting: all the Cantons voted twice either yes or no. Thus one could distinguish clearly definite majorities for or against atomic energy in the different Cantons.

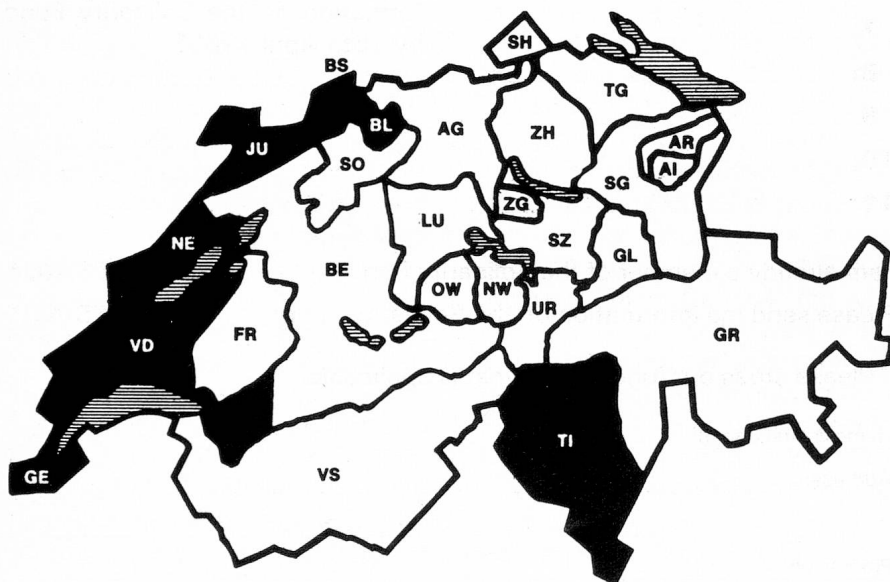
Voting participation stood at 41.2%. This is the fourth time the Swiss electorate had to voice an opinion in this matter: rejection of a Constitutional Article on Energy in February 1983, acceptance of the revision of the atomic law in May 1979 and rejection of an anti-atomic Initiative in February 1979.

Amongst those accepting the Initiatives were the romands Cantons of Geneva, Jura, Vaud and Neuchâtel, as well as the Ticino and the two Basle, the latter with very definite results. Dissenting majorities were in the same Cantons this time as in 1979. Three Cantons (Uri, Fribourg and Grisons) have left the camp of the nuclear energy opponents.

It is remarkable, too, that everywhere in the German-speaking Cantons, the rejecting majorities reached at least 55% of the votes.

### Initiative against Atomic Power and Energy Initiative

15 Cantons and 4 Half-Cantons voted «no». 5 Cantons and two Half-Cantons voted «yes» (in black).



Ahead in these was the Canton of Aargau with about 70% of rejecting votes – the Canton which already has more nuclear power stations than any other, i. e. three. The Confederation follows an energy policy which aims at reducing energy consumption and is against all waste, without, however, too much State intervention. An acceptance of the Initiatives would have led to a shortage of electricity and consequently to considerable interference by the State.

*I. Franzoni*



**Question 6:**

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