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Changes and reforms

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGNING IN SWITZERLAND is now in full swing. The parliamentary elections on 23 October, which this special edition of "Swiss Review" focuses on, may result in fundamental changes to Switzerland's political system. Professor Georg Kohler, a philosopher specialising in politics at the University of Zurich, believes it is quite possible that government will no longer be based on concordance after the Federal Council elections in December owing to a new distribution of power within parliament. In an interview on page 12 onwards, he also says that this does not bode well for the future. However, Kohler believes the key challenge for Switzerland is to implement urgently required reforms while, at the same time, protecting Switzerland's identity.

In this election edition, we have, of course, also given the main political parties the opportunity to set out their positions on various issues. And as lots of promises are always made during election campaigns, we look back over the past four years. We show you how parliament in Berne voted on proposals directly concerning the Swiss abroad.

We also have some changes to announce in the editorial team of "Swiss Review". Rolf Ribi, who has been closely associated with this magazine for decades – firstly as a member of the editorial board and then as editor – has now decided to enjoy his retirement. In Rolf Ribi we are losing a colleague who has made a major contribution to the face of "Swiss Review" over the years and who will certainly be very missed by readers. We thank him for his efforts and wish him many happy hours in his beloved vineyard.



Barbara Engel

Two new employees joined the editorial team at the start of June: Marc Lettau and Manuel Gnos. Marc Lettau lives in Berne and has worked for many years as an editor in various departments at the daily newspaper "Der Bund". He has family roots in Bulgaria and a close relationship with the Swiss abroad community as some of his family have lived in Tasmania for many years. Marc Lettau's first article for "Swiss Review" looks at the part-time system in Swiss politics. Manuel Gnos was head of the online editorial team at "Der Bund" for ten years. He now works as a freelance journalist and as an organiser of cultural events at Café Kairo in Berne. He will not just be working as a journalist but will also be supporting the editorial team in their use of new media. We have already introduced our first change – you can now read "Swiss Review" on an iPad or Android tablet.

Another new feature is that information from the Federal Palace and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) will be towards the back of "Swiss Review" from now on. This should make it easier for you to find this information and the "OSA advice" section.

I would finally like to urge you once again to take part in the elections, as a large turnout from the Swiss abroad will lend more weight to your concerns.

BARBARA ENGEL

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Echo

Cover image: Peter Gut, the Zurich caricaturist, has contributed illustrations to this special edition of "Swiss Review". A perceptive, humorous observer, he provides an offbeat perspective on political events in Switzerland.