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How to vote

The same questions are asked every four years. People have a good idea what the answers are but are often not entirely certain. We have therefore compiled a list of answers to the most frequently asked questions for the forthcoming elections.

What requirements have to be met in order to be eligible to vote in elections and referenda as a Swiss citizen abroad?

You have to be at least 18 years of age and be registered with a Swiss representation abroad (embassy or consulate). In addition to registration, you have to be entered on the electoral roll of your former commune of residence or your commune of origin as a Swiss citizen abroad eligible to vote. The registration form can be found at: www.eda.admin.ch > Living abroad > The Fifth Switzerland > Voting and electoral rights

Can I vote in National Council and Council of States elections?

All Swiss Abroad entered on the electoral roll are eligible to vote in the National Council elections.

The Swiss Abroad can only take part in Council of States elections in 12 cantons – Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Grisons, Jura, Neuchâtel, Schwyz, Solothurn, Ticino and Zurich. BE, BL, BS, FR, GE, GR, JU, NE, SO, SZ, TI and ZH.

Election survey amongst the Swiss Abroad

The Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau is conducting a broad-based survey amongst the Swiss Abroad on the parliamentary elections. The data is being collected by FORS, the research association of the political science departments of the Swiss universities, as part of the Swiss election study SELECTS.

Participation in the study is voluntary. It is nevertheless important that as many people as possible take part to ensure the results are as informative as they can be. Please take 15 minutes to answer the questions.

To the survey:
www.umfrage15.ch

When will I receive the voting documents?

The Federal Council recommends that the cantons send the ballot papers to the Swiss Abroad eligible to vote by 1 October 2015. There is no guarantee of this.

Who can vote electronically?

13 cantons have submitted applications for e-voting at the 2015 elections. At the time of this issue going to press, it was still not clear which applications would be approved by the Federal Council. Further information is available at:
www.ch.ch/en/online-voting

How can I support candidates standing as Swiss Abroad?

You can only vote for candidates from your canton. You cannot vote for Swiss Abroad who are not standing in your electoral constituency.

Where can I find out which Swiss Abroad are standing for election?

All candidatures of Swiss citizens abroad are listed on OSA's website.

As candidates can register until shortly before the elections, "Swiss Review" is unable to publish a current list of all candidates.

List of candidates:
www.2015elections.ch > Candidates

Are there candidates campaigning especially for the Swiss Abroad?

The following members of the Executive Board of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) or the Council of the Swiss Abroad are standing as candidates:

- Céline Amaudruz, SVP, Geneva
- Roland Büchel, SVP, St. Gallen
- Robert Cramer, Greens, Geneva, Council of States
- Antonio Rodgers, Greens, Geneva
- Filippo Lombardi, CVP, Ticino, Council of States
- John McGough, SVP, Basel-Stadt
- Christa Markwalder, FDP, Berne
- Roman Räuper, SVP, St. Gallen
- Carlo Sommaruga, SP, Geneva

■ The members of the Swiss Abroad parliamentary group can be found at:
www.aso.ch > Politik > Parlamentarische Gruppe

How do I complete the ballot paper?

You have the following options:

1. Use an unchanged ballot paper

You vote using a preprinted ballot paper of a party without making changes to it.

The listed candidates receive one vote. There are as many votes for the party as there are seats allocated to the canton.

2. Amend the ballot paper:

You can cross out the names of candidates. They do not receive any votes, but the vote counts for the party.

You can vote cumulatively, which means entering the names of candidates twice by hand on the list. The person then receives two votes. Please note: On party ballot papers, names often already appear twice in the list. You cannot enter these names additionally.

You can split the vote, which means entering the names of candidates from other lists on blank lines of the preprinted ballot paper. You can also cross out a name to enter a desired candidate.

The party whose list you have chosen then loses a vote to the party to which the person from the other list belongs.

This does not apply to the cantons of Uri, Glarus, Appenzell AR and Appenzell IR where only one National Council seat is allocated in each case.

3. Use a blank ballot paper:

You can enter the candidate(s) you wish to vote for on a blank ballot paper. Please note: Only take names from the preprinted ballot papers as only these are candidates. You can also vote cumulatively on the blank ballot paper.

You can enter the name of a party at the top of a blank ballot paper and the lines left blank then count as votes for this party.

Avoid making errors.

Adhere to the guidelines of your commune and canton.

- Only use an official ballot paper.
- Write by hand using legible handwriting.
- Only candidates who appear on preprinted ballot papers are valid.
- Always write out the surname, first names and numbers of candidates. Quotation marks and "ditto", etc. are not permitted.
- At least one valid name must be entered on your ballot paper.
- A name may only be repeated once, never more than that.
- The ballot paper must not contain more names than there are seats allocated to your canton.
- Do not write anything else on the ballot paper.
- Do not sign the ballot paper.
- Do not forget to sign and send the voter identification card when voting by post (exception: canton of Basel-Stadt).

Links with good information on the elections

www.ch.ch/en/elections2015/

The websites of federal government, the cantons and the communes containing special information for the Swiss Abroad. These are indicated by a blue background.

www.smartvote.ch/?lang=en_GB

www.easyvote.ch

www.ich-will-waehlen.ch

www.parteienkompass.ch

www.civicampus.ch

www.wahlen.ch

www.vimentis.ch

