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Vote for the new Council of the Swiss Abroad!

The elections for the delegates of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) will take place worldwide between January and June 2017. You will find the answers to the most frequent questions about the CSA and the elections here. Additional information is available on the homepage: www.aso.ch.

What is the Council of the Swiss Abroad?

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) represents the interests of all Swiss citizens abroad vis-à-vis the authorities and public in Switzerland. It is therefore also often referred to as the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland".

Since when has the CSA existed?

The CSA has existed in its current form since 1989. Its predecessor organisation was the Swiss Abroad Committee of the Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft (NHG) constituted in 1919.

How is the Council made up?

The CSA has a total of 140 members: 120 delegates of the Swiss communities abroad and 20 representatives from Switzerland.

How are the seats allocated?

The allocation of seats is based on the size of the Swiss community in the respective country or continent and is regularly updated in line with statistics on the Swiss Abroad. The seats are currently distributed as follows:

■ Europe	60 seats
■ Americas	30 seats
■ Africa	8 seats
■ Asia	16 seats
■ Oceania	6 seats

Why are there representatives from Switzerland?

They have the task of conveying the concerns of the Swiss Abroad and decisions by the CSA to the competent bodies in Switzerland (Parliament, administration) and effectively representing these concerns at political level. Some domestic representatives

are members of the National Council and Council of States, while others represent institutions or organisations. They are elected by the CSA after nomination by the Executive Board of the OSA.

How and by whom are the delegates abroad elected?

The umbrella organisations or, where these do not exist, Swiss societies appointed by the CSA in the various countries elect the delegates based abroad. The umbrella organisations or Swiss societies can expand the circle of candidates standing for election to include persons who are not members of societies. In this case, the societies can if needed organise a direct election (by post or electronically).

Who can vote abroad?

All Swiss citizens abroad provided they are a member of a recognised Swiss society.

When will the elections be held?

Between January and June 2017. The organisations in charge in the individual countries determine the election dates. "Swiss Review" provides information on the elections and presents the candidates in its regional news issues. The newly elected CSA will meet for the first time on 18 August 2017.

What requirements do delegates abroad have to meet?

They have to be Swiss citizens, live abroad, speak German or French, maintain contact with the Swiss community within the represented region



On the occasion of the 100 years of the OSA, the Council of the Swiss Abroad met in the National Council chamber in Bern in August 2016. Photo: OSA

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and be able to travel to Switzerland twice a year to attend CSA meetings. The electing umbrella organisations and Swiss societies may also determine special requirements for eligibility to stand for election. The delegates receive a modest attendance allowance but are not reimbursed for the costs of travel and accommodation.

What powers does the CSA have?

It is the senior management body of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, which represents the interests of the Swiss Abroad in Switzerland as an independent foundation. The CSA can take up positions in consultation procedures and on political issues, make demands and resolve and issue referenda and voting recommendations. It does not have any legislative powers.

What are the CSA's most important achievements?

- The enshrining of the Swiss Abroad in the federal constitution (Art. 40)
- The preservation of voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance/invalidity insurance (AHV/IV)
- The promotion of education for young Swiss Abroad

- The introduction of the postal vote for referenda and elections
- The introduction of the Swiss Abroad Act

What are the CSA's main issues for the future?

- Introduction of e-voting
- Preservation of a functional consular network
- Drawing-up of provisions that facilitate emigration and return migration (for example, social insurance contributions)



More information on the elections

As the election of the CSA delegates is not based on the same procedure in all countries and cannot therefore be organised centrally, the details of the elections in individual countries and regions are published in the regional news issues of "Swiss Review". The Swiss societies and umbrella organisations responsible for holding the elections will provide information there on the exact procedure and organisation of the elections. Candidates can contact the regional editorial teams in order for their profile to appear in "Swiss Review".

The election campaign will take place here

SwissCommunity.org will play a key role in the elections. Voters can engage with candidates, ask questions, voice criticisms, make suggestions and present and discuss issues on this website.
www.swisscommunity.org

The new Council

The newly elected CSA will meet for the first time on 18 August 2017 in Basel at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. The delegates from Switzerland will also be elected there upon nomination by the Executive Board.