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Switzerland's digital transformation

The aim of e-government is to provide the public, economy and administration with easy-to-use, location-independent and fast services. The use of state-of-the-art information and communication technology (ICT) enables services to be delivered securely, transparently and efficiently. This also benefits the Swiss Abroad.

Huge progress has been made in the field of ICT over recent decades, which has also had an impact on the work of government and political institutions. They are making increasing use of the internet to make access to information for the public easier than before and to deliver services digitally.

These digital services include e-voting, for example. 21st-century technology is being deployed to maintain Switzerland's culture and tradition of exercising political rights. Groups with special requirements, such as the Swiss Abroad, benefit from this in particular. On 5 April 2017, the Federal Council agreed steps towards the nationwide introduction of electronic voting. It intends to submit an amendment to the legal basis to Parliament, thus establishing e-voting as a third official method of voting alongside postal voting and voting at the ballot box. Around 77,000 Swiss Abroad were able to cast their votes electronically

on 24 September 2017 in the cantons of Berne, Lucerne, Fribourg, Basel-Stadt, St. Gallen, Aargau, Neuchâtel and Geneva. The cantons of Fribourg, Basel-Stadt, St. Gallen, Neuchâtel and Geneva also enabled around 103,000 eligible voters in Switzerland to use the e-voting system.

Another objective is E-ID – the introduction of the first official form of electronic identification. Parliament will discuss a draft bill over the course of the year. The *Federal Act on Electronic Identification Services (E-ID Act)* provides for a division of responsibilities between the state and market players. Federal government will perform the role of a regulatory and certification authority ensuring an optimal legal and organisational framework. E-ID will allow users to conveniently register with various electronic service providers at any time enabling them to obtain, for example, an extract from the judicial record or access to the online counter for the Swiss Abroad easily and securely. This will eliminate the need for expen-

sive paper ID documents and the management of usernames and passwords for individual websites. E-ID will be a basic service on the basis of which other digital services can be developed and will therefore act as a catalyst on the road to comprehensive digital e-government.

Federal government, the cantons and the communes have drawn up a joint strategy for the implementation of e-government. It is made up of 12 strategic projects and services. The E-Government Switzerland Steering Committee will define the projects and services for four years, review them annually and amend them if required. A framework agreement on e-government cooperation will govern the joint approach of the three levels of government in implementing the strategy. Federal government and the cantons will each meet half the costs of the initiative.



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“Bilateral Agreements between Switzerland and the EU”, 2017 edition

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Federal referendums

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposals will be put to the vote on 4 March 2018:

- Federal decree of 16 June 2017 on the new 2021 financial regime
- Popular initiative of 11 December 2015 “Yes to abolishing radio and television fees (abolition of Billag fees)”

Other voting dates in 2018:

10 June, 23 September, 25 November

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council, electronic voting, etc.) can be found at www.admin.ch/votes.

Popular initiatives

The following federal popular initiatives had been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- “Encourage organ donation - save lives” (17 April 2019)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found in German at www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen > Im Sammelstadium.



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