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Federal elections 2019:

The official election portal is online

Elections 2019

ch.ch

ch.ch/elections2019 is the link to the official election platform for the federal elections of 2019. The website will be updated regularly with information for the electorate and candidates until the election results are published. It also contains a section for Swiss Abroad.

An important vote is set to take place next year. On 20 October 2019, Swiss voters will elect the members of the National Council and Council of States (Switzerland's two chambers of parliament) for the 2019-2023 legislative period.

A few weeks ago the Federal Administration launched an information portal for citizens. The portal is jointly operated by the Federal Chancellery and ch.ch, the website of the Confederation, the cantons and the communes.

ch.ch/elections2019 already contains a section with detailed information from each canton about all those standing as candidates for the National Council or Council of States. General information about the organisation of the elections of both chambers, an election dictionary, a FAQ page and a quiz about the elections, where you can test your knowledge of the elections, can be found online.

During the electoral year, new content will continuously be uploaded to ch.ch/elections2019: In the spring of 2019, detailed explanations of the electoral arrangements for the National Council and Council of States will be published for each canton. The portal features answers to questions like: When will I receive the election materials and who should I contact if I don't receive them?; How do I fill in the ballot paper?; What mistakes should I avoid?; Who is eligible to vote?; Where and when can I vote?; and Do I need to register in order to vote? The website also contains practical information on how people with disabilities can vote.

On 20 October 2019, the results of the elections to the National Council and the Council of States will be published on ch.ch/elections2019, in cooperation with the Federal Statistical Office.

Swiss Abroad may also participate in the federal elections. There is a special section for the "Fifth Switzerland" on ch.ch/elections2019, which will be updated regularly with useful information for candidates as well as the electorate, in each case per canton.

The electorate can also obtain information about the elections via multimedia resources, such as interactive diagrams, illustrations and

especially explanatory videos. The official voting guide for the National Council elections completes the offer.

The portal ch.ch/elections2019 is available in five languages (German, French, Italian, Romansh and English). All explanatory videos are also available in sign language, allowing deaf and hearing impaired people to follow the election explanations. In addition, the content is adapted to the needs of the blind and visually impaired.

Federal referendums

Proposals submitted to a popular vote are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposal will be put to the vote on 10 February 2019:

- Stop urban sprawl – for sustainable urban development (Urban sprawl initiative)

Other voting dates in 2019: 19 May, 20 October, 24 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.

For information about the National Council elections of 20 October 2019, visit www.ch.ch/en/elections2019

Popular initiatives

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

- 'For lower premiums – a cost brake in the healthcare system' (16.04.2020)

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

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Travel advice

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www.twitter.com/travel_edadfa

itineris

Online registration for Swiss citizens travelling abroad
www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris



Plan well.
Travel well.

App available for free for iOS and Android

New: Customs clearance via smartphone

With QuickZoll, the Federal Customs Administration (FCA) is taking an important step towards digitisation. The smartphone app, which was launched in spring 2018, is aimed at private individuals entering Switzerland with goods intended for private use or as gifts.

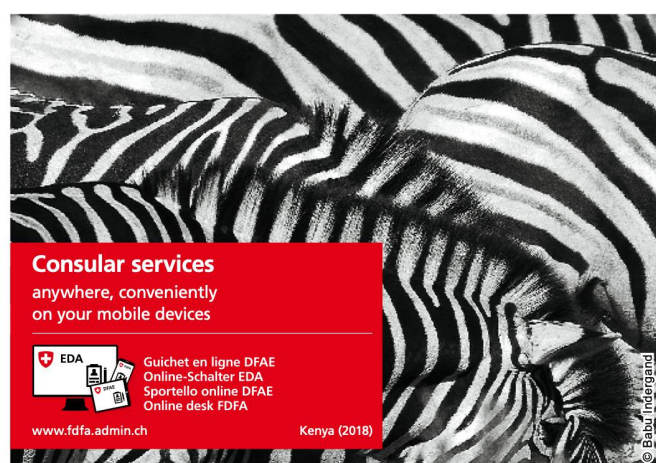
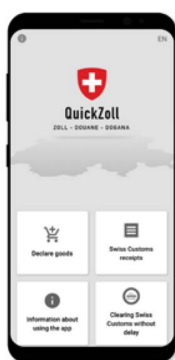
Previously, travellers were required to declare their purchases abroad, holiday souvenirs or gifts for customs clearance verbally or in paper form (declaration box) when crossing the border into Switzerland. This was particularly inconvenient for those arriving by train if they did not intend to disembark at the border. Now goods can be cleared digitally, irrespective of the location and up to 48 hours before crossing the border and duties can subsequently be paid directly.

Domicile plays an important role in customs clearance. For Swiss Abroad, QuickZoll is relevant if they bring gifts for family and friends or import food, tobacco and alcohol for their own final consumption in excess of the permitted allowances (e.g. 1 litre of spirits per adult). On the other hand, personal effects, such as one's own skiing equipment, are tax-exempt.

QuickZoll simplifies the importation into Switzerland. However, the digital processing of export certificates is not (yet) possible. VAT refunds also remain the responsibility of the country from which the goods are exported.

The smartphone app QuickZoll is one of the first results of the DaziT transformation programme, which will systematically simplify and digitise FCA services for private individuals and companies by the end of 2026.

More information: www.quickzoll.admin.ch



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THE SWISS ABROAD ON INSTAGRAM



Aroma of spices woos Swiss lawyer out of his office

When backpacking, lawyer Raphael Flury fell in love with East Africa and its natural products. The 28-year-old Swiss Abroad is now managing a certified organic spice production company on the Tanzanian spice island of Zanzibar.

My Job: I followed my desire to take an unconventional step towards an interesting but business-related life. It's very fulfilling to work with natural products such as cinnamon, vanilla and cloves as well as learn from the small farmers how these products are produced and processed.

My Tanzania: The country is enormous and has many different climatic zones, which makes the living space and outdoor activities so attractive. My Sunday trips to the pristine beaches of the island seem almost surreal in comparison with the turbulences of everyday life.

My Switzerland: Our place of birth is one of the few crucial things in life we have no influence over. Therefore, we should be grateful to have grown up in such a stable, safe, peaceful and well-organised country like Switzerland. Once you live abroad though, you get to know many other ways of living that could actually help some Swiss be more content.

My heart: As a matter of conviction, I used to cast my ballot in every single election or popular vote, something I no longer quite manage to do since I have moved here. This is why I deeply regret that a few years ago, e-voting was suspended due to a security gap in my home canton.

The original interview was published on swissinfo.ch, the online service of the Swiss Broadcasting Company, which is available in ten languages. Do you live abroad too? Then tag your Instagram photos **#WeAreSwissAbroad**.