

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 47 (2020)
Heft: 6

Rubrik: news.admin.ch

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Easy access to administrative services – with e-government

eGovernment provides people and businesses with online access to government services. Since 2008, the Confederation, cantons and municipalities have been working together to expand their online services. They have been collaborating on shared objectives and projects as part of a new strategy that began in 2020. The aim is to make digital the medium of choice for people and businesses who wish to contact Switzerland's public authorities.

Work is currently ongoing to establish a new joint project called Digital Administration Switzerland. Project head Kurt Nuspliger tells us more about it below.

What does Swiss federalism look like from your point of view?

A multilingual country such as Switzerland can only function as a federalist construct. Federalism also means competition. It enables our cantons to develop innovative made-to-measure solutions. Take moving house, for example: many cantons allow people to register or deregister online. But not all cantons do. This is also a consequence of the federal system.

What about the process of digitalising public administration? What opportunities or limitations do you think have arisen under the current form of administrative collaboration?

Authorities, businesses, the scientific community, civil society, and politicians must work together if digitalisation is to be a success. The Confederation cannot do everything on its own when it comes to digital transformation and e-government. Cantons and



Professor Kurt Nuspliger is an expert in constitutional law and an honorary professor at the University of Berne. He was state chancellor of the canton of Berne from 1985 to 2013 and has been advising public institutions on legal and organisational matters since June 2013. Photo provided

municipalities must be involved in this process as equal partners. The present form of cooperation has room for improvement.

The Digital Administration Switzerland project was launched to strengthen cooperation between the Confederation, cantons and municipalities. What are its objectives?

We currently have a public-sector framework agreement in place for e-government collaboration in Switzerland at federal, cantonal and municipal level. We also have the Swiss Information Technology Conference – an organisation that promotes cooperation among public stakeholders in the area of administrative digitalisation. Furthermore, the eCH group is drawing up and developing standards for e-government in Switzerland. The Digital Administration Switzerland project will lend these ventures a more binding character. We want to make more of an impact by concentrating resources.

What can the new project achieve?

We are focusing on joint tasks. These include developing and implementing a digital transformation strategy, defining standards for data management and the exchange of data between authorities, developing basic nationwide services (e.g. electronic IDs) and promoting innovation. We also want the various stakeholders to engage with each other and share knowledge. As we know, knowledge

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is the only resource that multiplies if you share it.

What progress can we expect over the coming years regarding digital administrative services in Switzerland?

Digital transformation affects our everyday lives – in relation to daily communication, shopping, interaction with public authorities, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this process. We can still do various things to improve administrative services. For example, the introduction of electronic identity cards is crucial if we want to continue developing online transactions and e-government applications.

How will the new project benefit the Swiss Abroad?

Many Swiss Abroad live far away from their home country and are unable to visit government offices in person. Their local postal services may not be the most reliable either. This is why it is important for people to be able to communicate electronically with Switzerland's administrative authorities and process their transactions online. We need digital platforms – online hubs, in other words – providing user-friendly, multilingual and barrier-free access to government services. In this regard, it is vital that the Confederation, cantons and municipalities coordinate their efforts and optimise their digital services.

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Simone Flubacher, Delegate for Relations with the Swiss Abroad, is moving on

Dear Readers,
Engaging with you has been an enriching experience.

Whether meeting you in person at one of the many Swiss Abroad events or communicating via "Swiss Review", it has been both a pleasure and honour for me to represent your interests with the federal government these past three years. Your needs were always very important to me.

Having served the interests of the Swiss Abroad for almost 30 years at Swiss representations abroad as well as in Berne, I am now ready for a new professional challenge starting in November. I would therefore like to bid you farewell and wish you all the very best, wherever in the world you may be.

Yours,
Simone Flubacher



Federal votes

The Federal Council determines voting proposals at least four months before the voting date.

Everything you need to know about voting proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council etc.) is available at www.admin.ch/votes or via the Federal Chancellery's VoteInfo app.

■ The voting proposals for 7 March 2021 have not yet been finalised.

Popular initiatives

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

■ No new popular initiatives have been launched.

The list of pending popular initiatives is available in German at www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen

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