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Councillor Matthias Jauslin (canton of Aargau). These compromises are up for debate again. “The legislative process is at square one,” he said. Under the terms of the initiative, both chambers have four years to complete this process.



Health Minister Alain Berset sees the people’s resounding yes as an expression of appreciation and gratitude towards the nursing staff.

Photo: Keystone

Unresolved questions on staffing and pay

The Federal Council’s role in this two-track process is to flesh out the additional points within 18 months and, in particular, provide a roadmap to ensure greater job satisfaction and longevity in the nursing profession. For example, the federal government will have to address the issue of wages including overtime pay for night and Sunday shifts, not to mention specify nurse-to-patient ratios. Delivering solutions that command majority support will be anything but easy. Yvonne Ribi said the initiative committee would not sit back and watch parliament water down the initiative. “We will not let up,” warned the SBK-ASI boss. Meanwhile, opponents of the initiative have vowed to scrutinise costs. They will hold the Yes camp to the promise that these will not balloon.

Role of the cantons

When and how the proposals are to take effect not only depends on the government, however. The Federal Council only has the authority to provide guidelines. Responsibility for implementation lies with the cantons and partly with the municipalities. This federal structure makes it more difficult to push through reforms quickly and consistently. Hence, it could still take a few years before nurses notice any tangible improvement.

Switzerland in figures

Noisy cities, empty hotel beds

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Geneva is Switzerland’s noisiest city: 33 per cent of all its apartments are exposed to more than 60 decibels. That is equivalent to running a lawnmower permanently outside your front door. Lugano and Lausanne come in at number two and three, respectively. The cities in the German-speaking region are quieter. Berne is almost suspiciously quiet, with a mere 4.6 per cent of apartments exposed to a high level of noise.

279,248

People need to recover from all that noise. We wondered: if everyone in Switzerland wanted to holiday in a Swiss hotel for a year, would there be enough room? Swiss hotels have a total of 279,248 beds, which is enough to guarantee everyone almost two weeks’ holiday.

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The hotels would welcome a massive influx of tourists from within Switzerland, as visitors aren’t coming from outside the country. In 2020, room occupancy was a mere 28 per cent, so 72 per cent of rooms on average stood empty. The last time that Swiss hotels were so underutilised was in the 1950s.

11:1

Spending more holidays within Switzerland would bring city and rural dwellers closer together. The notorious urban-rural divide would diminish. The rural communities claim the jumped-up city dwellers are imposing their political will on the country. This assertion has been put to the test and we discovered that, out of the 12 last hotly contested popular votes, the “rural side” has come through 11 times, compared to just once for the urban voters. Don’t always believe what you hear.

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Is this the place to comment on “Swiss Review”? Here goes: air cargo in Switzerland fell off a cliff in 2020. In April 2020, it contracted by 68% and 41% on average over the year. The post was particularly affected, as it is transported in the cargo hold on passenger flights. If the planes are grounded, the post will be days, weeks, even months late. We realise that you will have noticed this.

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