

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 25 (1998)  
**Heft:** 5

## **Inhaltsverzeichnis**

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 15.03.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## CONTENTS

<b>Forum</b>	
The federal elections 1999	4-7
<b>Official News</b>	9/10
<b>History</b>	
The "New York Deal"	11
<b>Votes</b>	
Federal referendums of September 27th 1998 and of November 29th 1998	12-14
<b>Culture</b>	
Vevey's Fête des Vignerons	15
<b>Mosaic</b>	16/17
<b>Dialogue</b>	18
<b>SSA News</b>	19

### Cover

In just one year's time the new and re-elected members of the National Council will take the oath. In Swiss Review the election campaign has already begun. (Photo: Keystone)

## I M P R E S S U M

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 25th year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 20 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 320,000. Regional news appears four times a year.

**Editors:** René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (Chairman); Alice Baumann (AB), Press Bureau Alice Baumann Conception, Berne; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Dario Ballanti (DB), parliamentary correspondent of Corriere del Ticino; Editor of Official News: Robert Nyffeler (NYF), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; Tel: 41 31 351 6100, Fax: 41 31 351 61 50, Postal Cheque Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3084 Wabern.

**Change of address:** please notify your new address to your local Embassy or Consulate - do not write to Berne. Thank you.

Internet: <http://www.revue.ch>



For whom shall I vote?" We Swiss come up against this question every four years, next time on the occasion of the National Council elections of October 24th 1999. For the second time our compatriots abroad will be able to vote by post. This is reason enough for Swiss Review to open the election campaign and begin with its reporting on the 1999 federal elections. From this edition we are starting a series in which the Swiss political landscape is described with reference to the most important political subjects.

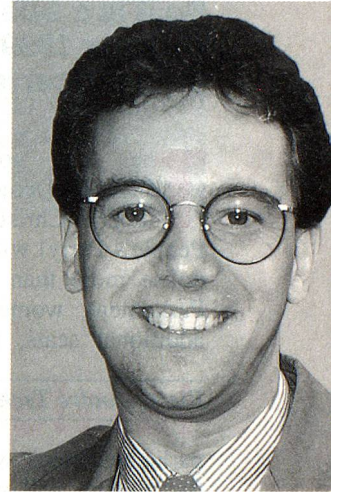
Given the large number of parties, it is not a simple matter to find one's way in this jungle. In today's National Council 15 parties are represented, and in Canton Zurich alone 30 groupings stood for election in 1995. And if this were not enough: over and over again, in referendums you find representatives of the same party in the camps both for and against.

Swiss concordance democracy binds the most important political forces in the responsibility of government. In 1995 the parties represented in the Federal Council received 74% of votes and 162 of the 200 seats in the National Council. On the other hand, this prevents a clear distinction between government and opposition, of the sort known to most parliamentary democracies. Our system allows both diverging opinions amongst the various individual government parties, as also different opinions within each of them. In addition, ever and again voters take decisions in referendums which are not consistent with the majority relationship which the same voters decided upon at the last elections.

Direct democracy must be able to live with this unpredictability and these contradictions if it wants to survive. But it can do this only if the elections have a high status. It must be said that in federal elections we lay down the basic orientation of the policy of our country for the next four years. We transfer decision-making on important subjects to a parliament to which we should give a corresponding amount of trust. This remains true even if we are able to reverse or change almost all its decisions in referendums, and it would be fatal to underestimate these elections.

This is why we now call upon all Swiss Abroad: Make use of your political rights! Take part in the National Council elections of the coming year. Even if you have not yet put your name on the voting register of a Swiss municipality, fill in the form on page 10 and send it to your embassy or consulate.

"For whom shall I vote?" This question must be even more difficult for you abroad to answer than for us in Switzerland. After all Switzerland has given you the right to vote by post not least so that you can contribute to Swiss politics drawing on your experience. This circumstance and the opportunity it gives you to help give substance to Swiss democracy should make it worthwhile searching for answers.



*René Lenzin*  
René Lenzin