

New appointments in the lower house : stability in the Council of States

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New appointments in the lower house

Stability in the Council of States

Although the results are not yet definitive for all cantons due to the upcoming second ballot, one thing is sure: in the coming legislature period the Council of States will continue to consist primarily of FDP and CVP representatives.

The remaining twelve State Council seats will not be allocated until the second ballot. This applies to the cantons of Lucerne, Basle Country, St. Gallen, Aargau, Thurgau, Vaud (one seat each) as well as Ticino, Valais and

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Neuchatel (two seats each). Nevertheless, this much can be determined now: the balance of power remains unchanged. The SVP's success is therefore limited to the National Council elections.

Domination of centrist parties

In the first ballot the Liberal Democrats were able to win one seat, while the SP, CVP and SVP suc-

cessfully held onto their seats. With the FDP and CVP, including Independent Hans Hess of Nidwalden (who has allied himself with the FDP faction) accounting for 24 of the 34 mandates so far determined, the two other government parties are left to pick up the crumbs. So far the SP holds four seats (in Solothurn, Basle City, Geneva and the Jura). The loss of Fribourger Pierre Aeby's seat to Liberal Democrat Pierre Cornu was offset in Solothurn by the election of former National Council President Ernst Leuenberger. After the first ballot the SVP has six seats (one each in Zurich, Berne, Glarus, Schaffhausen, Grisons and Aargau). In eight cantons where no second ballot has been called, the elected State Councillors represent the two centrist parties (FDP 13, CVP 11).

None of the non-government parties has yet won a single seat. The only party with a real chance of a mandate is the LPS in the Valais and Neuchatel. In Neuchatel Fernand Cuche of the Greens might have been in the running but has relinquished his candidature following his election to the National Council. Besides a number of foregone conclusions there were also two surprises. One was the failure of SP faction head Ursula Hafner to be elected. Since she stood only for a Schaffhausen State Council seat, she is now excluded from parliament, at least for the coming legislative period.

Surprises not excluded

In addition to Ursula Hafner, 21 other National Councillors stood for election to the Council of States, but only four succeeded in the first ballot: SVP faction leader Samuel Schmid (BE) and Toni Dettling (FDP/SZ), who campaigned only for a State Council seat, as well as Christiane Langenberger (FDP/VD) and Ernst Leuenberger (SP/SO), who simultaneously stood for a National Council seat in order to hedge their bets. Other former National Councillors such as St. Gallen SVP representative Eugen David stand a good chance of being elected to the Council of States.

(Photo: Michael Stahl)

The second surprise was the need for a second ballot in the Valais. Both CVP representatives (Simon Epiney and Rolf Escher) failed to attain an absolute majority despite the dominance of their party in the bilingual canton. Contrary to earlier indications Peter Bodenmann, former president of the SP, will not take part in the second ballot. Finally, the historic election of a Nidwalden woman to the State Council deserves mention. Marianne Slongo-Albrecht (CVP) managed to win a seat in the upper chamber. ■



The state Council also saw some new faces on 24 October.