

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 30 (2003)
Heft: 4

Artikel: Elections : campaignin from abroad
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907386>

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Campaigning from abroad

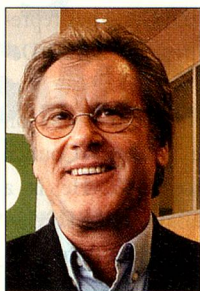
Swiss Abroad standing for election face a major challenge and, because of this, are all the more committed to their cause.

Political parties in Switzerland are becoming increasingly aware of the political importance and the potential for votes inherent in Swiss nationals resident abroad. Whereas four years ago Pierre-Alain Bolomey (SP/VD) from Brussels was the only Swiss Abroad to stand for election, now there are at least ten candidates from abroad. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) in the canton of Basle Country have put forward a complete list of Swiss Abroad candidates.

Active People's Party

Heading the SVP list in Basle Country is Rolf Schudel, resident in Edenvale, South Africa. 60-year-old Rolf Schudel is the president of SVP International and has been a member of the OSA's Council for the Swiss Abroad since 2001. A trained mechanic and owner-operator of an SME, he is a member of the Swiss Club of Johannesburg and the Adelboden Alpine Club. Rolf Schudel is divorced and father of a grown-up daughter. His hobbies are riding and skiing.

Rolf Schudel attaches special importance to fostering Switzerland's good image abroad.



He is committed to a self-assured foreign policy and the retention of banking secrecy. "The voting system makes it very difficult for candidates living abroad to be elected.

The only way to change this is to revise the constituency system to make the Fifth Switzerland a constituency in its own right."

Other candidates on the Swiss Abroad list drawn up by the SVP in Basle Country are: Bruno Kaspar, Honorary General Consul and businessman, born 1951, ZH, resident in Vilnius (Lithuania); Edgar Studer, retired, born 1940, SH, resident in Finchampstead (UK); Thomas F. Daetwyler, born 1955, businessman, ZH, resident in Colombo (Sri Lanka); and Walter Müller, businessman, ZH, resident in Capetown (South Africa). Christian Hodel, resident in Ireland, is standing for the Young SVP in the canton of Berne.

Three Radical Free Democrats

The Radical Free Democrats (FDP) are also very active. Young Radical Free Democrats Alexandra Martinec (28) from Zagreb, Croatia, and Claudia Wachs (25) from Laguna Beach, USA, are standing for the canton of Berne, while Pierre Droz (22) from Paris is standing for Aargau. The FDP was the first party to establish an international chapter with the aim of facilitating the political co-determination of Swiss Abroad, promoting their active involvement at the federal level and advocating their interests at the political level. To this end the party maintains a world-wide network of contacts and information sources.

By contrast, the Social Democrats, Greens and Christian Democrats were unsuccessful in their efforts to persuade Swiss Abroad to stand for parliament. At the time of printing, however, 40-year old Liliane Vitanza-Hoffer from Alsace in France had been nominated for inclusion on the EDU list for Basle City.

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