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Federal Council photo 2018

The Federal Council in 2018 (from left to right): Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga, Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer (Vice-President), President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, Federal Chancellor Walter Thurnherr.

The Federal Chancellery has published the official Federal Council photo for 2018. It is the first time that it has been designed as an animated image for online media. 'BUNDESART – the artistic Federal Council photo' is the title of the concept selected by President Alain Berset. Both the concept and the photo were produced by STEMUTZ. The background image is the work of Michel FR.

Download, order: admin.ch>Federal Council>Photographs and speeches of the Federal Council.

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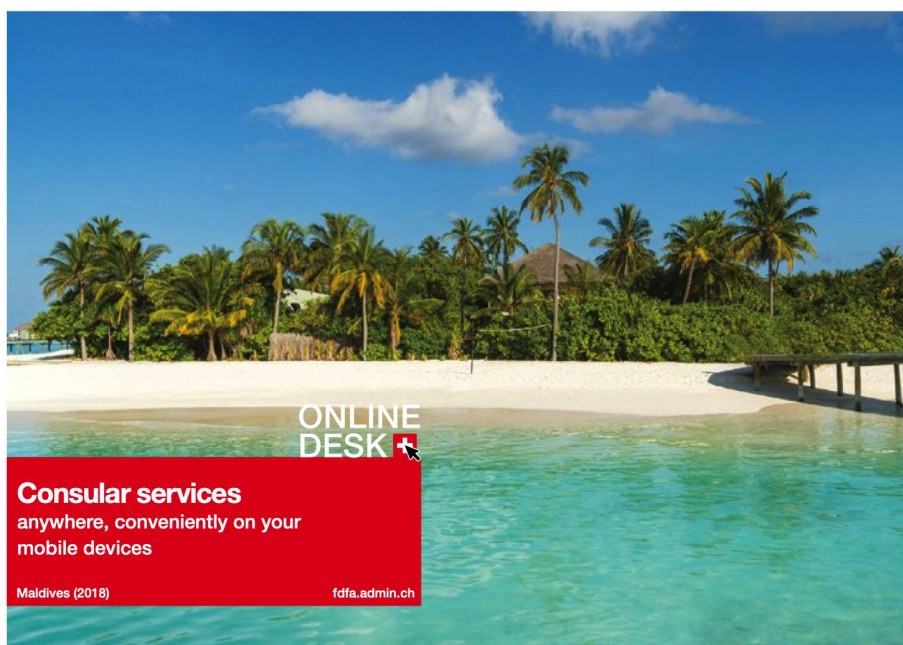


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The new Swiss Citizenship Act entered into force on 1 January 2018

Foreign nationals who feel a close association with Switzerland even while abroad owing to their family situation can also apply for simplified naturalisation under the new law.



Photo Keystone

As before, foreign spouses can also apply for simplified naturalisation while residing abroad. Former Swiss citizens who have lost their citizenship for various reasons can be renaturalised in certain cases. Answers to the key questions about changes to the Swiss Citizenship Act and about applying for simplified naturalisation are summarised below.

I am married to a Swiss citizen and we live abroad. Can I apply for simplified naturalisation?

As the spouse of a Swiss citizen, you can apply for simplified naturalisation if you have lived in an actual, stable conjugal relationship for six years and have a close association with Switzerland. The Swiss spouse must have held Swiss citizenship when the wedding took place or have subsequently obtained it through renaturalisation or simplified naturalisation on account of having a Swiss parent.

What are the criteria for having a close association with Switzerland?

The following conditions must be met to have a close association with Switzerland:

- You have visited Switzerland at least three times within the past six years, spending at least five days there on each occasion;
- You can conduct an everyday oral conversation in one of the national languages;
- You have basic knowledge of Switzerland (its geography, history, politics and society);
- You maintain contacts with Swiss citizens;
- You can name reference persons residing in Switzerland who can confirm your visits and contacts.

What other conditions do I have to meet?

Simplified naturalisation is subject to the condition that you uphold public order and safety and do not jeopardise the internal and external security of Switzerland, that you respect the values of the Federal Constitution, that you are engaging in economic activity or currently undertaking training or education and that you promote and support the integration of your family members.

I am under the age of 25 and a Swiss national born abroad. I am not yet registered with the Swiss embassy. Could I lose my Swiss citizenship?

Yes. Children born abroad to a Swiss mother and/or a Swiss father, who also hold another nationality automatically forfeit their entitlement to Swiss citizenship upon reaching the age of 25 if they were not registered with the Swiss authorities either abroad (embassy or consulate) or in Switzerland (civil registry office), did not register themselves or have not expressed a willingness to retain their Swiss citizenship in writing by that time. Anyone who reached their 22nd birthday by 31 December 2017 and had not yet been registered with a Swiss authority forfeited their Swiss citizenship at the age of 22 under the provisions of the previous law.

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I have lost my Swiss citizenship. Can I apply to be renaturalised?

Yes. Anyone who has lost their Swiss citizenship can apply for renaturalisation within ten years of losing it. Close association with Switzerland is required and the other conditions must also be met. Beyond this period, anyone who has lived in Switzerland for three years can apply for renaturalisation.

My grandmother is/was Swiss. Can I apply for simplified naturalisation?

No. In contrast to the previous law, this is no longer possible. However, there is an exception: a foreign-born child of a non-Swiss father married to the child's mother who possessed Swiss citizenship before or at the time of the birth may apply if the child's mother lost her Swiss citizenship due to her marriage to the child's foreign father rather than through forfeiture.

How much does simplified naturalisation or renaturalisation cost?

A fee of CHF 600 is charged for decisions on simplified naturalisation or renaturalisation for adults. A fee of CHF 350 is levied for minors who are not included in the naturalisation application of one of their parents. The fees comprise those charged by the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and the cantonal authorities. Services provided by the Swiss representation abroad (advice, receipt, interviewing, evaluation, processing of foreign marital status documents and forwarding of the file to the SEM or any further clarification or research) are charged additionally according to the

actual time spent (CHF 75 per half hour). The cost of the involvement of third parties for marital status documents is charged as expenses. The fees are levied by the responsible Swiss representation abroad. They are payable in advance and non-refundable. In other words, they cannot be reimbursed, regardless of the outcome of the procedure. The fees must be paid in the

local currency of the relevant country. Payment in instalments is not possible.

For further information, see the FAQ below:

www.sem.admin.ch > Einreise & Aufenthalt > Schweizer Bürgerrecht / Einbürgerung > Rechtliche Grundlagen > Fragen zum neuen Recht

Federal referendums

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposals will be put to the vote on 10 June 2018:

- Popular initiative of 1 December 2015 'For crisis-safe money: Money creation by the National Bank only! (Sovereign Money Initiative)'
- Federal Act on Gambling of 29 September 2017 (Gambling Act)

Other voting dates in 2018: 23 September, 25 November

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council, electronic voting, etc.) can be found at www.admin.ch/votes.

Popular initiatives

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

- 'For moderate immigration (limitation initiative)' (16.07.2019)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found in German at www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

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