

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 49 (2022)  
**Heft:** 6

**Artikel:** Controversial proposals mobilise voters  
**Autor:** Peter, Theodora  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-1051889>

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# Controversial proposals mobilise voters

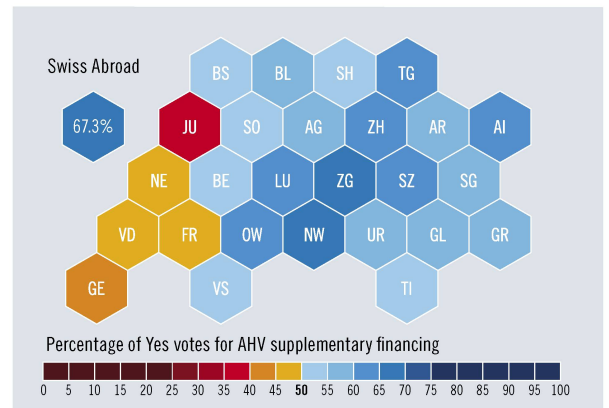
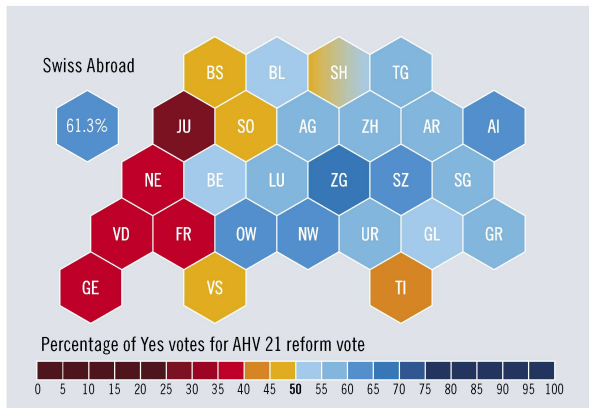
The votes of 25 September saw the highest voter turnout in 2022, as more than half of the electorate – around 51 per cent – headed to the polls. Three of the four votes went the way of the Federal Council and parliament.

## OASI pension age for women now 65

Women will now receive their OASI state pensions one year later than before – at 65 instead of 64. A narrow majority of 50.5 per cent approved the change, with a margin of around 30,000 voters. The result reveals a divided country: French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland rejected the proposal while most German-speaking cantons favoured it. Emphatic approval also came from the “Fifth Switzerland”. (TP)

## VAT rises to fund OASI

Swiss value-added tax on services and products is to increase by 0.4 per cent to 8.1 per cent. VAT on food, medicine, newspapers and books will climb from 2.5 to 2.6 per cent. In the hospitality industry VAT will increase from 3.7 to 3.8 per cent. The additional revenue from these increases will help to fund the old-age and survivors’ insurance (OASI) state pension. A clear majority of voters, 55 per cent, approved the proposal. (TP)



## No change to animal farming rules

The popular initiative to end factory farming failed, with almost 63 per cent saying no. There will, therefore, be no change to animal farming rules. The authors of the initiative wanted to ban intensive, large-scale livestock farming. Opponents said the proposal was unnecessary, as Switzerland already has a stringent Animal Welfare Act. The “Fifth Switzerland” also rejected the initiative. (TP)

## No tax breaks for companies

Withholding tax on interest income from Swiss bonds will not be abolished, after 52 per cent of voters rejected a change in the law. The left-wing parties successfully contested the proposal, which would have resulted in an annual tax shortfall of several hundred million francs. The Swiss Abroad were in favour – but ultimately in the minority. (TP)

