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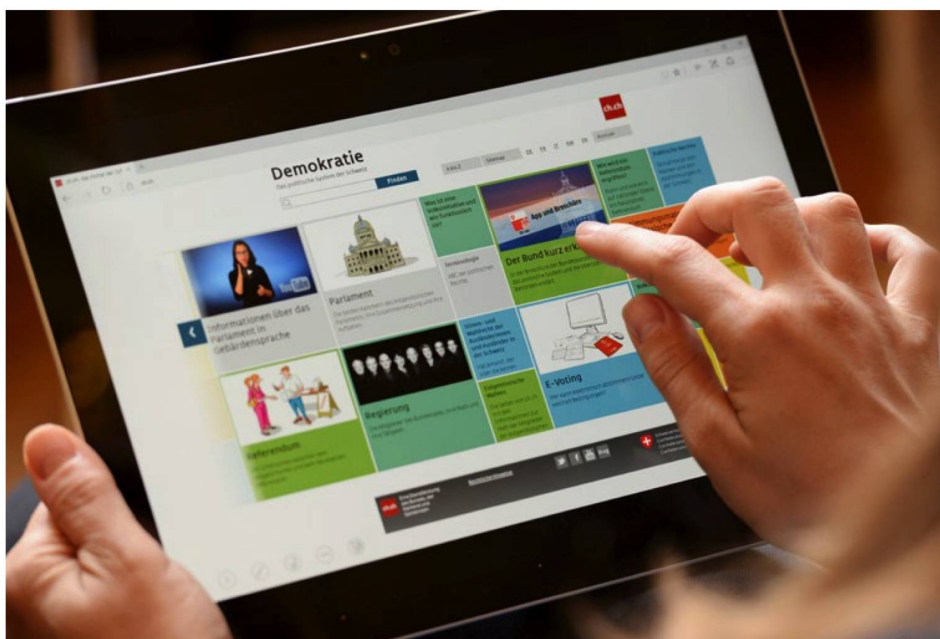
ABC of the Swiss political system at a single click

How do I correctly fill out a ballot paper? Who do I have to contact if I haven't received the voting material? Can Swiss living abroad vote? Who can vote online? Who can launch an initiative? What is the role of a cantonal government or parliament? Who can stand as a candidate in federal elections, and how? ch.ch/democracy, the new content provided by ch.ch, gives you answers to these and other questions.

ch.ch, the official portal of the Confederation, cantons and communes, has expanded its content on ch.ch/democracy, and now a wide range of information dedicated to how the Swiss political system functions. Fresh content and lots of links to external websites of federal, cantonal and communal authorities are brought together on one single website, making it easier and faster to access information on the functioning of the Swiss political system at all political levels.

The wide-ranging content published on ch.ch/democracy gives useful, practical information explained clearly and simply for all citizens, both in Switzerland and abroad. The new portal is especially useful for Swiss living abroad as it contains information of particular interest, including explanations on how they can exercise their political rights. On ch.ch/democracy citizens will find questions and answers such as: How can I vote if don't live in Switzerland? Who can vote using e-voting? Who can I contact to obtain voting material? Can Swiss people living abroad participate in all elections and votes? Can they stand as a candidate in elections in their canton of origin? What conditions need to be met?

Besides giving this practical information, the ch.ch/democracy portal explains the how the Swiss political system functions and how it is organised. There are several pages explaining federalism, the principle of subsidia-



ry, the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and the role of the Swiss courts. There are also descriptions of the various political parties and political movements in Switzerland.

ch.ch/democracy is continually being developed. We intend to add new and up-to-date multimedia content to address the needs and wishes of the portal's users both in Switzerland and beyond the country's borders.

The illustrations, graphics and video clips which back up the explanations in the texts make ch.ch/democracy a dynamic and attrac-

tive website for younger citizens too. The public can also keep abreast of the latest news in our democratic system via www.twitter.com/ch_portal, and so exercise their political rights more easily.

The site is available in five languages: Italian, French, German, Romansh and English.

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Peter Zimmerli – de Berna a Atlanta

Estimados lectores: A lo largo de estos últimos cuatro años tuve la oportunidad, como delegado responsable de las relaciones con los suizos en el extranjero, de tender puentes entre ustedes y la Confederación. El intercambio de impresiones y las relaciones con mis compatriotas, tanto en ocasión de los congresos de los suizos en el extranjero celebrados en Suiza y en el extranjero, como a través de las páginas de la Confederación en *Panorama Suizo*, siempre fueron para mí muy importantes y motivo de gran satisfacción. Ahora ha llegado el momento de despedirme de ustedes, ya que desde principios de agosto asumiré en Atlanta, EE. UU., la dirección del Consulado General. Agradezco cordialmente a todos los suizos en el extranjero el entusiasmo con el que representan los valores suizos en sus países de residencia.



Simone Jenny Flubacher – en Berna

Estimados suizos en el extranjero: Me alegra la oportunidad que voy a tener de intercambiar opiniones e información con ustedes. Después de un largo período dedicado a cuestiones relacionadas con la preparación de la emigración, esto me permitirá acercarme a ustedes. Durante 20 años trabajé para el DFAE, en diversas representaciones suizas en el extranjero. A finales de 2012 regresé a Suiza, donde en la dirección consular creé el departamento de asesoramiento para la emigración y me ocupé de distintos asuntos y consultas sobre los temas de la estancia en el extranjero, la emigración y el regreso a Suiza. En julio de 2017 sucederé a Peter Zimmerli en su cargo de delegado responsable de las relaciones con los suizos en el extranjero.

Important notice

Please notify your Swiss representation of your e-mail address(es) and mobile telephone number(s) and/or any changes to these and register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications ["Swiss Review", newsletter from your representation, etc.].

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Federal referenda

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposal will be put on the vote on 24th September 2017:

- Federal Decree of 14 March 2017 on Food Security (direct counter-proposal to the popular initiative "For food security", which has now been withdrawn) (BBl 2017 2383);
- Federal Decree of 17 March 2017 on Additional Funding for OASI (Old-Age and Survivors Insurance) by increasing Value Added Tax (BBl 2017 2381);
- Federal Act of 17 March 2017 on the Reform of Retirement Provision 2020 (BBl 2017 2393).

Further voting date 2017: 26th November

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

Popular initiatives

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

- "For clean drinking water and healthy food – No subsidies for pesticides and the prophylactic use of antibiotics" (21.09.2018)
- "For a ban on financing war material manufacturers" (11.10.2018)
- "Close down the nuclear power station – take responsibility for the environment" (16.11.2018)
- "Jobs for Swiss residents first" (13.12.2018)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at www.bk.admin.ch > under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

