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The cover features a vibrant yellow background with a series of horizontal blue bands. These bands are arranged in a symmetrical, wave-like pattern that curves inward from both sides towards a central vertical axis, creating a sense of depth and movement. The top and bottom bands are the most prominent, while the middle bands are more closely spaced and curve more sharply.

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## SWITZERLAND

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Table 1. Cabinet composition 1 January 1992

### A. The Party Composition

Date of Investiture: The Swiss cabinet has no formal investiture

No.	Party	Number and percentage of parliamentary seats (Nationalrat)	Number and percentage of cabinet seats
4	Radical Democrats/ Freisinnig Demokratische Partei (FDP)	44 (22.0%)	2 (28.6%)
1	Christian Democrats/ Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei (CVP)	36 (18.0%)	2 (28.6%)
5	Social Democrats/ Sozialdemokratische Partei (SPS)	41 (20.5%)	2 (28.6%)
6	Swiss People's Party/ Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)	25 (12.5%)	1 (14.3%)

### B. Cabinet members

Home Affairs/Inneres: Flavio Cotti (1939 male, CVP)

Foreign Affairs/Auswärtiges: René Felber (1933 male, SPS)

Finances/Finanzen: Otto Stich (1927 male, SPS)

Economic Affairs/Volkswirtschaft: Jean-Pascal Delamuraz (1936 male, FDP)

Justice and Police/Justiz und Polizei: Arnold Koller (1933 male, CVP)

Transport and Energy/Verkehr und Energie: Adolf Ogi (1942 male, SVP)

Army/Militär: Kaspar Villiger (1941 male, FDP)

*Note:* There is no prime minister in Switzerland, the seven members of the Bundesrat form the Swiss government on equal terms. The role of president or chairman of the board changes from year to year. For 1992 René Felber was assigned president and Adolf Ogi vice-president. For 1993 Adolf Ogi becomes president and Otto Stich was elected vice-president.



Table 2. National referendums and initiatives 1 Jan 1992 to 31 Dec 1992

Total electorate on 27 September 1992: 4,533,617					
issues	yes (%)	no (%)	valid votes	total votes	rate of participation
16 February 92					
Health Fund Initiative (Popular initiative for financially acceptable health insurance)	39.3	60.7	1,968,545	2,004,983	44.4
Away with Animal Experimentation (Popular initiative for a gradual but drastic reduction in animal experiments)					
	43.6	56.3	1,982,134	2,009,400	44.5
17 May 92					
Federal Decree concerning the membership of Bretton Woods (International Monetary Fund and World Bank)	55.8	44.2	1,654,238	1,753,457	38.8
Law regulating the membership of the Bretton Woods institutions	56.4	43.6	1,648,183	1,753,278	38.8
Total revision of the Law on Watercourses	66.1	33.9	1,742,946	1,771,843	39.2
Popular initiative to safeguard the watercourses	37.1	62.9	1,738,070	1,771,722	39.2
Constitutional article relating to genetic engineering and artificial insemination	73.9	26.2	1,721,687	1,770,487	39.2
Constitutional article allowing for the creation of an alternative military service	82.5	17.4	1,747,704	1,772,139	39.2
Revision of the Penal Code provision relating to sexual offences	73.1	26.9	1,717,327	1,768,752	39.2
27 Sept. 92					
Federal Resolution on the Construction of Two New transalpine Railway Lines	63.6	36.4	2,052,962	2,080,785	45.9
Revision of the Federal Law on Parliamentary Business	58.0	42.0	2,058,710	2,058,710	45.4
Revision of the Federal Law on Parliamentary Indemnities	27.6	72.4	2,065,103	2,065,103	45.6

Revision of the Federal Law on Parliamentary Infrastructure	30.6	69.4	2,061,749	2,061,749	45.5
Revision of the Federal Law on Stamp Duty	61.5	38.5	2,070,537	2,070,537	45.7
Revision of the Federal Law on Rural Property Rights	53.6	46.4	2,069,711	2,069,711	45.7
6 Dec. 1992					
Swiss Membership of the European Economic Area (EEA)	49.7	50.3	3,580,094	3,549,580	78.3

### Changes in the cabinet

For 1992 René Felber was assigned president and Adolf Ogi vice-president. For 1993 Adolf Ogi becomes president and Otto Stich will be vice-president. These changes take place as part of the normal practice of rotation and are not due to any political reasons.

### Results of national referendums and initiatives

In Swiss politics referendums and initiatives seem to have registered an even greater increase in importance in recent years. In 1992 a record number of 16 issues (see Table 2) were put to the vote at national level. Two ballots took place on 16 February, seven on 17 May, six on 27 September, and on one 6 December. The issues were as follows:

A *popular initiative for financially acceptable health insurance* (Health Fund Initiative), organised by the concordat of the Swiss health insurance companies, asked for a substantial rise in state subsidies to the insurance companies and a limitation on the costs for medical treatment. With the exception of the Communist Party (PdA) all parties were against the initiative and considered it either inappropriate or too minimalistic to solve the basic problems of the health insurance system. The proposal gained no more than 39.3 per cent of the votes and was thus rejected.

The *popular initiative for a gradual but drastic reduction in animal experiments* (Away with Animal Experimentation) demanded the abolition of any experiments causing harm or pain to animals with the exception of those intended to save human or animal life. The initiative was supported by the left-wing parties and the Green Party (GPS). The right-wing parties, on the other hand, asked their supporters to reject the project and succeeded. The initiative achieved only 43.6 per cent of the votes.

A new landmark in Switzerland's foreign policy and international commitment was established in the ballot of 17 May, when 55.8 per cent of Swiss



voters approved the *Federal Decree concerning the membership of Bretton Woods Institutions* (International Monetary Fund and World Bank). The Federal Government pointed to the already existing close co-operation between Switzerland and the two institutions and the necessity to put these connections on a political basis, especially in view of the vital interests of Swiss industry. The decree was opposed by two different committees: The Green Party (GPS) and a minority of the Social Democrats (SPS) argued that the international indebtedness of the Third World was administered by the IMF. A second committee composed of members of the Swiss People's Party (SVP), the Swiss Motorists' Party (AP), and the Swiss Democrats (SD) based its arguments on isolationist terms, all the more so since the overall costs – in their view – far exceeded any expected utility. The *Law regulating the membership in the Bretton Woods institutions*, which was the subject of a separate vote, obtained 56.4 per cent of the votes.

A *Total revision of the Law on Watercourses* was approved by 66.1 per cent of the votes. The new legislation to protect watercourses aimed to prevent excessive damming and to guarantee minimum water flow beneath the dams. It played the role of an indirect counter-proposal to the more far-reaching *Popular initiative to safeguard the watercourses*, which was rejected with only 37.1 per cent of the votes. The Green Party (GPS), the Social Democrats (SPS), the Independents' Party (LdU) and the Protestant People's Party (EVP), as well as the environmental associations (*Umweltverbände*) supported both proposals. The Christian Democrats (CVP), the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and important cantonal sections of the Radical Democrats (FDP) were in favour of the Law but against the initiative. The association of the electric power companies, important trade associations, the Radical Democrats and major right-wing politicians of the cantons supplying water rejected the Law as well as the initiative.

The *Constitutional article relating to genetic engineering and artificial insemination* was accepted by 73.8 per cent of the voters and all cantons except Valais. The article was a counter-proposal from parliament to a rather similar initiative (the *Beobachter-Initiative*) which was withdrawn in favour of the article. Its aim was to protect human, animal and plant life against abuse in genetic science. The new article prohibits the sale of embryos and the use of surrogate mothers, and regulates in vitro fertilisation. Opposition arose from a group putting forward Christian ethics as their reasoning, from a second group consisting of women concerned about the loss of autonomy regarding their fertility, and from disabled persons fearing pressure on them due to obvious eugenic facilities.

All cantons and 82.5 per cent of the votes approved a *Constitutional article allowing for the creation of an alternative military service* for conscientious objectors. Parliament will now have to frame a law stating the precise form the alternative service will take. It was not the first time that the people had to decide on alternative military service, but this time there was not much opposition against the rather vague constitutional article except perhaps from



some conservative right-wing politicians generally opposed to a weakening of the principle of compulsory military service. More controversy is expected when it comes to establishing the concrete regulations.

The *Revision of the Penal Code provision relating to sexual offenses* was accepted by 73.1 per cent of the voters. The age of consent for children remains at 16, but teenage sex will no longer be a criminal offence provided there is less than three years age difference between those involved. So-called soft pornography will be allowed while hard pornography will be treated more strictly than before. Marital rape and sexual harassment become criminal offenses upon charge, and homosexuality will be treated on the same terms as heterosexuality. Two committees organised the referendum against this revision. One was mainly opposed to the acceptance of "teenage"-sex and the other fought the liberalisation in general, which in their view, would lead to decadence and immorality.

On September 27 the voters had to decide on the most costly railway project ever. The *Federal Resolution on the Construction of Two New Transalpine Railway Lines* (NEAT) was accepted with 63.6 per cent "Yes" votes. On the one hand, the project, consisting basically of two tunnels through the Alps (St. Gotthard and Lötschberg), is intended to improve public transport nationally; on the other hand, it is intended to guarantee sufficient transit facilities on the North-South axis and therefore formed part of the negotiations with the European Community. Opposition against the project arose from fundamentalist green forces in the Green Party (GPS) who are in general against any increase in mobility. They organised the referendum but were having difficulty collecting the necessary number of signatures; they finally succeeded at the last minute with the help of a politically opposed right-wing committee which did not like the idea of partly financing the cost through petrol taxes. In favour of the project were the traffic organisations (TCS, VCS) and all parties with the exception of the Green Party (GPS), the Motorist's Party (*Autopartei*) and the Swiss Democrats (SD).

The voters also had to decide on three separate issues regarding *parliamentary reform*, which were intended to relieve the excessive workload of its militia members and to make the parliament more efficient. A revised law on the relations between the two houses (a more efficient parliamentary procedure) was accepted with 58.0 per cent "Yes", whereas parliamentary indemnities (higher pay for members) and infrastructural costs (government assistance to pay parliamentary staff) were rejected with only 27.6 per cent and 30.6 per cent in favour respectively. By accepting the former and refusing the latter two proposals the voters proved to be more refined in their decision than the political parties, all of which favoured the reform package as a whole. The referendum against this reform was not organised by a committee of party members or a traditional interest group, but by a group of students supported by a Public Relations office, some right-wing politicians and the People's Party of the canton of Zurich – a procedure which was considered a form of "new politics".



A comfortable majority of 61.5 per cent of the voters approved a *Revision of the Federal Law on Stamp Duty*. The agreement to lower stamp duty and to make Swiss banks more competitive internationally was especially welcomed by the banking centres in Geneva, Zurich and Zug. The opposition, made up of the Social Democrats (SPS), who were responsible for the referendum, the Green Party (GPS) and the trade unions, argued that in times of a state deficit it was hardly sensible to free the financial markets of taxes without any compensation, and that the small tax payers would pay for it in the long run.

The *Revision of the Federal Law on Rural Property Rights* aimed at facilitating the purchase of agricultural land by farmers working on their properties. This issue was rather controversial, and there were differences between and sometimes even within the parties. Freedom of property and deregulation stood against more state responsibility and a sound agricultural sector. Hence, the Radical Democrats (FDP), the Independents' Party (LdU), the Motorists' Party (*Autopartei*), as well as various cantonal parties of the Christian Democrats (CVP) and the Swiss People's Party (SVP) of Zurich, rejected the revision, which was, on the other hand, welcomed by the Social Democrats (SPS), the Christian Democrats (CVP), and the Swiss People's Party (SVP) nationally. The Swiss Farmers' Association supported the project but had to face the negative warning of its sections in Geneva and Vaud. With 53.6 per cent of the votes the revision finally won, albeit with a rather small majority.

The highlight of Swiss direct democracy in 1992 took place on 6 December. The Federal Council had decided to treat the *Swiss Membership of the European Economic Area* (EEA) as a compulsory referendum subject and hence had decided to put it to the vote. In practical terms the voters were asked whether or not they approved of the parliamentary resolution authorising the Federal Council to ratify the European Economic Area Treaty, and thus the entry into the free market of goods, persons, capital and services. By a double majority of voters and cantons the decision was negative. Even if the "No" majority of 50.3 per cent among the total voters was very small, the verdict of the cantons was unambiguous: only the six French-speaking cantons and the two half cantons of Basle-City and Basle-Rural were in favour of the EEA, while the rest of German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland voted against it. The voting turnout was an exceptionally high 78.3 per cent, the highest participation rate since 1947. This reflects both the vital importance and the controversial nature of the decision, which was quite often referred to as the most important of the century. The outcome also reveals a substantial gap between the political class and the people. With the government and the three major parties, the Radical Democrats (FDP), the Christian Democrats (CVP) and the Social Democrats (SPS), in favour, the support for the EEA was considerable. Opposed to entry were only the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and the Green Party (GPS), with an exponent of the former being particularly engaged in the campaign. He was deemed

by those in favour of the treaty to have been largely responsible for the voters' refusal and was accused of having used the sort of populist methods regarded as unseemly for a member of a government party. The obvious differences between the German-speaking and the French-speaking cantons proved to be quite a shock to many, and integrating measures to avoid a drifting away of the French-speaking minority have been requested. In addition, first analyses showed that there was also a considerable gap within the different populations, with those living in cities and urban conglomerations, as well as the better educated, being in general more open towards Europe.

### **Institutional changes**

A revision of the electoral law led to an extension of the political rights of Swiss people living in foreign countries. From 1 July, 1992, Swiss citizens who are living abroad are entitled to vote in federal elections and ballots, and to append their signature to popular initiatives and referendums by correspondence from their foreign domicile. As far as their voting area is concerned, they may choose either the municipality in which they previously lived or their official municipality of origin. As a direct consequence, two major parties (FDP and SVP) have already founded an international party section with the aim of representing the interests of the some half a million Swiss citizens living abroad and to ensure their support in forthcoming ballots and elections.

### **Issues in national politics in 1992**

As a result of the system of direct democracy, the political agenda depends very heavily on the referendums and initiatives put to the vote. A considerable part of the main issues in national politics has thus already been discussed above. The most important decision in 1992 was undoubtedly the question as to whether or not Switzerland should become a member of the EEA, a proposal which was turned down by the voters (see above). As a consequence, there is now a concern as to how Switzerland can find its way alone (*Alleingang*) and to what extent, in order to remain competitive, it should independently adapt to EEA standards. Nevertheless, there have already been announcements concerning several initiatives to put the EEA to the vote for a second time and the application of the government to become a member of the European Community still stands.

At least as far as those who saw the EEA as a remedy for the actual economic crisis are concerned, the "No" vote will not change things for the better. Since 1991 the economic situation has become worse and worse, with the rate of unemployment rising to a new record height. At the end of the



year, 4.2 percent of the labour force, some 130,000 people, were reported to be on the dole, a record number by Swiss standards. The prognosis for the near future does not hold out much hope of improvement, so that changes in the financing of the unemployment funds and an increase in the duration of unemployment payments have become necessary. The actual state deficit and the bad forecasts for the years to come – a development which is also mirrored at cantonal and at communal level – are now a major concern in Swiss politics, making budget cuts and tax increases, as well as state investment schemes and continued training, topics of political controversy.

One further political issue which should be mentioned is the purchase of 34 American-made F/A-18 Hornet fighter aircraft for 3.5 billion Swiss francs, a decision which was strongly criticized by the "Group for a Switzerland without an Army" (GSoA). On 28 April this group launched an initiative and gathered an unprecedented number of 500,000 signatures in record time, winning support in nearly all groups of the population. In the meantime, both the National Council and the Council of States approved the purchase but stopped the first payments. The final decision now rests with the vote which will take place in mid-1993.

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