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SWITZERLAND

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Table 1. Elections to the *Nationalrat* (Lower House)

Date of election:	22 October 1995
Total number of seats:	200
Electorate:	4,593,772
Total votes cast:	1,940,646
Valid votes cast:	1,895,330
Rate of participation:	42.2% (1991: 46.0%)

No.	Party	Votes ¹		Change since 1991	Seats		Change since 1991
		N	%		N	%	
4	Radical Democrats Freisinnig Demokratische Partei (FDP)	384,516	20.2	- 0.8	45	22.5	+ 0.5
5	Social Democrats/ ² Sozialdemokratische Partei (SPS)	415,234	21.8	+ 3.3	54	27.0	+ 6.0
1	Christian Democrats/ ³ Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei (CVP)	319,976	16.8	- 1.2	34	17.0	- 1.0
6	Swiss People's Party/ Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)	283,898	14.9	+ 3.0	29	14.5	+ 2.0
19	Green Party/ Grüne Partei der Schweiz (GPS)	96,065	5.0	- 1.1	8	4.0	- 3.0
22	Freedom Party/ ⁴ Freiheitspartei (FPS)	75,641	4.0	- 1.1	7	3.5	- 0.5
14	Swiss Democrats/ ⁵ Schweizer Demokraten (SD)	59,613	3.1	- 0.3	3	1.5	- 1.0
3	Liberal Party/ Liberale Partei der Schweiz (LPS)	51,182	2.7	- 0.3	7	3.5	- 1.5
12	Independents' Party/ Landesring der Unabhängigen (LdU)	34,801	1.8	- 1.0	3	1.5	- 1.0

8	Protestant People's Party/ Evangelische Volkspartei (EVP)	34,071	1.8	- 0.1	2	1.0	- 0.5
23	League of the Tessins ⁶ Lega dei Ticinesi	17,942	0.9	- 0.5	1	0.5	- 0.5
20	Feminist Green Alternative/ ⁷ Feministische-Grüne- Alternative (FGA)	28,081	1.5	+ 0.2	2	1.0	+ 0.5
24	Federal Democratic Union/ ⁸ Eidgenössisch- Demokratische Union (EDU)	24,795	1.3	+ 0.3	1	0.5	0.0
9	Communist Party/ Partei der Arbeit (PdA)	22,849	1.2	+ 0.4	3	1.5	+ 0.5
17	United Socialist Party/ ⁹ Partito Socialista Unitario (PSU)	0	0.0	- 0.6	0	0.0	- 0.5
25	Christian-Social Party/ ¹⁰ Christlich-soziale Partei (CSP)	5,625	0.3	- 0.1	1	0.5	0.0
18	Progressive Organisations of Switzerland/Progressive Organisationen (POCH)	0	0.0	- 0.2	0	0.0	0.0
-	others	51,043	2.7	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
	Total	1,905,332	100.0		200		

¹ Due to the special voting system only a mathematically calculated, rather than 'real' number of voters can be given. This total is slightly higher than the valid votes cast.

² PSU-votes and the PSU-seat in Tessin, formerly counted separately, later went to the Social Democrats. See also note 9.

³ CSP-votes and the CSP-seat in Freiburg are listed separately.

⁴ Formerly named Swiss Motorists' Party (Autopartei).

⁵ Formerly named 'Nationale Aktion' (NA).

⁶ The 'Lega dei Ticinesi' is a right wing, populist party which is active mainly in the Tessin.

⁷ Formerly named Alternative Greens ('Die andere Schweiz'-DACH) and in 1987 'Grünes Bündnis Schweiz' (GBS).

⁸ The EDU is a small right wing party which only exists in the canton of Bern.

⁹ The PSU was created out of the Autonomous Socialist Party (PSA) to unite the different socialist tendencies in the canton of Tessin. They later became part of the Social Democrats. See also note 2.

¹⁰ The CSP organizes the Christian-Social wing of the CVP. Some cantonal parties are members of the national CVP, others (i.e. in Freiburg and Jura) are independent.

Table 2. Elections to the *Ständerat* 1995 (Upper House)

No.	Party	Seats		Change since 1991
		N	%	
	Date of election:	22 October 1995 ¹		
	Total number of seats:	46		
	Electorate:	n.a. ²		
	Total votes cast:	n.a. ²		
4	Radical Democrats/Freisinnig Demokratische Partei (FDP)	17	37.0	- 2.2
1	Christian Democrats/Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei (CVP)	16	34.8	0.0
5	Social Democrats/Sozialdemokratische Partei (SPS)	5	10.9	+ 4.3
6	Swiss People's Party/Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)	5	10.9	+ 2.2
3	Liberal Party/Liberale Partei der Schweiz (LPS)	2	4.3	- 2.2
12	Independents' Party/Landesring der Unabhängigen (LdU)	1	2.2	0.0
23	League of the Tessins/Lega dei Ticinesi	0	0.0	- 2.2

¹ Although in most cantons the elections take place on the same day as the elections to the *Nationalrat*, some of them are held earlier, or, if the seats are not contested, not at all. As the procedure follows the absolute majority rule, a second ballot is possible.

² No figures on the votes cast and the rate of participation are available. The Elections to the *Ständerat* are held according to cantonal rules. In some cantons (OW, NW, AI) the members of the *Ständerat* are still elected in a local gathering.

Table 3. Cabinet composition on 1 January 1995

A. The party composition			
Date of investiture: The Swiss cabinet has no formal investiture.			
No.	Party	Number and percentage of parliamentary seats (<i>Nationalrat</i>)	Number and percentage of cabinet posts
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)	42 (20.5%)	2 (28.6%)
6	Swiss People's Party/Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)	25 (12.5%)	1 (14.3%)

B. Cabinet members on 1 January 1995*

Home Affairs/Inneres: Ruth Dreifuss (1940 female, SPS)

Foreign Affairs/Auswärtiges: Flavio Cotti (1939 male, CVP)

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)

* 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 1995 Kaspar Villiger of the Radical Democrats (FDP) was assigned President and Jean-Pascal Delamuraz of the Radical Democrats (FDP) Vice-President. For 1996 Jean-Pascal Delamuraz is President and Arnold Koller from the Christian Democrats (CVP) is elected Vice-President.

Table 4. Cabinet composition on 1 November 1995

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 posts
4	Radical Democrats/Freisinnig Demokratische Partei (FDP)	45 (22.5%)	2 (28.6%)
1	Christian Democrats/Christlich- demokratische Volkspartei (CVP)	34 (17.0%)	2 (28.6%)
5	Social Democrats/ Sozialdemokratische Partei (SPS)	54 (27.0%)	2 (28.6%)
6	Swiss People's Party/ Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)	29 (14.5%)	1 (14.3%)

B. Cabinet members on 1 November 1995*

Home Affairs/Inneres: Ruth Dreifuss (1940 female, SPS)

Foreign Affairs/Auswärtiges: Flavio Cotti (1939 male, CVP)

Finances/Finanzen: Kaspar Villiger (1941 male, FDP)

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: Moritz Leuenberger (1946 male, SPS)

Army/Militär: Adolf Ogi (1942, male SVP)

* See note Table 3.

Table 5. National referendums and initiatives 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1995

issues	YES (%)	NO (%)	valid votes	total votes	rate of participation
Electorate on 12 March 1995: 4,583,856					
Electorate on 25 June 1995: 4,591,795					
12 March 1995					
Constitutional article on agriculture (Counter-proposal to the popular initiative 'For an environment-friendly and competitive agricultural industry')	49.1	50.9	1,702,322	1,738,895	37.9
Modification of the federal decision on the dairy industry	36.5	63.5	1,699,352	1,738,955	37.9
Modification of the federal law on agriculture	33.6	66.4	1,696,671	1,738,353	37.9
Federal decision on curbing expenditure	83.4	16.6	1,668,056	1,735,266	37.9
25 June 1995					
Modification of the federal law on old-age and survivors' insurance (the 10th AVS revision)	60.7	39.3	1,828,402	1,856,163	40.4
Popular initiative 'To expand the state old-age and disability pension scheme (AHV/IV)'	27.6	72.4	1,806,568	1,852,720	40.4
Modification of the federal law on acquisition of real estate by persons resident abroad (Lex Friedrich)	46.4	53.6	1,797,375	1,852,627	40.4

Election report/analysis

The *campaign* for the election of the parliament (*National- und Ständerat*) on 22 October 1995 started rather early compared to other years and resulted in unprecedented media coverage of the parties and candidates participating, and of possible issues influencing the voters' decision. Pre-election opinion polls tried to reveal the voters' party preferences and the media attempted to

analyze the parties' success in campaigning. Nevertheless, in the last weeks before the election most political observers seemed rather disappointed with the electoral campaign. In their eyes the campaign lacked a climax and the most important question, Switzerland's attitude towards the European Union, was left aside.

Despite the importance of problems (unemployment, pension scheme issues, European integration) to be solved in the years to come, *voter participation* declined from 46.0 percent in 1991 to an all-time low of 42.2 percent.

The Social Democrats (SPS) were the clear winner of the elections. They were made Switzerland's most popular party with 21.8 percent of votes (up 3.3 percent) and a gain of 12 new seats in the lower house of parliament (*Nationalrat*). The reasons for the extent of this unexpected success included concern for worrying social problems, the clear position of the party in favor of joining the EU, and the help provided by Otto Stich, a SPS-member of the federal government (Federal council) who resigned from the Finance Department just at the right moment (see also **Changes in the cabinet**), giving the party top publicity in the election campaign from the end of August.

The Swiss People's Party (SVP) also increased its share of the votes remarkably. With a gain of 3 percent, they reached a new high of 14.9 percent and are now number three of the parties in government, only 2.9 percent behind the Christian Democrats (CVP). Responsibility for the Swiss People's Party's successful results belonged to the faction which follows National Councilor Christoph Blocher, who stands clearly against political integration in the EU and takes a firm position on other issues, such as drugs. Other SVP-party members, including Federal Councilor Adolf Ogi, did less well.

Although the Radical Democrats (FDP) reached an all-time low with 20.2 percent of votes (down 0.8 percent), they managed to gain one seat. The Christian Democrats (CVP) received the most distressing result of the major parties. With 16.8 percent of the vote, there have never been so few Christian Democrats in the National Council.

Despite losses for both Radical and Christian Democrats, the four parties in government, after a long period of decline, together rather unexpectedly increased their total share of the vote. The smaller opposition parties, especially the Green Party (GPS) and the Freedom Party (FPS, ex Motorists' Party) which were relatively successful in the 1991 elections, lost their attractiveness. Only time will tell whether this is a new trend in Swiss politics, as there are no other signs that the Swiss political system has regained its old stability. For the moment, the traditional parties in government are less challenged than in years before. Among the governmental parties, however, those parties that held relatively clear positions on several issues were the most successful in the elections.

With regard to party strength, the election results for the *Ständerat* (Upper house) reveal a different pattern. In the Nationalrat, seats are allotted to the

cantons according to the size of population, with most using a proportional representation electoral system. For the *Ständerat*, however, every canton holds only two seats and representatives are generally elected in majority rule elections. Thus the smaller Catholic and conservative cantons in the heart of Switzerland have a larger per capita share of the seats and only minor changes in the party composition are the rule. Although the Radical Democrats lost one seat, they remained the strongest party in this house, closely followed by the Christian Democrats, whose number of seats did not change. The Social Democrats gained two seats they lost in 1991 and the Swiss People's Party, with a gain of one seat, has now matched the Social Democrats with five seats. The Liberal Party lost one seat, the Independents' Party managed to hold their seat in the canton of Zürich and the presence of the Lega of the Tessins in the *Ständerat* came to an end after only four years.

Changes in the cabinet

In August 1995 Otto Stich, Finance Minister of the Social Democrats (SPS), announced that he would resign from his post at the end of October. Thus, according to the Constitution, his successor had to be elected during the next parliamentary session, which took place only one month before the general election. The conservative parties accused the Social Democrats of a plot to promote their electoral campaign, which proved to be very successful indeed (see also **Election report/analysis**).

The SPS proposed two candidates to succeed Otto Stich: Moritz Leuenberger from Zürich and Otto Piller from Fribourg. The Zurich Section of the Radical Democrats (FDP) attempted to break the 'magic formula' (since 1959 2 FDP, 2 CVP, 2 SPS and 1 SVP form the Federal Council) and proposed Verena Spörry, a member of the National Council. However, Moritz Leuenberger, minister of justice in the cantonal government of Zurich and former chairman of the special parliamentary committee that investigated the activities of the Swiss Secret Service, was elected. Coming from an urban and intellectual background and living with a woman to whom he is not legally married, he stands for a 'new generation' of Swiss politicians.

Results of national referendums and initiatives

Referendums and initiatives play an important role in Swiss politics. They are to be found at all political levels (*Bund, Kantone, Gemeinden*). At the national level, a ballot is held two to four times a year, to let the citizens decide on important political issues. In 1995 on two weekends seven issues were put to the vote (see also Table 4).

On March 12 the *Constitutional article on agriculture* (a counter-proposal

to the popular initiative 'For an environment-friendly and competitive agricultural industry'), which was meant to replace the present provisions that have formed the basis of agricultural policy since the Second World War, was rejected by 50.8 percent of voters and by 14 cantons. The article would have inscribed in the Constitution the multi-functional character of agriculture. Also rejected (by almost two voters to one) was the *modification of the 1988 federal decision on the dairy industry* which would have allowed transfer of milk quotas and was fought by the Association for the protection of Small-scale and Medium-scale farmers. And with nearly the same result, the *modification of the federal law on agriculture* was finally rejected. It aimed to make solidarity contributions to farmers compulsory, in order to adapt production to market requirements. The triple 'No' to the agricultural policy proposals was seen as a shot across the bows of the agricultural lobby. The Swiss seem to have had enough of their over-protected and highly subsidized agriculture. They want farmers to be more respectful of nature, and they prefer small family enterprises producing healthier food at lower costs for the taxpayers and consumers.

In contrast to the three rejected agricultural proposals, there was an enthusiastic welcome for the *constitutional article putting a brake on expenditure* by 83 percent of voters. In the future a majority of members of both houses of parliament and no longer a majority of those present will be required for one-off expenditure of more than Sfr. 20 million or recurrent expenditure of more than Sfr. 2 million.

Three voters in five accepted on June 25 the *10th revision of the old-age and survivors' insurance law (AVS)*. The AVS will see important changes: individual pension rights, splitting of the income of married couples, education allowances, improved pensions for those on low incomes, introduction of a widower's pension. Education allowances in particular are generally seen as an improvement, taking the years a mother or father has spent bringing up their children into account when calculating the pension rights. The price for all this, however, is a rise in the retirement age for women to 64 on January 2005. Popular initiatives have been launched to modify this last element, which was added to the revision during its passage through parliament.

The initiative of the trade union and the Social Democratic Party to extend the state pension scheme (*Popular initiative 'To expand the state old-age and disability pension scheme (AHV/IV)'*) had no chance. It was supported by less than 30 percent of voters. The initiative proposed a flexible retirement after the age of 62 for both women and men.

Finally, with the rejection of the *modification of the federal law on acquisition of real estate by persons resident abroad* by 53.6 percent, the relaxation of the Lex Friedrich, a law restricting property ownership, was turned down. This modification was supported by almost all economic associations and political parties, with the exception of the right-wing Swiss Democrats, which were able to obtain a majority in German-speaking

Switzerland big enough to counteract the vote of Italian and French speakers in favor of the reform. This result not only increased the uneasiness in the French-speaking part of Switzerland about being constantly overruled by the German-speaking majority, but also made negotiations with Brussels more difficult.

Institutional changes

In October, both houses of parliament accepted a series of measures to reform the government and administration. The main goals of the law were to improve the conditions in which the government works and increase the efficiency of political decisions and administrative duties (New Public Management). The first of the two important changes, which gives the Federal Council more responsibility for organizing the administration, met few objections. The second, giving the Federal Council the right to appoint 10 additional secretaries of state to assist federal councilors in their ministerial functions, was successfully fought by a right-wing referendum campaign. The last word now lies with the electorate, who will decide on this proposal in 1996.

In 1995 a large-scale consultation procedure on a new draft of the federal constitution, a birthday present for Switzerland's 150th anniversary in 1998, has also begun. With a few exceptions, the proposed revision is mainly a clearing-up operation, giving the constitution a new form expressed in a modern language. Regarding popular rights, however, the new constitution tends to be, on the one hand, more restrictive, doubling the number of signatures needed for initiatives (from 100,000 to 200,000) and referendums (from 50,000 to 100,000). On the other hand, there are some qualitative improvements in popular rights, like, for example, the optional administrative and financial referendum, which would make it possible to put to the vote certain types of credit allocation, such as those necessary for the purchase of new fighter aircraft or for the construction of nuclear power plants. Everyone has been asked to give her or his opinion on the ideas put forward by the experts.

Issues in national politics

Switzerland's *position in Europe* continues to be a major concern in Swiss politics. Bilateral negotiations with the EU initiated in 1994 could not be successfully completed in 1995. In certain domains — Swiss participation in EU research programs, the partial liberalization of Swiss agriculture, non-discriminatory conditions for public contracts, and the mutual recognition of technical regulations and standards — agreements were ready for signature. Serious differences still remained, however, about the liberalization of

transport by land and air and unrestricted reciprocal access to labor markets.

The *economic situation* and the *precarious state of public finance* also continued to be an important concern. Unemployment figures declined only slightly, from 165,000 at the end of 1994 to 157,000 at the end of 1995 (4.3 percent of the registered work force). Due to the introduction of VAT, the annual inflation rate increased to 1.9 percent, and the GNP expanded by less than 2 percent. At 5,000 million Swiss francs, the federal deficit in 1995 was lower than expected and lower than in the preceding year, and, with the 'constitutional article putting a brake on expenditure' (see **Results of national referendums and initiatives**) accepted by a large majority, a further step was taken to reduce the federal deficit.

In regard to the Swiss economy, the trend to *abolish tight regulative measures* continued. Swiss membership in the WTO was not contested with a referendum. A law against cartel agreements passed and restrictions concerning the domestic market were lifted. Professional qualifications are now to be recognized in all cantons and public contracts have to be open to all firms regardless of the canton in which they are located.

The political agenda in Switzerland is, of course, strongly influenced by referenda and initiatives, and those discussed above also represent important issues in national politics.

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