

SWITZERLAND

Dates of Elections: October 25 and 26, 1975

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the National Council and for 33 of the 44 members of the Council of States on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Swiss Federal Assembly is bicameral, consisting of the National Council (*Nationalrat*) and Council of States (*Ständerat*).

The National Council is composed of 200 members elected for 4 years. The Council of States comprises 44 members, two from each of the Confederation's 19 cantons, and one from each of the six half-cantons. All *Ständerat* members are elected for 4 years except for those from the canton of Glarus, whose term of office is 3 years. *Ständerat* elections generally coincide with those for the *Nationalrat*.

Electoral System

While the electoral laws for the National Council are drawn up on the federal level, those for the Council of States are done so by the cantons.

In elections to the National Council, citizens at least 20 years of age and residing in Switzerland are entitled to vote unless they are insane, have been deprived of their civil rights or (in most cantons) are under guardianship.

Electoral registers are compiled on the constituency level and revised continuously. Voting is compulsory only in a small number of cantons, where those abstaining without a justifiable reason are subject to a small fine.

All qualified electors aged 20 years or more who are laymen may be candidates for the National Council. Membership thereof is incompatible with membership of the Federal Council (Cabinet) or the post of federal judge or official appointed by the Federal Council. Membership of the Council of States is incompatible with that of the Federal Council and the Federal Tribunal. Lists of candidates for the National Council must be supported by 15 electors; candidates are, in practice, nominated by political parties.

For purposes of elections, Switzerland is divided into 25 constituencies — one for each canton and half-canton. The number of seats allotted to each

is based on the constituency's population. Candidates in multi-member constituencies appear on party lists and are elected so as to arrive at proportional representation calculated according to the Hagenbach-Bischoff method, the electoral quota within each constituency being established by dividing the number of seats to be filled, plus one, into the total number of valid votes; every party is given one seat for every completed number of times which this quota is contained in the number of votes cast for it. Each elector can vote for a list as is or modify it by crossing out or repeating names appearing on it; he can moreover split his vote between different party lists (*panachage*) or select names from different lists in forming his own list on a blank ballot paper.

In the five single-member constituencies (two cantons, three half-cantons), National Council members are elected by simple majority vote.

Cantonal law governs election to the Council of States. Members are generally chosen by simple majority vote.

If a seat in the National Council becomes vacant between general elections it is filled by the individual who is "next-in-line" on the list of the party which formerly held the seat, or by means of a by-election in constituencies which elect only one member. By-elections are also generally held to fill vacancies in the Council of States.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The elections were contested by close to 2000 candidates and some 30 political parties and groups, including the four partners — Social Democrats, Radical Democrats, Christian-Democratic People's Party and Swiss People's Party (*Union démocratique du centre*) — in the government coalition which has ruled Switzerland for over 16 years.

The election campaign centred to a great extent on local issues and on the consequences of the country's economic recession, with the Socialists calling for more State intervention to cure problems such as unemployment, and the remaining three "bourgeois" parties of the coalition defending their record and reassuring the people that they would continue to deal adequately with any economic difficulties which might arise.

The polling days were marked by Socialist gains contrasted with losses by the small rightist anti-foreigner groups, and by strong voter abstention, a chronic problem in Switzerland. The Socialists more than recouped their losses in the 1971 elections and, with 55 seats, regained their position of leading party in the National Council. Between them the four moderate government parties obtained 169 seats in the National Council and 42 in the Council of States. Their strengths in the seven-man Cabinet remained unchanged, with all but the Swiss People's Party having two Ministers.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Council

Number of registered voters.	3,548,680
Voters.	1,955,752 (55.11%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	24,355
Valid votes.	1,931,397

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seat
Socialist Party.	247	480,400	24.9	55
Radical-Democratic Party.	284	428,921	22.2	47
Christian-Democratic Party	235	407,288	21.1	46
Swiss People's Party.	198	192,053	9.9	21
Independent Party.	132	117,216	6.1	11
Liberal-Democratic Party	35	47,256	2.4	6
Republican Movement.	92	57,193	3.0	4
Labour Party.	114	45,799	2.4	4
Evangelical Party.	87	37,960	2.0	3
National Campaign.	110	47,796	2.5	2
Others.	413	62,393	3.2	1

2. Distribution of Seats in the Council of States

Political Group	, <
Christian-Democratic Party.1? (=)
Radical-Democratic Party.15 (=)
Socialist Party.5 (+1)
Swiss People's Party.5 (=)
Independent Party.1 (=)
Liberal-Democratic Party.1 (—1)

3. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Professional Category

	National Council	Council of States
Lawyers and notaries.	30	16
Officials and civil servants of can- tonal and communal authorities	29	2
Members of the teaching profession	22	4
Contractors, craftsmen, industri- alists, tradesmen.	21	7
Businessmen.	18	1
Members of the cantonal govern- ments.	18	8
Farmers.	11	3
Journalists.	13	1
Engineers and architects.	12	1
Clerical staff and manual workers	10	—
Members of the medical profession and pharmacists.	7	1
Others.	4	—
	200	44

4. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

	National Council	Council of States
Men.	186	44
Women.	14	—
	"200"	~TT

Switzerland

*Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Age Group*

	National Council	Council of States
30-39 years	14	1
40-49. . .	51	it
50-59. . .	82	21
60-69. . .	50	12
70 and over	3	1
	<hr/> 200	<hr/> 44