

SWITZERLAND

Dates of Elections: 18 October 1987

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in the National Council and for 37 of the 46 seats of the Council of States on the normal expiry of the members' term.

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 46 members, two from each of the Confederation's 20 cantons and one from each of the 6 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 drafted 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 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 26 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.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The 1987 electoral campaign was marked by different themes in different parts of the country. Environmental protection dominated the discussions in German-speaking Switzerland, while relations with the European Community was the main feature in French-speaking Switzerland. Social policy, taxation and employment were other issues debated. Candidates numbered over 2,400 (including an unprecedented number of women) for the National Council and 87 for the Council of States. Some 50 incumbents of the National Council did not seek re-election.

Voting day participation was the lowest registered since 1919 (46.5%).

The results revealed stability for the bourgeois parties (Radicals, Christian-Democrats, Swiss People's Party and Liberals) and a considerable decline for the Socialist Party. The principal gains were registered by the ecological parties, which nevertheless did not do as well as variously forecast. Through an effect of polarization, a new motorists' party succeeded in winning two seats.

In the Council of States, the position remained very much as it was before, the Alliance of Independents and Christian-Democrats each gaining one seat at the expense of the Socialists and the Swiss People's Party.

On 9 December 1987, the Federal Assembly (National Council and Council of States) renewed the four-party Government (2 Radicals, 2 Christian-Democrats, 2 Socialists and 1 Swiss People's Party member) which has been in power since 1959.

Switzerland

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	4,215,078	
Voters.	1,958,469	(46.46%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	24,012	
Valid votes.	1,934,457	

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Radical-Democratic Party.	440,384	22.9	51 (-3)
Christian-Democratic People's Party.	378,356	19.7	42 (=)
Social-Democratic Party.	364,182	19.0	42 (-5)
Swiss People's Party.	211,533	11.0	25 (+2)
Ecological Party & allies.	99,396	5.2	9 (+6)
Independent Alliance.	80,099	4.2	9 (+D)
Liberal Party.	51,844	2.7	9 (+D)
Progressive Organizations of Switzerland/Green Alliance.	78,833	4.1	4 (=)
National Action & allies.	57,308	3.0	3 (-D)
Evangelical People's Party.	36,970	1.9	3 (=)
Auto Party.	49,854	2.6	2 (+2)
Labour Party.	15,273	0.8	1 (=)
Others.	55,022	2.9	- < «)

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2. Distribution of Seats in the Council of States

Political Group	Number of Seats
Christian-Democratic People's Party.	19 (+1)
Radical-Democratic Party.	14 (=)
Social-Democratic Party.	5(—1)
Swiss People's Party.	4(—1)
Liberal Party.	3(=)
Independent Alliance.	1(+1)

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3. Distribution of Members of the National Council according to Profession

Members of the teaching profession.	32
Lawyers and notaries.	31
Farmers.	23
Contractors, craftsmen, industrialists, tradesmen	20
Officials and civil servants of cantonal and local	
authorities.	18
Officials of local bodies.	14
Engineers and architects.	11
Economists.	10
Journalists.	10
State Councillors (including former).	6
Doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists.	4
Clerical staff and manual workers.	2
Housewives.	2
Others.	17
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Distribution of Members of the Federal Assembly according to Sex

	National Council	Council of States
Men	172	41
Women	28	5
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5. Distribution of Members of the Federal Assembly according to Age

	National Council	Council of States
Under 30 years	1	
30-39 »	16	2
40-49 »	75	11
50-59 »	74	20
60-69 »	33	13
Over 70 »	1	
	<u>200</u>	<u>46</u>