Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

SWISS CONFEDERATION

FEDERAL ELECTIONS
21 October 2007

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

19-22 June 2007

Warsaw
20 July 2007

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I. INTRODUCTION

In response to an invitation from the President of the Swiss Confederation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to observe the federal elections scheduled for 21 October 2007, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to Switzerland from 19 to 22 June 2007. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM comprised Nicolas Kaczorowski, Deputy Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Department, Vadim Zhdanovich, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Election Adviser and Nicola Schmidt, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the NAM was to assess the conditions and preparations for the forthcoming federal elections, and advise on modalities for a possible election observation activity with regard to these elections.

The NAM held meetings in Bern with representatives of the federal administration, members of the Federal Assembly, political parties and representatives of the media and civil society. In addition, the NAM was able to visit the cantons of Fribourg and Geneva to gain some knowledge of cantonal election procedures as all cantons have their own laws and regulations for elections.

The OSCE/ODIHR is grateful to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for its assistance and co-operation in organizing the NAM. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank the Federal Chancellery, as well as representatives of other Federal and Cantonal institutions, political parties, media and civil society, who took the time to meet the NAM.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elections to the federal bicameral parliament are scheduled in Switzerland for 21 October 2007. Swiss voters in the 26 cantons – each of which is one constituency – are expected to elect 200 members of the National Council and the majority of the 46 members of the Council of States. Members of the National Council are elected through a proportional system and most members of the Council of States through a majority system. While the organization of the elections to the National Council is the joint responsibility of the cantons and the Confederation, the elections to the Council of States are within the sole competency of the cantons.

Switzerland is a confederation consisting of 26 cantons which enjoy wide-ranging autonomy. It is a parliamentary democracy with a long-standing tradition of direct

democracy. Switzerland is a multilingual state with four national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh).

The applicable legislation for the upcoming elections comprises the Constitution, Federal Act on Political Rights, the Federal Decree on Political Rights, the Radio and Television Law and cantonal legislation. Details related to the organization of elections are regulated on cantonal level. There is no specific media legislation related to elections, either on federal or on cantonal level.

Election observers are not foreseen in the federal legislation. While federal legislation is not in line with OSCE commitments in this regard, legislation and practices vary from canton to canton; some cantons permit observation of the voting and counting process, but not always for the tabulation process. However, an OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity was welcomed by all NAM interlocutors.

Switzerland has a long-standing tradition of direct democracy which has been institutionalized since 1848. Swiss voters are often called upon to take part in national or cantonal referenda on specific issues. All interlocutors met by the NAM expressed a high level of confidence in the election system and process, and in the integrity and impartiality of the election administration. The Swiss election system is based on the principles of honesty, trust, ethical behaviour and self-regulation. Similarly, interlocutors were satisfied with existing provisions for elections, including provisions for and practice of media coverage.

Eighty per cent of Swiss citizens vote by post, in some cantons and urban areas even more than 90 per cent. Electronic voting has been tested in the cantons of Geneva, Neuchatel and Zurich, but will not be used for the upcoming federal elections. There has been a trend towards lesser voter participation in elections, which causes some concern among interlocutors. Participation in the last parliamentary elections in 2003 was around 45 per cent.

Political parties do not receive funding from the federal State for their activities or campaign expenses, but some cantons provide reimbursement of campaign expenses. There are neither regulations for party or campaign finances, nor financial disclosure requirements.

The media landscape is pluralistic with many public and private media outlets. There is no specific federal or cantonal regulation on media coverage of election campaigns. The Radio and Television Law does not, however, allow political advertisements in electronic media. Coverage of the election campaign is informally regulated with the possibility of lodging complaints with media supervisory councils.

Women were only granted the right to vote in federal elections in 1971, and remain under-represented in parliament and government. Official quota regulations for inclusion of women on election lists do not exist, but some parties introduced their own quota systems or have specific womens' lists.

The NAM recognizes the high level of public confidence as expressed by all those it met. At the same time, as part of an effort by the OSCE/ODIHR to follow electoral

processes in a broader range of participating States, the OSCE/ODIHR recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission (EAM). Since the administration of elections is decentralized, it would be of particular interest for an EAM to follow the conduct of elections at the cantonal level. The EAM would also plan to follow specific issues identified during the NAM, such as the media coverage of the elections and the use of postal voting during these elections.

III.   BACKGROUND

Switzerland is a parliamentary democracy with a long-standing tradition of direct democracy. Federalism, neutrality and direct democracy are the main constituents of the Swiss political culture. Its political structure reflects a complex system of cantonal authority, linguistic diversity and people's sovereignty. Switzerland is a federal state with three political levels: the federal level, the 26 cantons and 2,721 communes. The cantons enjoy wide-ranging autonomy and independence from the federal government, and have their own constitution, laws, parliament, and courts. For federal elections, each canton forms a constituency.

The Swiss system of direct democracy has been institutionalized for the past 150 years. Every Swiss citizen over 18 has the right to vote in elections and popular ballots. Swiss citizens have the right to launch popular initiatives in order to put their own proposal on the political agenda and initiate a referendum on it. They can request a revision to the Constitution, to adopt a new law, and repeal or amend an existing law. Referenda can be mandatory or optional depending on the issues put to the popular vote. A referendum is mandatory for constitutional revision or for the membership of Switzerland to international organizations; such a referendum requires a double majority from the people and from the cantons. Parliamentary decisions and law amendments can be put to an optional referendum if requested by 50.000 eligible voters. A popular initiative supported by 100.000 eligible voters can propose a change of the federal constitution, which has to be submitted to a popular vote mandatory

Legislative power is exercised by the Swiss parliament, (Bundesversammlung / Assemblée fédérale). The parliament consists of two chambers with equal power: the National Council (Nationalrat / Conseil national) and the Council of States (Ständerat / Conseil des États). Members of parliament carry out their parliamentary duties in addition to their regular occupation at four three-week parliamentary sessions each year. The 200 members of National Council represent the Swiss people, while the 46 members of the Council of States represent the 26 cantons. Twenty cantons are represented by two members, while 6 half-cantons elect one representative each.[1]

Executive power is vested with the Federal Council (Bundesrat / Conseil fédéral). Its seven members are elected by the Federal Assembly (both chambers of parliament) for a four-year term. The government of the day seeks compromise and collegiality involving all major political parties, designed to ensure consensus, continuation and stability. The Federal Council seats are allocated to the strongest parties represented in parliament. The President of the Swiss Confederation is elected for one year, and the presidency rotates annually among the members of the Federal Council. The Federal

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[1]   All traditional half-cantons have resulted from the division of a pre-existing territory or canton.

Council is supported in its work by the Federal Chancellery (Bundeskanzlei / Chancellerie fédérale) and the different Federal Departments.

Switzerland has a multi-party system with long-standing existence of political parties at federal and cantonal level. The political party landscape is characterized by stability and decentralization. Cantonal branches of parties enjoy full autonomy in determining campaign issues and strategies. The following four parties are represented in the government: the Swiss People's Party (SVP)[2] with two members, the Social-Democratic Party (SP)[3] with two members, the Radical Free Democratic Party (FDP)[4] with two members and the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP)[5] with one member. Another 11 parties are represented in the parliament with the Green Party[6] being the strongest of the non-governmental parties.

Members of the Council of States are considered as representatives of the canton rather than of a particular party, even if elected as a party representative.

Switzerland is a multilingual state with four national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh). Some cantons are officially bi- or even trilingual.

IV.   FINDINGS

A.   LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for the upcoming elections comprises the Constitution, the Federal Act on Political Rights of 17 December 1976 (since amended) and the Decree on Political Rights of 24 May 1978 (since amended) as well as the cantonal constitutions, laws and decrees on political rights and elections.

The Federal Act and Decree on Political Rights provide the overall framework for elections to the National Council and referenda, while the cantonal laws and decrees establish the detailed provisions and regulations for the elections, including the election system, election administration, and voting, counting and tabulation procedures. These may differ from canton to canton. Elections to the State Council are only regulated by cantonal legislation.

The Federal Act does not foresee the presence of observers or party/candidate representatives in polling stations or during the count, but in some cantons, parties may nominate members of election commissions. Cantonal regulations may provide for observation of the voting and counting. Cantons are required to publish results of the

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[2]   Schweizerische Volkspartei / L'Union démocratique du centre with 26.7 per cent and 55 seats in the National Council and eight representatives in the Council of States.

[3]   Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz / Le Parti socialiste suisse with 23.3 per cent and 52 seats in the National Council and nine representatives in the Council of States.

[4]   Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei / Le Parti radical-démocratique Suisse with 17.3 per cent and 36 seats in the National Council and 14 representatives in the Council of States.

[5]   Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei / Le Parti démocrate-chrétien Suisse with 14.4 per cent and 28 seats in the National Council and 15 representatives in the Council of States.

[6]   Grüne Partei der Schweiz / Le Parti écologiste Suisse (Les Verts), which appears under different names in different cantons.

elections immediately in the official gazette, at the latest within eight days. Within three days of publication of the results, complaints can be submitted to the cantonal government which has to decide within ten days on the complaint. The decision of the cantonal government can be appealed within three days at the Federal Supreme Court (Tribunal fédéral). The Supreme Court has to decide in a timeframe that allows the newly elected National Council to have its constituting session on the seventh Monday after the election, i.e. for the upcoming elections on Monday, 3 December 2007.

The Federal Act and Decree on Political Rights do not provide for thresholds for political parties or candidates to be elected or for a quota regulation to ensure women's representation. Generally, the Federal Act and Decree leave some important issues unregulated, such as *inter alia* the conduct of the campaign, media coverage and campaign finances.

1.   The Electoral System

The bicameral parliament is elected every four years. Elections to the National Council take place on the third Sunday in October. Generally elections to the Council of States take place at the same time as the elections to the National Council, except in two cantons which elect their state councillors earlier. While the organization of the elections to the National Council is the joint responsibility of the cantons and the Confederation, the elections to the Council of States are within the sole competency of the cantons.

The 200 members of the National Council are elected through a proportional system representing the Swiss people. Cantons with only one member in the National Council have a majority election system. Seats are allocated according to the population of the cantons with each seat representing on average 36,000 citizens. The number of seats per canton varies from 34 for the canton Zürich to one for the canton Uri. The distribution of seats is reconsidered every ten years after a population census.

For the parliamentary elections, parties submit candidate lists to the cantonal chancelleries which, after having approved these, forward the lists to the Federal Chancellery. The Federal Chancellery reviews the lists of all cantons to exclude multiple candidacies and ensure that candidates comply with eligibility criteria.

In order to register, a candidate list must collect a required amount of voter signatures (between 100 and 400 depending on the number of seats to be allocated in the respective canton) unless the list is presented by a party that complies with the following requirements: The party is registered with the Federal Chancellery at the end of the year before the election; it presents no more than one list in the canton; and if it is represented in the National Council by at least one Councillor or with a minimum of three members in each of any three cantonal parliaments.. Voters are not allowed to sign more than one candidate list.

Electoral lists are numbered and given a title by the representatives of the signatories of that list. Then they are numbered by the relevant canton and the Federal Chancellery for easier identification. Parties can also combine their lists or make specific sublists such as women's or youth lists to promote specific candidates. All lists are on cantonal level

and differ from canton to canton. If the same party presents two lists, signatures must be collected for each of the two lists.

The voter can vote by using a pre-printed ballot paper without changing the list of candidates. She/he can also change a pre-printed paper by deleting one or more candidates, adding or replacing candidates with names from other electoral lists from the same constituency (vote splitting or 'Panachage') or entering the name of one candidate twice (accumulation or 'Kumulieren'). The voter can also use a blank ballot paper and complete it her/himself with candidates' names and party reference numbers.

Seats for the National Council are attributed according to the Hagenbach-Bischoff system[7] except for those seats that are distributed according to the majority principle. Votes for parties are counted separately from votes for individual candidates. Seats are allocated using an allocation number which is obtained by dividing the number of valid party votes cast for all lists by the number of mandates to be allocated plus one. On the basis of the number of mandates received by a particular party or list, those candidates from each list that have received the highest number of votes shall be elected.

The 46 members of the Council of States (Ständerat / Conseil des États) are elected through a majoritarian system which is regulated at cantonal level, except in canton Jura which uses a proportional system.

2.   Party Finances and Campaign Expenses

Political parties do not receive funding from the federal State. Some cantons (for example Fribourg) provide for partial reimbursement of campaign expenditures dependent on the percentage of valid votes received. Party and campaign finances are generally not regulated. There is neither a ceiling for campaign expenses nor the requirement for their public disclosure.

Political parties are funded by members' fees, mandatory contributions from national councillors, and members of the Council of States who are members of the party as well as members of the respective cantonal government. Other sources of finances are donations by companies, individuals, interest groups or other organizations. Campaign or political advertisement is not allowed in the electronic media, but in the print media as well as through other means of publicity such as posters, leaflets, meetings, advertisements on other public and private installations, i.e. public transport or promotional films in the cinema. Parties also widely use the internet for promotion of their party platform and candidates. In addition to the federal elections that take place every four years, political parties engage throughout the year in campaigns and information on cantonal elections, referenda, and initiatives.

Representatives of political parties and other interlocutors that the NAM met expressed their satisfaction with the existing system for campaign funding as did other interlocutors, referring to the self-regulatory mechanisms inherent in the political culture of Switzerland. However, some interlocutors raised questions that arise from some party activities such as book launches or proposals for referendums or popular

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[7]   The Hagenbach-Bischoff system is a variant of the D'Hondt method, used for allocating seats in proportional representation.

initiatives that could be seen as being co-ordinated with the election campaign, or meant to raise a party's election profile. Some interlocutors favoured a system allowing for party financing by the State.

B.   ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

1.   Election Administration Structure

The elections to the National Council are administered by a three-tiered structure which involves the Federal Chancellery, the cantonal chancelleries and the communes. Cantonal chancelleries are in charge of organizing the federal elections in each canton. Voting and counting take place at the communal level, while election results for the entire canton are aggregated at the cantonal level. The Federal Chancellery has a coordination role and is responsible for the ensuring that the federal standards are fully respected. It also publishes the final results for the Confederation.

The composition of election boards is regulated at cantonal level and varies from one canton to the other. For the parliamentary elections, non-permanent election boards will generally be formed at cantonal and commune (i.e. polling station) levels. In the canton of Geneva, the Cantonal Election Board is composed of one representative per political party represented in the Parliament of Geneva. In addition, all political parties contesting the federal elections are also represented in the Board. The cantonal board is responsible for controlling the conduct of elections and verifying the results. In Fribourg, for instance, polling station boards are comprised of three to 10 representatives of political parties. The chairperson is elected among its members. In Geneva, board members are drawn for a list of citizens. Multi-party or citizen representation at polling stations boards seem to be common in Switzerland, thus increasing transparency of the voting and counting procedures.

Three to four weeks before the election each registered voter, including Swiss citizens abroad, is sent the voting materials by post including, if applicable, voter card, ballot paper, information material, and return envelope for postal voting. Each voter receives the materials in her/his own language; in the officially bi-lingual cantons such as Fribourg, materials are in both official languages.

Each voter has the option to cast her/his vote by post or in person at the polling station. Postal voting is possible once the voting materials have been received until election day, provided that the materials reach the cantonal chancellery before polls close. Cantons regulate the opening hours of the polling stations. Generally, the polling station is open on election Sunday from 10:00 to 12:00 hours. In addition, according to federal regulations, cantons must ensure that early voting is possible at least during two out of the four days preceding election day. The canton can arrange for a post-box drop-off system for the ballots in the days before election day. Usually this post-box will be at the cantonal chancellery. Security of the ballots received is provided at the cantonal chancellery where materials are sorted according to commune (i.e. polling station), so that ballots can be counted together with those cast in person on election day.

Around 80 per cent of Swiss voters use postal voting to vote. In some cantons, for example in Geneva, and in some urban areas, more than 90 per cent of voters vote by post. The Federal Act on Political Rights, as well as cantonal laws and regulations, provide for secrecy of the vote as a responsibility of each individual voter. Interlocutors acknowledged that this cannot be directly enforced, but referred to the political culture of Switzerland and the ethical stand of the voters which would ensure that secrecy of the vote is guaranteed.

The Federal Act and Decree on Political Rights provide for pilot projects of electronic voting or voting via internet. Electronic voting has been tested in referenda and canton-level elections in three cantons (Geneva, Neuchatel and Zürich). Electronic or internet voting is meant as an additional means of voting and not as a replacement to the traditional means of voting. It will not be offered to the Swiss voters for the upcoming federal elections.

The complex voting system including deletion of candidates, accumulation and "panachage"[8] makes for a complicated counting system. In Geneva, polling station boards sort ballot papers according to unchanged and modified ballots and count the number of votes received by political parties. Each ballot paper is then manually and centrally entered in computers at the Chancellery. Entering each ballot paper into the computer is done twice by different clerks to avoid mistakes and possible manipulations. The counting at the polling station level is open to the public, while the processing of the ballot papers into computers is carried out under the control of political parties represented in the cantonal election board. The counting is computerized, which yields results within approximately 10 to 12 hours for parliamentary elections.

Results should be published in the cantonal official gazette immediately, but at the latest within eight days of the election. The cantonal chancellery also has to communicate the results immediately after their establishment to the Federal Chancellery and inform those elected of their election in writing. After the deadline for complaints has expired, the election protocols have to be forwarded to the Federal Chancellery as well as the ballot papers.

The newly elected National Council, in its constituent sitting on the seventh Monday after the election day, will validate the election through a majority vote of its members.

2.   Voter Registration and Voter Turnout

Every Swiss citizen over 18 years of age who have not been declared incapacitated by a court due to his mental disability and who is registered in a Swiss commune, is eligible to vote.

Switzerland has a passive voter registration system, continuously updated, where voter registers are drawn from the civil registers maintained by the communes or the cantons. The responsibility for compilation and maintenance of the register is regulated by the cantons. Swiss citizens are obliged to register in a commune when moving there and to deregister in the commune where they resided previously. When registered, an eligible

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[8]   Panachage is the ability of the voter to mix candidates from several party lists.

citizen is automatically added to the voter register as is a citizen once she/he turns 18 or if she/he turns 18 on election day. Swiss citizens abroad can register to vote with their embassy or consulate by advising on the municipality that is their commune of origin ('Heimatort') or the municipality where they last resided in Switzerland.

Some 4.8 million citizens, around 60 per cent of the resident population, will be eligible to vote in the 21 October federal elections.

One feature of elections in Switzerland has been the decrease in voter turnout from around 80 per cent in 1919 and 60 to 70 per cent in the 1960s to 45 per cent in 2003. This decrease is viewed as worrisome by many of the NAM interlocutors and is attributed to several factors, including the high number of initiatives, referenda and elections that a Swiss citizen should participate in, the late enfranchisement of women and the perceived lack of executive responsiveness that characterizes the government. Another explanation given was that voters would be able to influence political issues of particular personal interest in initiatives and referenda, and perhaps therefore saw less need to vote in elections.

C.   MEDIA

Switzerland's media landscape is diverse with several public and private television channels and radio stations as well as many newspapers (daily, tabloid and weekly) in the different languages. The public broadcaster, Swiss Broadcasting (SRG SSR idée Suisse), encompasses seven different enterprise units, including Swiss Television (Schweizer Fernsehen – SF) and Swiss Radio (Schweizer Radio DRS – SR DRS). The public broadcaster is independent from the government and political parties, despite its director being nominated by the Federal Council. Its main task as a public service provider is the promotion of Swiss identity with balanced programmes in all linguistic parts of the country through its seven TV channels and 16 radio stations in the four national languages.

Radio and television, as well as regional newspapers, are the main sources of information for Swiss citizens. The internet is slowly becoming a major source of information. Swiss citizens are generally regarded as well informed, also on political issues, due to regular discussions on popular initiatives and referenda.

There is no specific media legislation, either on federal or on cantonal level, related to elections. The Radio and Television Law (Radio- und Televisionsgesetz, RTVG/ Loi sur la radio et la télévision, LRTV) provides guidance to electronic media on media coverage of political events, including elections. No political or party campaign advertisement is allowed in electronic media. There are no specific legal provisions for print media.

Balanced coverage of political parties and the election campaign is ensured through informal agreements and internal guidelines, not necessarily in written format. Candidates can be part of programmes or articles in their capacity as a professional, but neutral coverage has to be ensured. When presenting the viewpoint of one party, other parties should be enabled to react and present their views. All interlocutors referred to this system as well-established and functioning well due to a culture of pluralism and a

tradition of balanced coverage. However, this system could work to the detriment of small parties, as larger parties, especially those represented in the Federal Council, have more media coverage and access to media. Interlocutors also informed the NAM that election related TV programmes tend to favour political parties represented in the Federal Council with the exception of the Green Party.

Electronic media is supervised firstly by the broadcaster's own ombudsperson offices to which complaints can be submitted. If the resolution of the complaint is not satisfactory, an appeal can be lodged with the Independent Radio and Television Appeals Body (Unabhängige Beschwerdeinstanz, UBI / l'Autorité indépendante d'examen des plaintes en matière de radio-télévision, AIEP). Further appeals to UBI decisions can be lodged with the Federal Supreme Court.

In addition to the UBI, complaints can be lodged with the Press Council (Schweizer Presserat / Conseil suisse de la presse). While the UBI only deals with complaints received, the Press Council can also actively investigate issues related to ethics of media and journalistic professionalism, as well as matters of freedom of press and opinion.

These regulatory bodies have little enforcement powers. Their decisions are, however, generally accepted by political contestants and implemented without the need to resort to the judiciary. NAM interlocutors expressed satisfaction with media coverage and the system for media regulation and complaints.

D.   WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Women in Switzerland have only been eligible to vote in federal elections since 1971. Still today, more men than women go to the polls. Fifty-two women were elected as members of the National Council in 2003 (26 per cent) and eleven as representatives of the cantons in the Council of States (24 per cent). The Federal Chancellor, as well as the Federal Commission for Women's Issues, called for more women representatives to be elected at the upcoming elections. There is no legal quota requirement for women's representation, but some parties ensure a quota system on their candidate lists with different percentages, or have introduced sub lists only for women.

V.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A high level of public confidence in the overall integrity of the election process in Switzerland has been noted by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM. At the same time, as part of an effort by the OSCE/ODIHR to follow electoral processes in a broader range of participating States, the OSCE/ODIHR recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission (EAM). Since the administration of elections is decentralized, it would be of particular interest for an EAM to follow the conduct of elections at the cantonal level. The EAM would also plan to follow specific issues identified during the NAM, such as the media coverage of the elections and the use of postal voting during these elections.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF MEETINGS

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs:
Ambassador Christian Meuwly, Head of Political Division I, Political Directorate
Ambassador Denis Feldmeyer, Political Division I
Mr Claude Altermatt, Minister, Head of Section Council of Europe and OSCE, Political Directorate
Ms Sabrina Dallafior, Head OSCE Service, Political Directorate
Ms. Adrienne Schnyder, OSCE Desk Officer, Political Directorate

Federal Chancellery
Dr. Hans-Urs Wili, Head of Political Rights Section
Dr. Oswald Sigg, Spokesperson

National Council
Dr Andreas Gross, National Councillor (SP)
Mr Christian Miesch, National Councillor (SVP)
Dr. Barbara Haering, National Councillor (SP)
Dr. Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold, National Councillor (SP)

Council of States
Dr.Philipp Stähelin, State Councillor (FDP)

Cantonal Chancelleries

Fribourg
Mr Jean-François Romanens, Chef de Secteur "Administration et Droits Politiques"
Mr Nicolas Wolleb, Préposé au Registre Electoral

Geneva
Mr Michel Warynski, Directeur des Systèmes d'information de la Chancellerie
Mr Michel Chevallier, Secrétaire adjoint

Political Parties
Mr Peter Lauener, Chief of Campaign and Communications, Deputy Secretary-General, Social-Democratic Party (SP)
Ms Alexandra Perina-Werz, Spokesperson for, Christian-Democratic People's Party (CVP)
Mr Bernard Favre, General-Secretary, Parti radical genevois, Radical Free-Democratic Party (FDP)

Civil Society
Dr. Hans Hirter, Institute for Political Science, University of Bern
Dr. Regula Zürcher, Institute of Political Science, University of Bern
Ms Georgine Paltzer, Youth Commitment, Initiative for Youth Participation

Media
Mr Rudolf Maeder, Editor, Schweizer Radio DRS
Mr Bernard Wuthrich, Journalist, Le Temps newspaper