



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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E-voting in Switzerland

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Overview and recent developments

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Basic conditions

- **Direct democracy:** referenda take place four times a year
- **Federalist system:**
 - Ground rules laid down by the confederation
 - Cantons regulate the details
 - Confederation specifies when a vote will be held
 - Cantons organize and conduct referenda and elections
- **Postal voting** introduced across the board in CH: Each voter automatically receives postal vote documents and may cast their vote by post without additional requirements
→ Remote voting in CH already the standard



Retrospective view

- 2000 Project start
- 2002 *First Federal Council report* on the opportunities, risks and feasibility of electronic voting
→ Feasibility studies and conducting pilot trials
- 2006 *Second Federal Council report* on the pilot projects
- 2009 Cantons start hosting others
- 2011 Federal elections (E-Voters: Swiss living abroad registered in four cantons)
- 2013 *Third Federal Council report on e-voting*
- 2014 New legal bases for e-voting on federal level



E-voting trials

- Swiss direct democracy (elections and referenda)
- Over 190 trials were conducted on the occasion of 30 federal referenda and elections
- Most recent trial on 28 September 2014 (referendum):
 - 170,000 voters from 12 cantons authorised to vote electronically
 - 26,000 voters cast their votes electronically (= 15.3%)
- Next trial on 30 November 2014 (referendum)



Legal basis – Overview

- Federal Act on Political Rights (Art. 8a)
- Federal Ordinance on Political Rights (Art. 27a–27q)
- Federal Chancellery Ordinance on Electronic Voting (VEleS; since 2014)
- Technical and administrative requirements for electronic vote casting (Annex to VEleS; since 2014)



Federal Ordinance on Political Rights

- Principles for electronic voting (Art. 27*b*)
- Administrative process (Initial licence from the Federal Council and authorisation by the Federal Chancellery)
- Determined steps to introduce e-voting: limitation of the electorate authorised to vote (Art. 27*f*)
- Basis for verifiability (Art. 27*i*)
- Basis of the hosting system (Art. 27*k^{bis}*)
- System and operation audits (Art. 27*l*)
- Transparency (Art. 27*n*)



Federal Chancellery Ordinance on Electronic Voting and its annex

- Concretisation of the Ordinance on Political Rights
- Duty to assess the risks → risks must be considered sufficiently low (Art. 3 VEleS)
- Technical requirements for systems and operations (Art. 2 VEleS and Annex No. 2 and 3)
- *Individual verifiability* as a requirement to authorise up to 50% of the cantonal electorate to vote electronically (Art. 4 VEleS and Annex 4.1 and 4.2)
- *Complete verifiability* as a requirement to authorise the entire cantonal electorate to vote electronically (Art. 5 VEleS and Annex 4.3 and 4.4)
- Necessary audits for each step (Art. 7 VEleS and Annex 5)



Overview of the three systems

- **Geneva System (GE, BE, BS, LU):**
Canton Geneva owns SW and operates the system
- **Consortium System (FR, SO, SH, SG, GR, AG, TG; new members: ZH, GL):**
Canton Zurich owns SW, external company operates the system (UNISYS)
- **Neuchâtel System:**
 - Canton owns SW and operates the system
 - Developer: SCYTL
 - Integral part of the “Guichet Unique” → e-voting as one service among others



Current work

- Modernization of the systems
 - Implementation of individual verifiability in all systems
 - New systems are currently tested
 - First trials with modernized systems are expected to take place on 8 March 2015
- National elections in 2015 for most of the Swiss voters abroad
- Extension to Swiss residents voters in several cantons presumably in 2016



Any questions?

Further information:

www.bk.admin.ch/themen/pore/evoting/07979/index.html?lang=en

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