

# **IRE201: CULTURE, SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES**

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**Fall 2019**

**Session 9: Switzerland**

# Switzerland

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- Facts and Figures
- Political System
- Economy
- Foreign Policy
- Referendums and Initiatives
- Switzerland and the EU





# Facts and Figures

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- **Landlocked** alpine country in Western Europe
- 41,285 square kilometres (9 times smaller than Germany)
- Population of over 8,5 million
- **Religion**
  - Roman Catholic 47.6%
  - Protestant 44.3%
  - other 8.1%





# Facts and Figures

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- Agricultural land 36.9%, settlements and urban areas 6.8%, unproductive land-21.3%
- **Land borders:** Austria, France, Germany & Liechtenstein
- **Bern:** Administrative capital
- **Lausanne:** Judicial center
- Swiss Franc *Schweizerfranken*
  - 1 EURO = 1.10 Francs

## Indices Difference

Consumer Prices in **Zurich** are 181.09% **higher** than in **Brno**  
Consumer Prices Including Rent in **Zurich** are 191.88% **higher** than in **Brno**  
Rent Prices in **Zurich** are 220.18% **higher** than in **Brno**  
Restaurant Prices in **Zurich** are 255.56% **higher** than in **Brno**  
Groceries Prices in **Zurich** are 239.19% **higher** than in **Brno**  
Local Purchasing Power in **Zurich** is 87.45% **higher** than in **Brno**

## Indices Difference

Consumer Prices in **Zurich** are 93.05% **higher** than in **Vienna**  
Consumer Prices Including Rent in **Zurich** are 94.27% **higher** than in **Vienna**  
Rent Prices in **Zurich** are 97.14% **higher** than in **Vienna**  
Restaurant Prices in **Zurich** are 94.17% **higher** than in **Vienna**  
Groceries Prices in **Zurich** are 121.67% **higher** than in **Vienna**  
Local Purchasing Power in **Zurich** is 51.09% **higher** than in **Vienna**



# Facts and Figures

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- Switzerland's cities have emerged as **international centers of industry and commerce**
- Due to its long-lived stability + tradition of **political and military neutrality**, Switzerland (**Geneva**) was selected as headquarters for several governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including many associated with the **UN**
- 1863 => **Red Cross founded** in Switzerland, still has its institutional center in the country





# The Swiss Cantons

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- In **France**, the canton is a **territorial division** rather than a genuine unit of local government
  - A convenient administrative subdivision for purposes of elections, tax collection, and the gendarmerie
- In Switzerland, '**canton**' is the name given to each of the **23 states** comprising the **Swiss Confederation**
- Three **cantons** (Unterwalden, Basel, and Appenzell) are subdivided into demi-cantons (half **cantons**) which function as full **cantons**



# The Swiss Cantons

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- Thus at times we refer to the **26 states/cantons** of Switzerland
- Each **canton** (and half **cantons**) has its own **constitution, legislature, executive and judiciary**





# The Swiss Cantons

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Canton	Capital	Canton	Capital
 Aargau	Aarau	 Nidwalden	Stans
 Appenzell Ausserrhoden	Herisau	 Obwalden	Sarnen
 Appenzell Innerrhoden	Appenzell	 Schaffhausen	Schaffhausen
 Basel-Landschaft	Liestal	 Schwyz	Schwyz
 Basel-Stadt	Basel	 Solothurn	Solothurn
 Bern	Bern	 St. Gallen	Sankt Gallen
 Fribourg	Fribourg	 Thurgau	Frauenfeld
 Genève	Genève	 Ticino	Bellinzona
 Glarus	Glarus	 Uri	Altdorf
 Graubünden	Chur	 Valais/Wallis	Sion
 Jura	Delémont	 Vaud	Lausanne
 Luzern	Luzern	 Zug	Zug
 Neuchâtel	Neuchâtel	 Zürich	Zürich

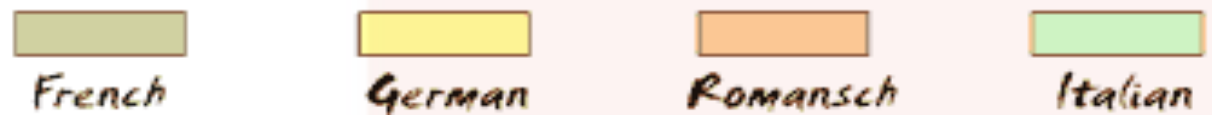




# Linguistic Diversity

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- 4 national languages:
  - Swiss German, French, Italian, Romansh (like Latin)
- 3 official ones: German, French, Italian
- The German language spoken in Germany and Austria isn't the same as "Swiss-German"



Languages Spoken in Switzerland  
(Approximate Boundaries)



# Linguistic Diversity

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English	German	French	Italian	Romansh
Switzerland	Schweiz	Suisse	Svizzera	Svizra
Year	das Jahr	l'année	l'anno	igl onn
Noon	der Mittag	midi	il mezzogiorno	il miezdi
Monday	Montag	Lundi	lunedì	gliendischdis
Breakfast	das Frühstück	le petit déjeuner	la colazione	l'ensolver



# Foreign Trade

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- The Swiss economy is **extremely open** to foreign trade: 118.9% of its GDP (2017)
- The **EU is Switzerland's largest trade partner**, accounting for two-thirds of its total foreign trade
- Switzerland has a **large trade surplus**
- Exports of **goods** and **services** account for nearly **two-thirds** of the country's GDP



# Foreign Trade

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- **Main exports** => Gems (26.2%), pharmaceuticals (24.2%), machinery (8%), clocks and watches (7%)
- **Main imports** => Gems and precious metals (31%), pharmaceuticals (10.7%), machinery and computers (7.2%), and vehicles (5.6%)

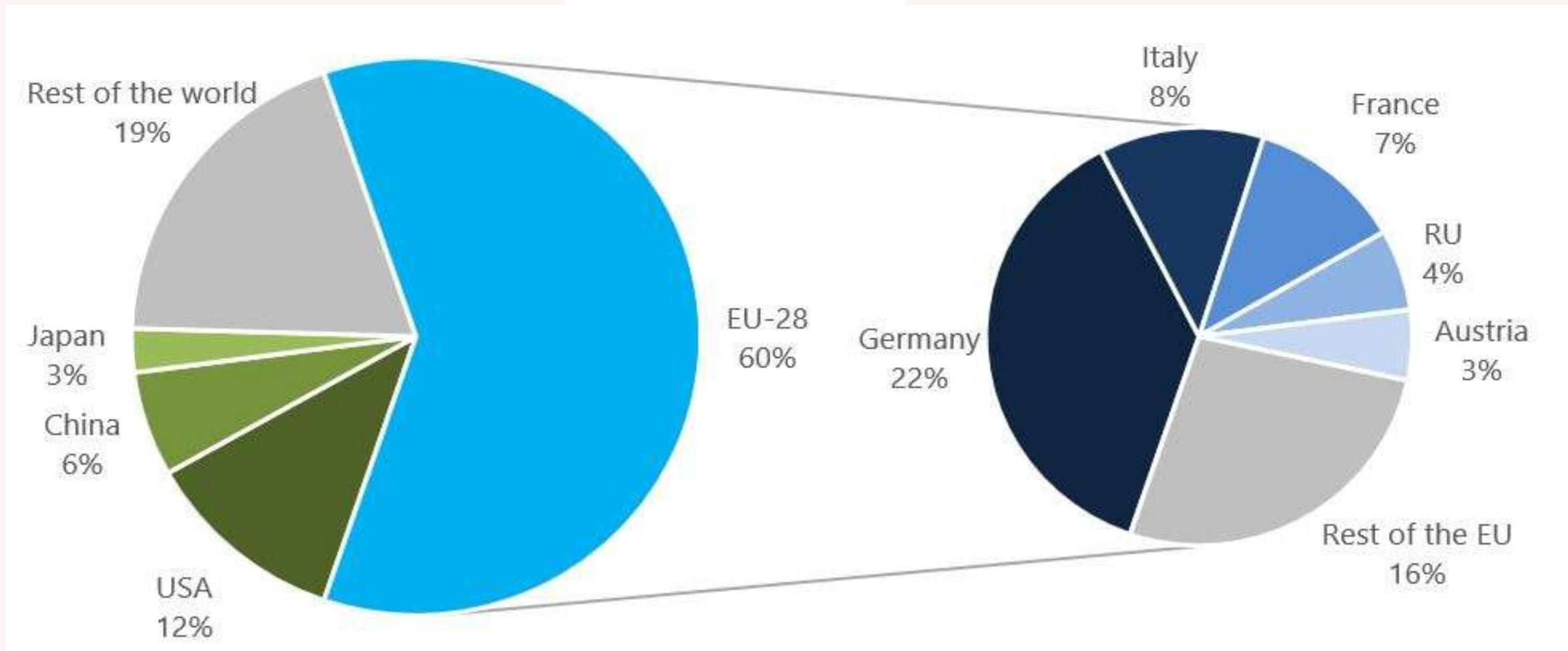




# Foreign Trade

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Switzerland's most important **economic partners** in **2018** by volume of trade

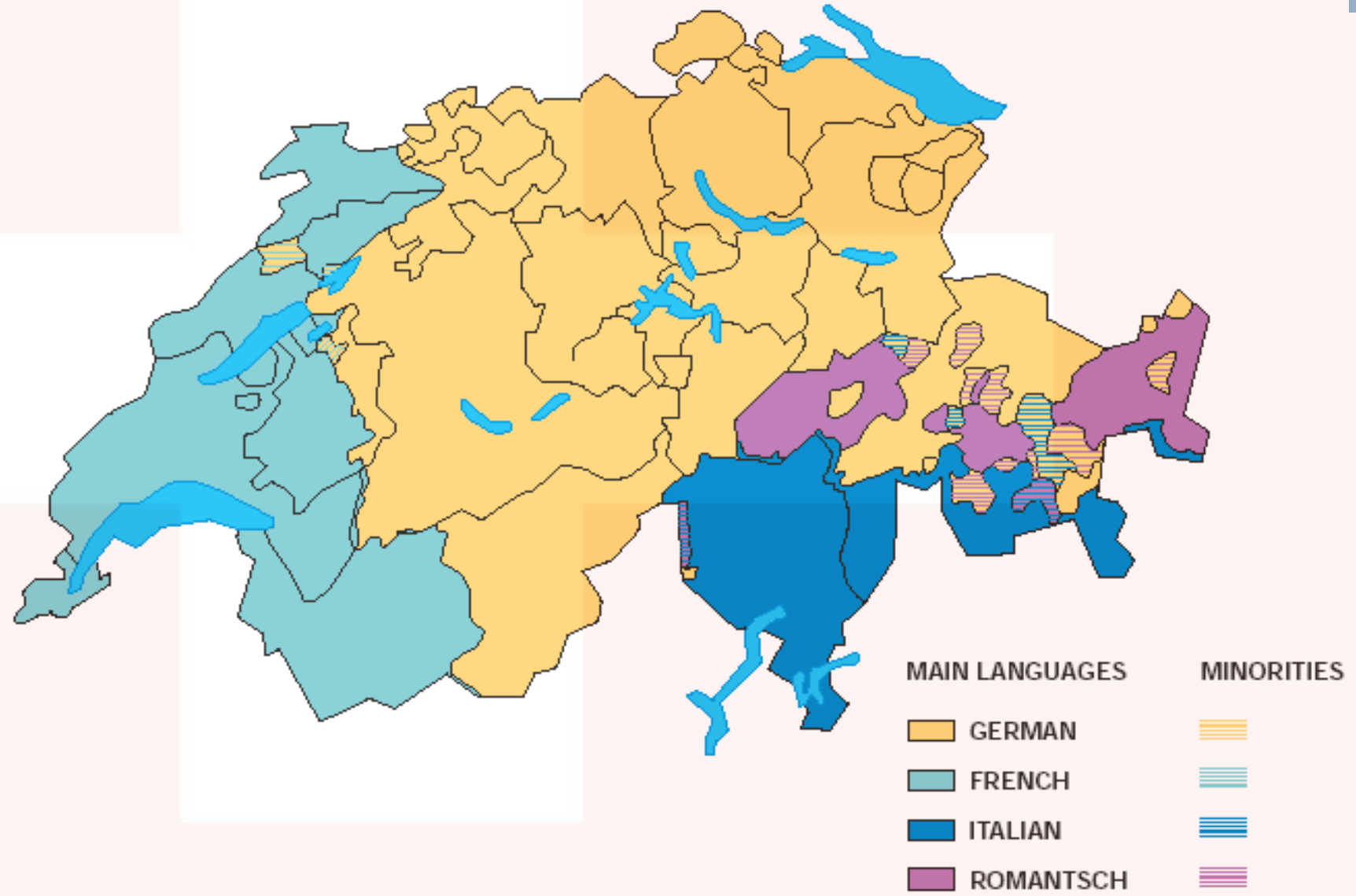




# Multicultural Switzerland

## Territorial Heterogeneity

- The country is divided into 5 zones and 23 cantons
- Linguistic Diversity

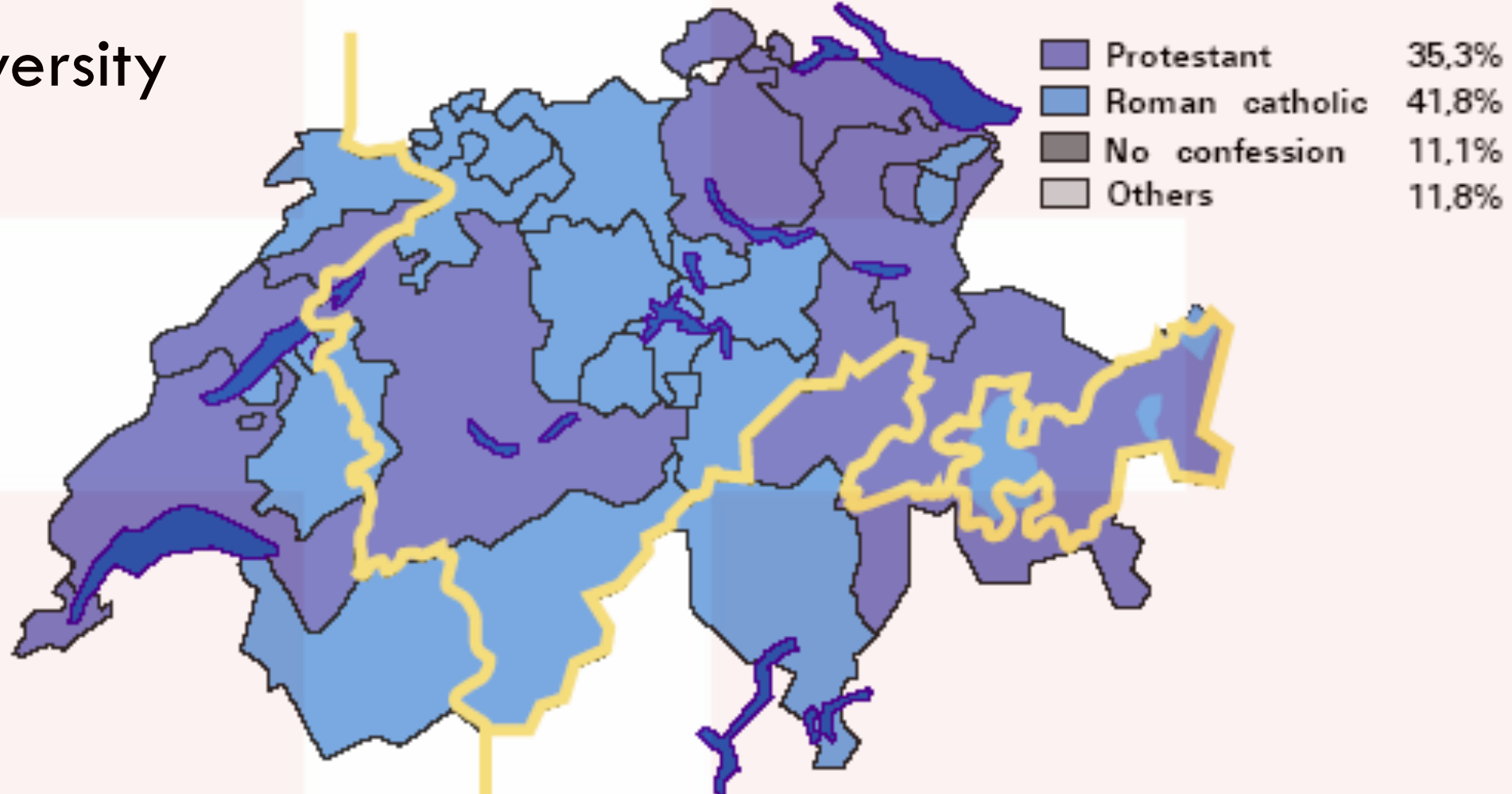
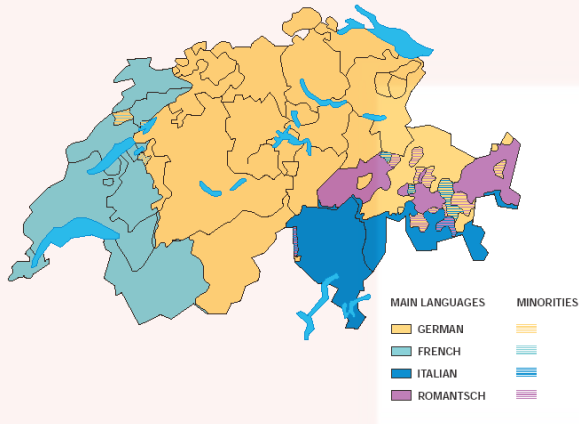




# Multicultural Switzerland

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## Religious Diversity



Religious orders do NOT overlap with linguistic orders

# Facts and Figures

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- The '**capital of direct democracy**'

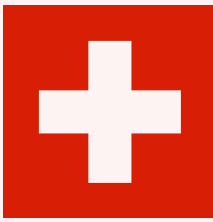
## The Alps

- Greatest **mountain range system** of Europe
- Stretching from Austria in the East to France in the West
  - Swiss Alps are the central portion of the mountain range
- Known for its cheese and chocolates





# Swiss Chocolate – Fun Facts



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- 1697 => Heinrich Escher, mayor of Zurich, was introduced to chocolate in Brussels and brought it home, where it was **discreetly consumed**
- 1722 => The Zurich Council **banned** it (was considered an aphrodisiac thus unfit for virtuous citizens)
- 1792 => The **first chocolate shop** in Switzerland opened in Bern
- **Swiss eat more chocolate than anyone in world**
  - 2018 => av. 19.4 pounds per capita (12.3 kg in 2001)
  - Biggest markets for Swiss chocolate producers: Germany, UK, France, and Italy





# Natural Disasters/Hazards

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25.01.1946, Wallis  
earthquake  $l_0=8$   $M_w=6.1$



2003, Forestfire Loèche, Wallis



23.10.2002 - Randa rockfall, Wallis



Bern 2005



7.02.2003, Snow avalanche,  
Walenstadt, St. Gallen



08.1987, Floods Reuss Valley, Uri



01.06.1994, Landslide Falli Hölli,  
Freiburg



Brienz 2005





# Federalism

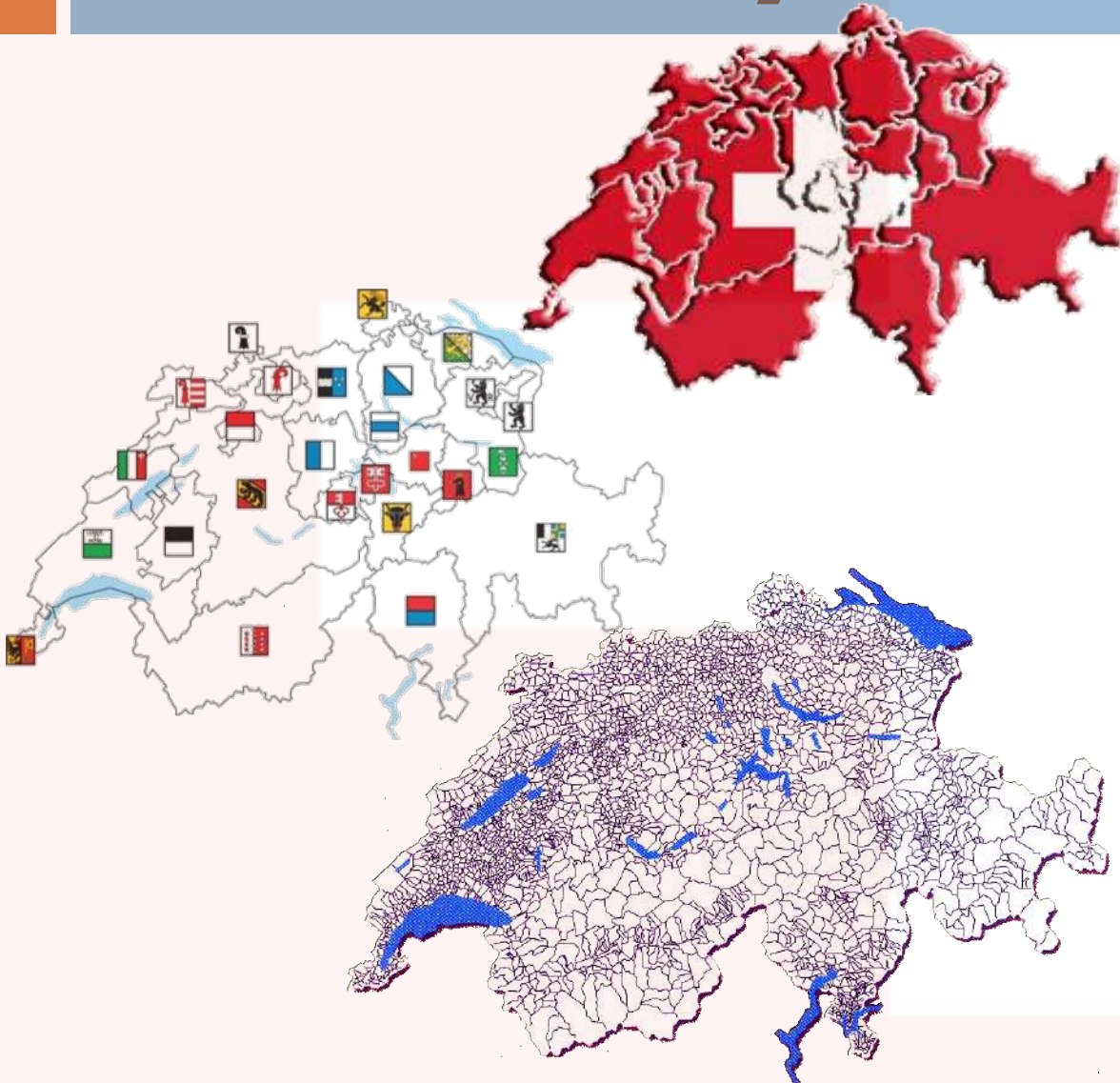
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- **Federalism** gives the Cantons **political autonomy**
- Allowed rural areas, different religious and language groups to **govern themselves** and to **influence federal decision-making**
- Requirement of **majority of Cantons** for constitutional amendments protects small rural (mostly Catholic) Cantons
- However, federalism only protects minorities **representing a political majority** in a sub-national unit



# Political System

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**Federal Government**  
Conceptual work and legislation  
Supervision of implementation

**Cantons (26)**  
Implementation of federal regulations

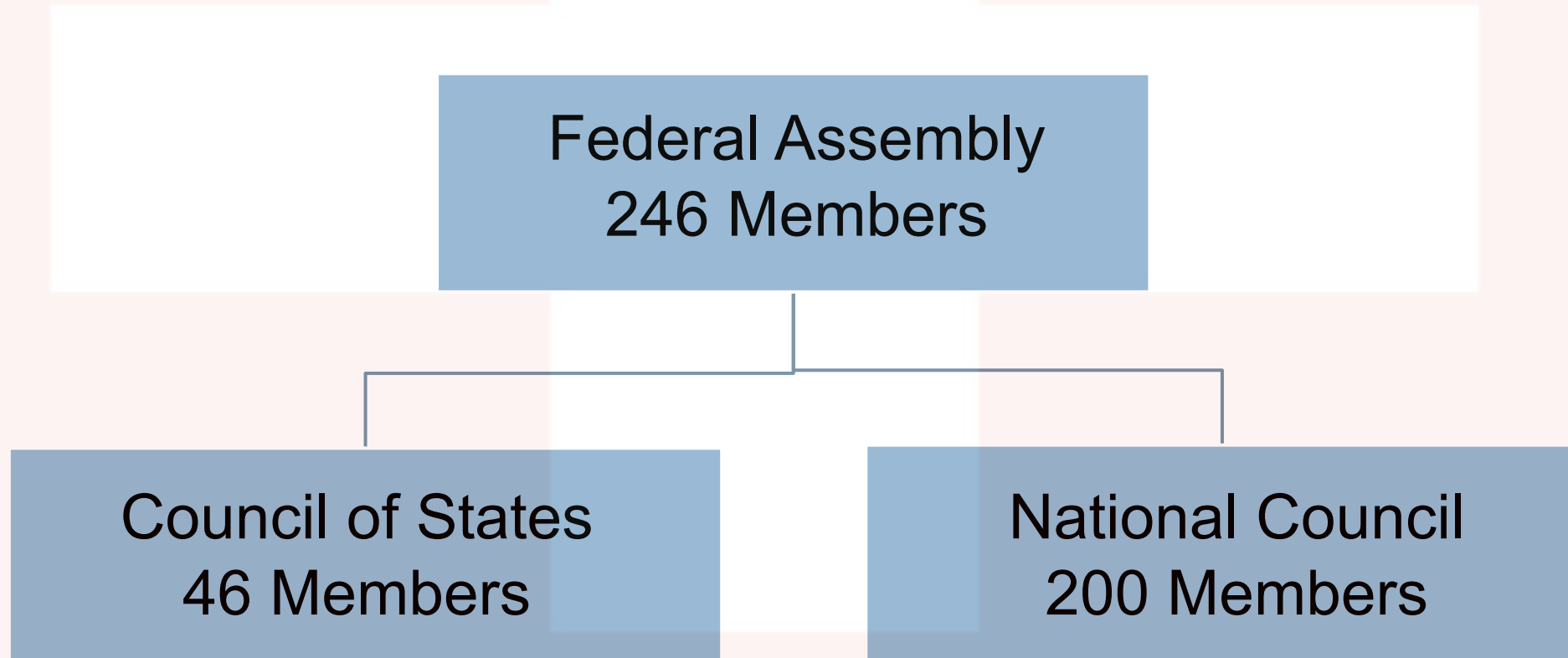
**Municipalities (< 3000)**  
Implementation of federal  
and cantonal regulations



# Political System

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- The **Legislative** (Bicameral parliament)
- The **Executive** (Federal Council, a collegial government)





# Political System

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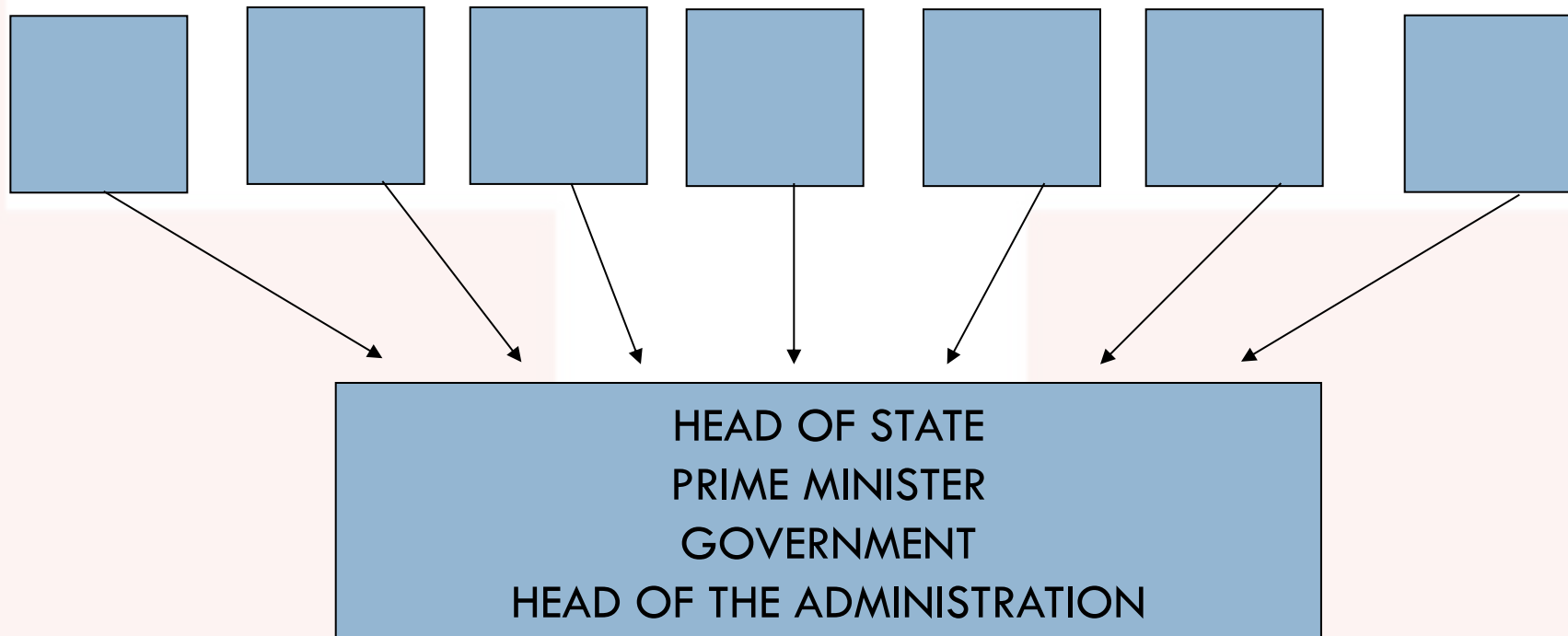
- **National Council** => 200 deputies are elected according to a standardized procedure, each canton representing an electoral district. The largest cantons have many deputies (ZH with 34 and BE with 26), whereas the smallest cantons have only one
- **Council of States** => Over time, there have been changes to how the 46 deputies are elected. Gradually been taken from the cantonal legislatures and given to the people
  - **Popular election:** they are not “real” cantonal representatives
  - Need for greater cantonal representation => 1993: **Conference of Cantonal Governments**



# Political System

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- The Federal Council, the executive => a collegial government of 7 members
  - Derives from the French First Republic, more precisely the “Constitution de l’An III”





# Political System

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- Cantons are not directly represented in the Federal Council
  - ‘The Council represents the geographical and linguistic diversity of the country’
- 1959 => the Federal Assembly opted for a political composition, known as the “**magic formula**”
  - Zaubersformel, formule magique
  - Arithmetic formula for dividing the seven executive seats of the council between the four ruling parties
- Its collegial nature allows minorities to be represented in the highest bodies of the Swiss polity







# Economy

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- About two third of the area of Switzerland is covered with **forests, lakes and mountains**
- Switzerland has **no mineral resources** => must import, process and resell them as products
- **Strong** economy (banking + finance)
  - Ranked as most competitive in the world by the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report



# Economic Sectors

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- 1. Agriculture** => Less than 10% of the population is employed in the sector, strongly supported by the government
  - Production of Swiss farmers does not fulfill the needs of the people, Switzerland must rely on imported goods
- 2. Industry** => About 40% of the population is employed in the industry, trade and handicraft. Significant export market
  - Machine and metal industry, watch industry, textile industry
- 3. Services** => More than 50% of the population is employed in this sector
  - Includes banking, assurances, tourism etc.
  - Banking is one of the most important businesses in Switzerland

# The Swiss Armed Forces



- **Neutrality doesn't mean NO military => Armed neutrality**
  - The Swiss cannot enter military alliances unless they are attacked
  - They must not take sides in international conflicts
  - Cannot give right of transit to foreign forces
- **Conscription => Compulsory enlistment of Swiss men to national service**
- **Ages 20 to 42, soldiers keep their arms at home (automatic rifles/Pistols)**
  - February 2011: the Swiss rejected an initiative aimed at creating a ban on keeping army-issue guns at home central gun registry and a strict licensing system for the use of firearms

# The Swiss Armed Forces

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- **Guns** are part of the **Swiss heritage**, many associate them with historical battles rather than with killings and crime
- Many **cave-like buildings** have been built in mountains to serve military purposes: hold arms, supplies for crisis + fighter planes





# The Political System

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- **Direct democracy**
- The system of **initiative and referendum** is a **modern** form of **popular assembly**, suitable for a large number of people and decisions
- Laws are created in four steps:
  1. **Draft** by the **administration**
  2. **Consultation** of federal **states**, political **parties**, entrepreneurs, unions, other interested groups
  3. **Parliamentary debate** and final version passed
  4. Possibility of a **referendum**

**Referendum** is Latin for 'referral' or 'referring' of a certain matter to the public for their vote



# Referendums

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- Referendums have the effect of **safeguarding** the political process by **blocking/delaying** amendments adopted by parliament/the government
- A referendum is only called if enough **signatures** are collected, unless the legislation involves an **amendment to the constitution initiated by the government**, or a proposal for Switzerland to sign a **major international agreement**





# Referendums & Initiatives

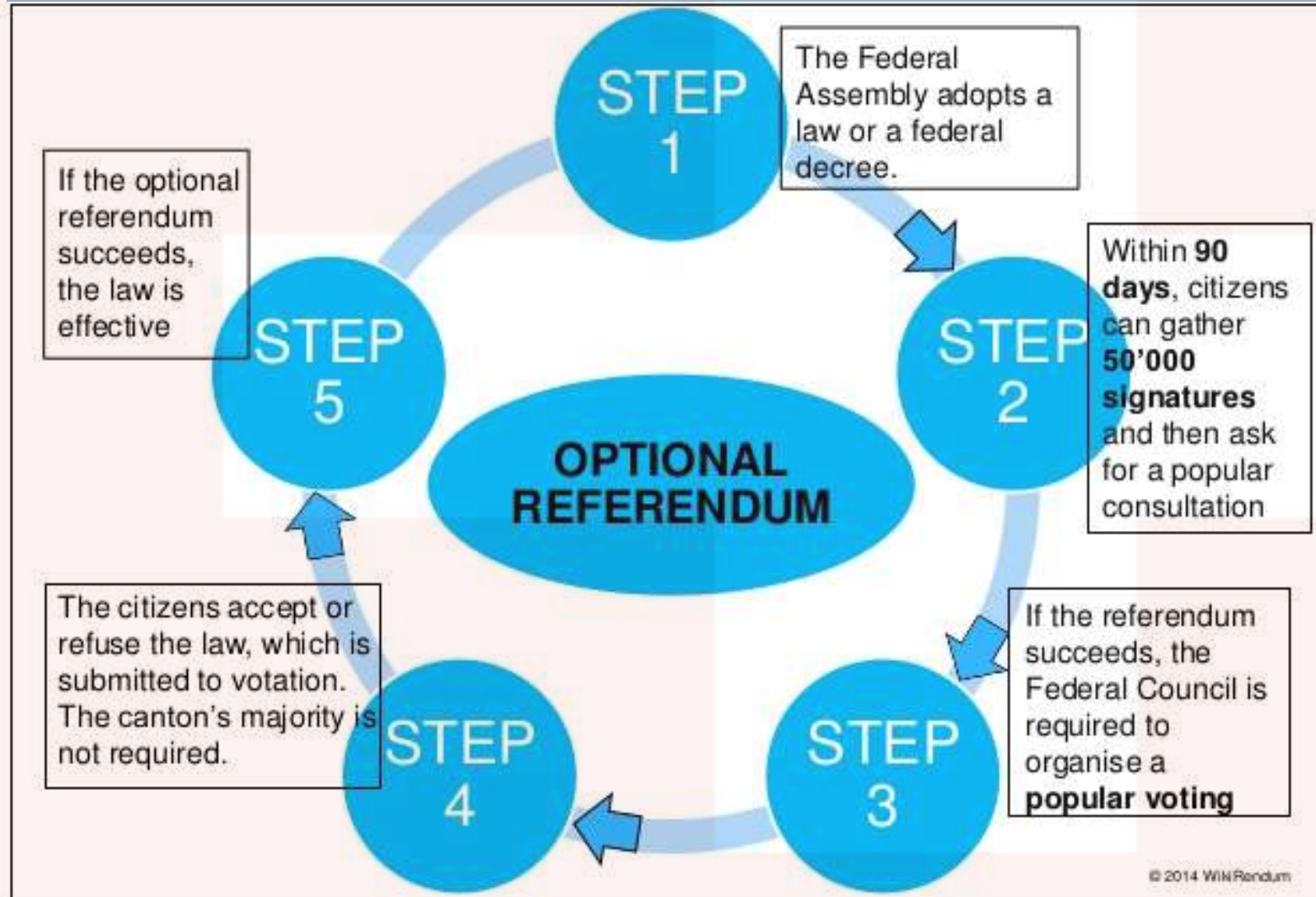
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- Amendments to the **constitution** => Mandatory referendum
  - Require a **double majority**: National popular vote at the polls + win most of the cantons
- Amendments to **legislation** => Optional referendum
  - Can be brought if citizens are able to gather 50,000 signatures within 100 days to contest a new law. The law is then passed or rejected by a simple majority of voters
- Requests to change the **constitution** => Initiative





# Referendums



**Referendum:**  
Maximum amount of time for collecting signatures  
**> 100 days**  
Required number of signatures  
**> 50 000**







# Initiatives

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- Federal popular initiative (*Eidgenössische Volksinitiative, Initiative populaire fédérale*) is an instrument of **direct democracy** in Switzerland
- Allows citizens to propose changes to the **Swiss Federal Constitution**
  - Must be launched by a group of at least seven citizens
  - Require a double majority
- 1893 => First initiative under the current system was accepted

## Initiative:

Maximum time for collecting signatures

> **18 months**

Required number of signatures

> **100 000**



# Initiatives

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- Popular initiatives are often the most controversial, headline-making referendums
- Recent initiatives:
  - A proposal to introduce a universal basic monthly income of around \$2,000 per person (rejected)
  - Cutting military spending (rejected)
  - Limiting the foreign population to 18% (rejected)
  - Banning the production and sale of absinthe (accepted)





# Initiatives Statistics

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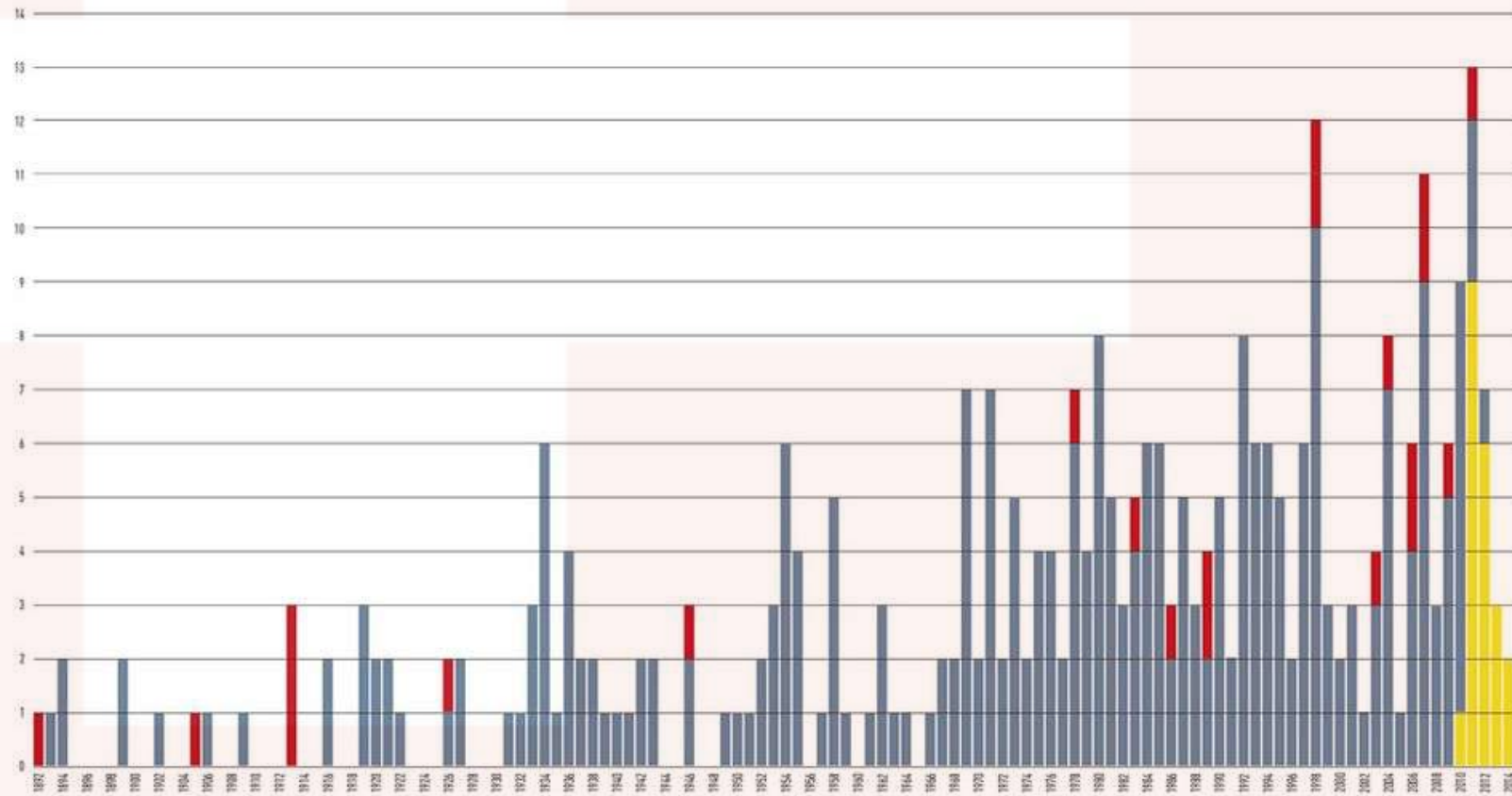
- Initiatives open the political system => Any political group may influence the political agenda
- Most are rejected, BUT
- The concerns they address give rise to broad debate
- Eventually translated (partially) into **new laws**

319 initiatives were submitted between 1892 and 2014

■ Successful submission

■ Unsuccessful, invalid, withdrawn or rejected

■ Accepted at referendum

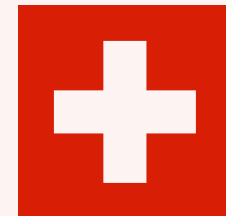




# Important Decision- Foreign Affairs

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- December 6, 1992: Switzerland refuses to join the European Economic Area
  - Citizens yes: 49.7%; Cantons yes: 6 2/2 yes; turnout: 78.7%
- March 3, 2002: Switzerland joins the UN (first vote on March 16, 1986, “no”)
  - Citizens yes: 54.6%; Cantons yes: 11 2/2 yes; turnout: 58.4%

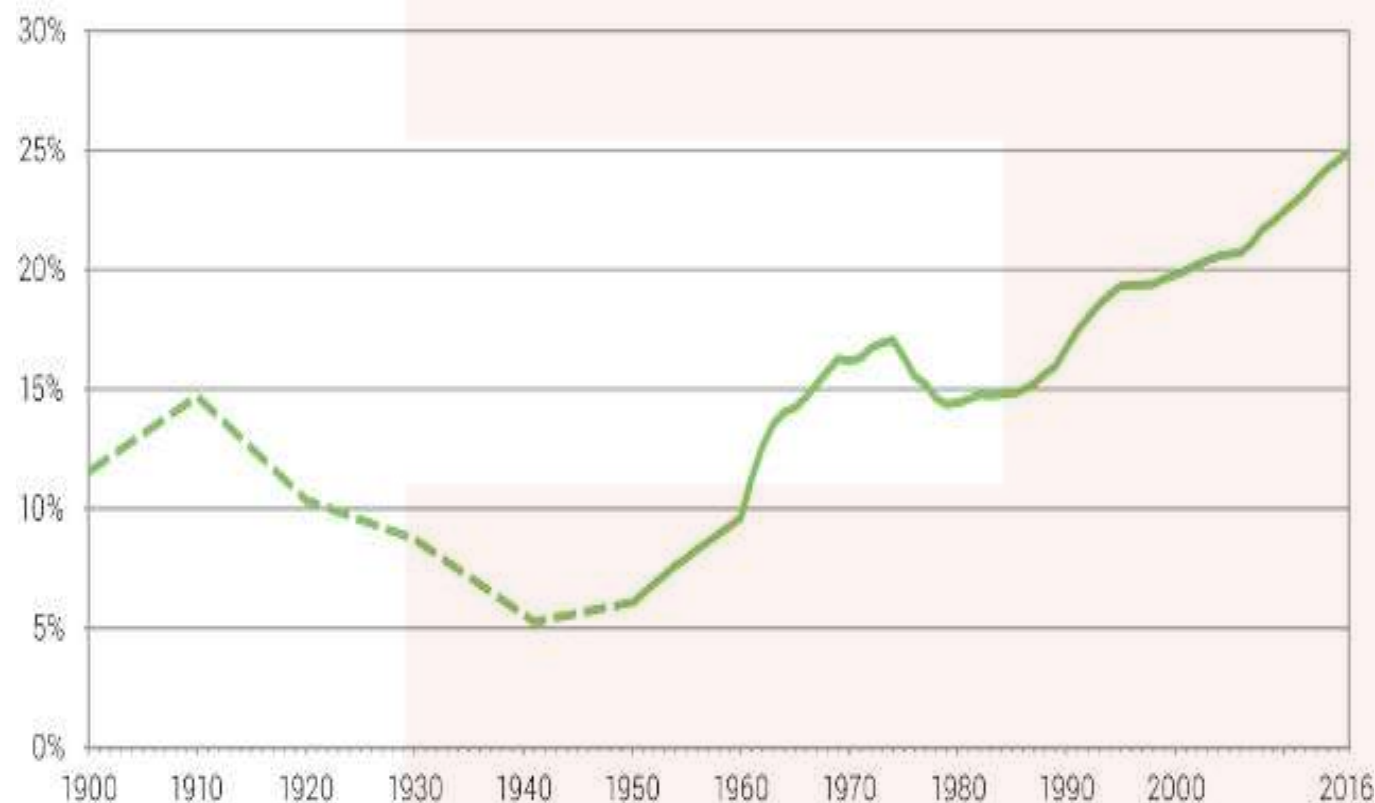


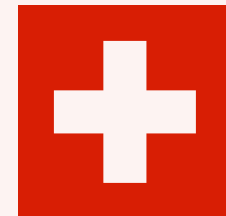
# Cultural Diversity

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- In recent years, the number of foreigners in Switzerland increased at a **faster rate than the number of Swiss natives**
- More than 2.1 million foreigners in Switzerland, **24.9%** of the total population

Part de la population résidante permanente étrangère



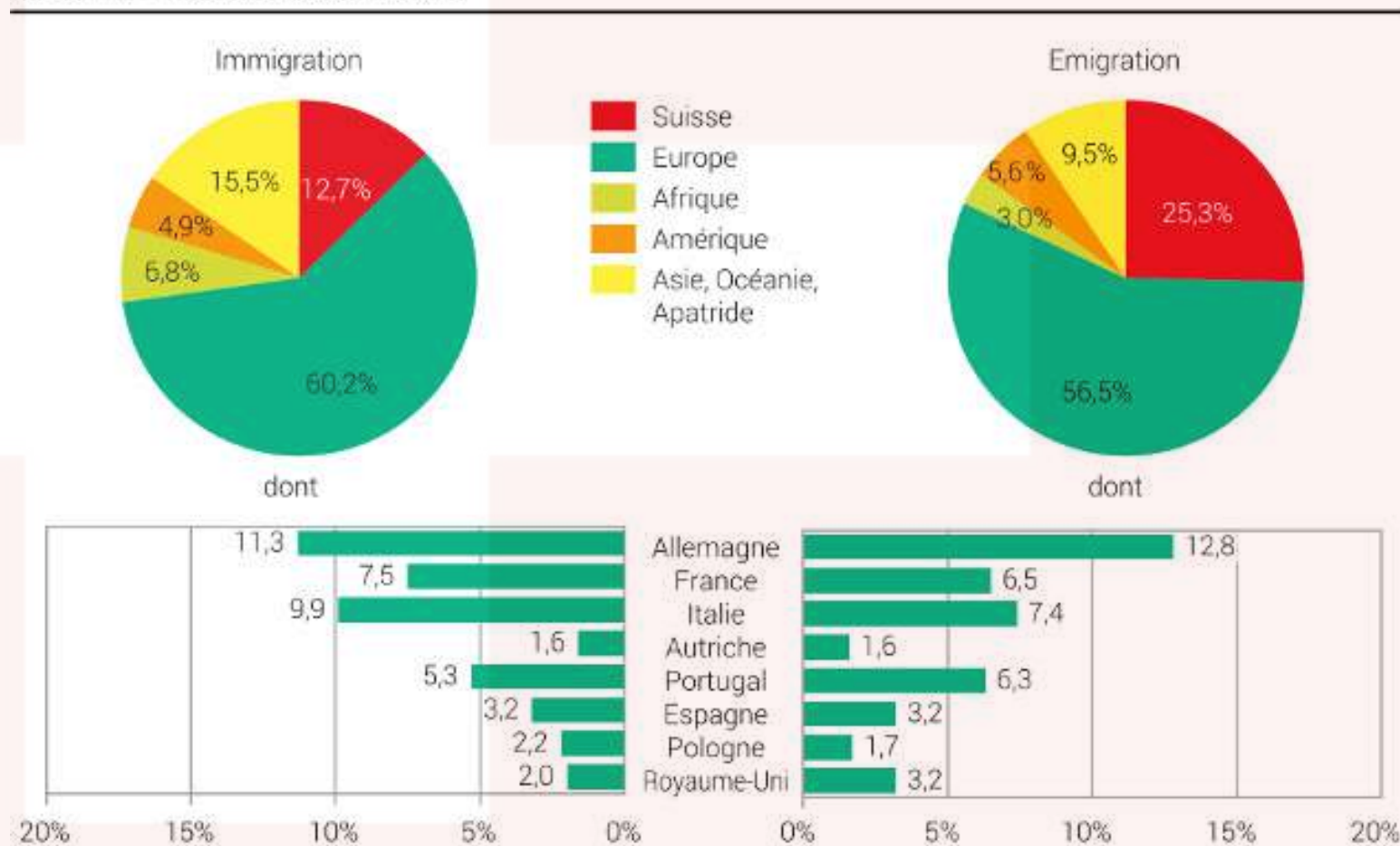


# Cultural Diversity

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- Babies born to foreign citizens in Switzerland do NOT automatically get Swiss citizenship
- Largest **diaspora** within Switzerland => Italians, Germans, Portuguese and French

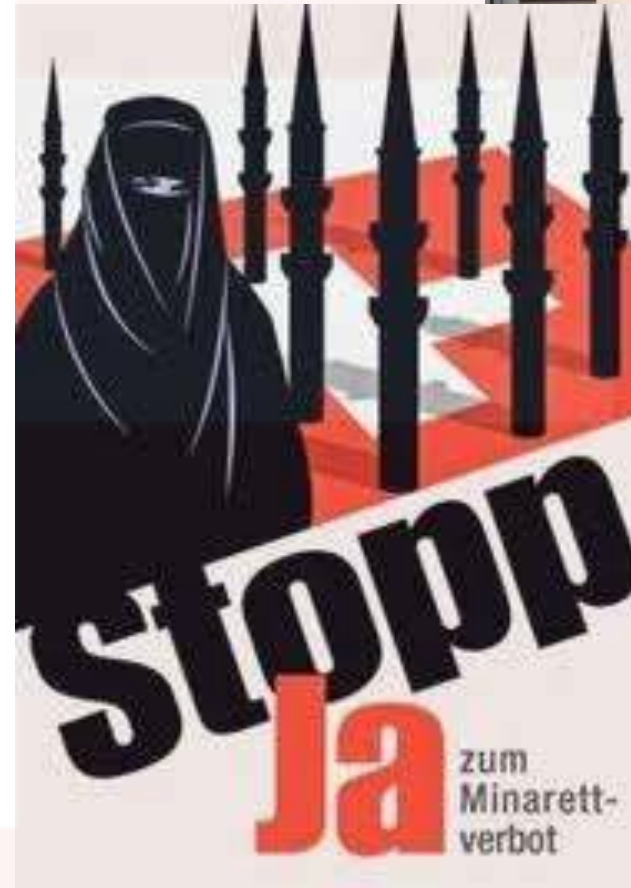
Immigration et émigration selon la nationalité, en 2016



# The Minaret Controversy

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- Construction of minarets in Switzerland has been subject to legal and political controversy during the 2000's
- **November 2009 referendum** => a constitutional amendment **banning** the construction of new minarets was approved by **57.5%**
  - Only 4/26 cantons, mostly in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, opposed the initiative



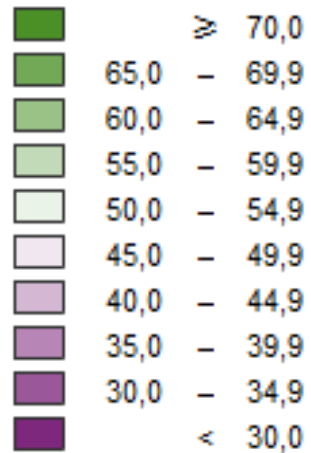
Tall towers that feature on mosques to call the faithful to prayer



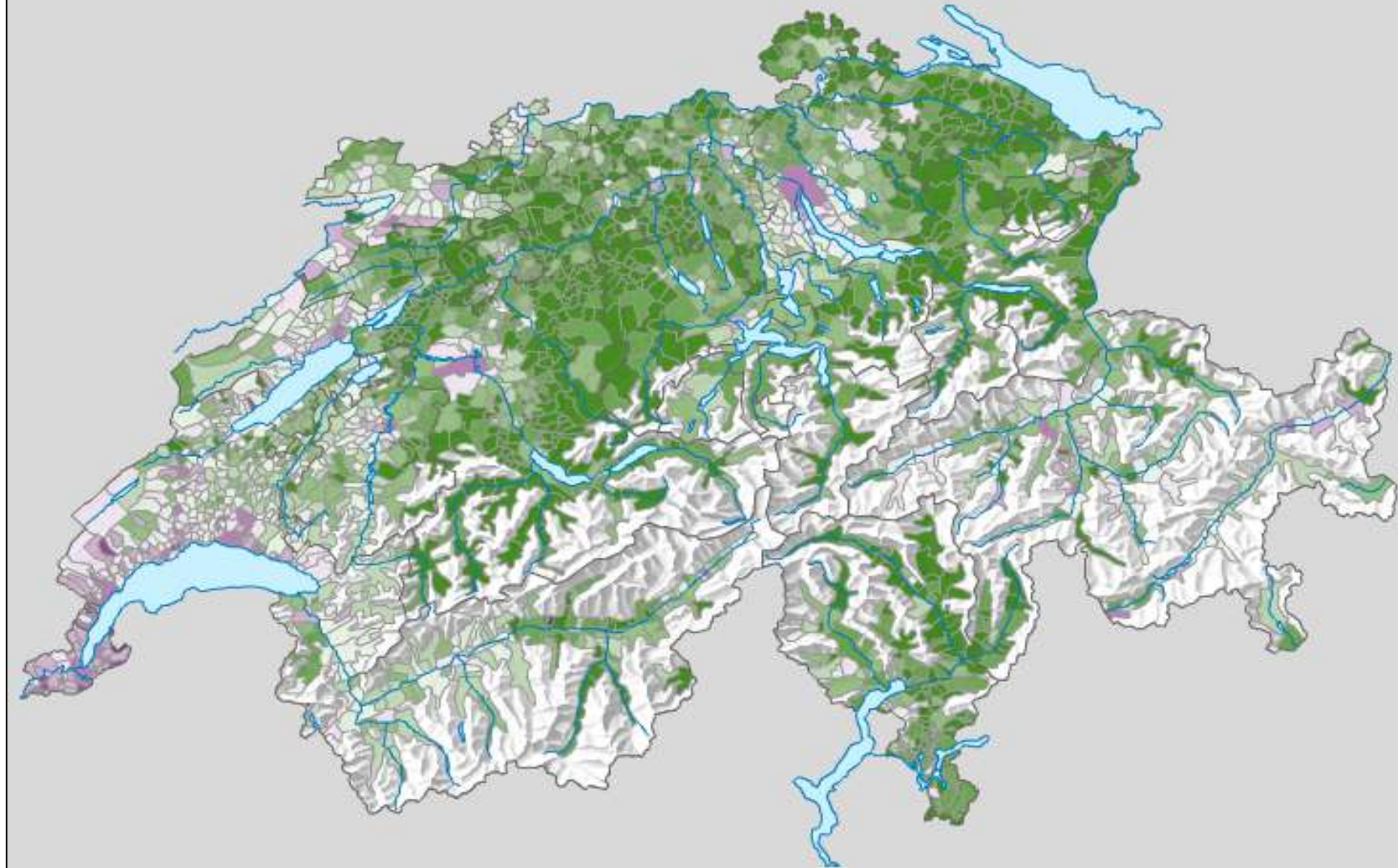
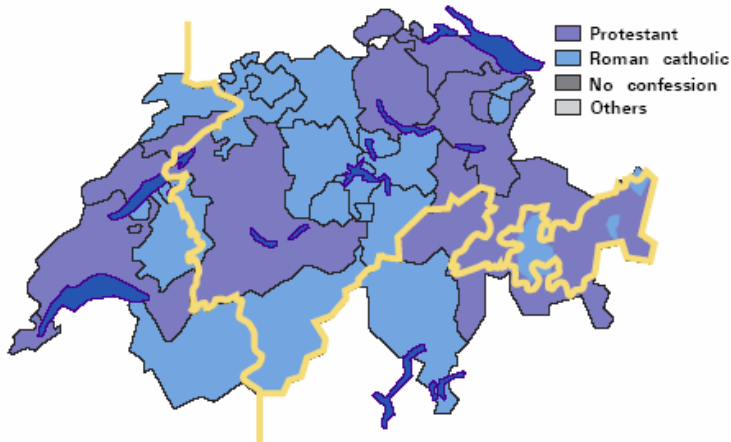
# The Minaret Controversy

Volksinitiative «Gegen den Bau von Minaretten», Abstimmung vom 29.11.2009

Ja-Stimmenanteil, in %



Schweiz: 57,5



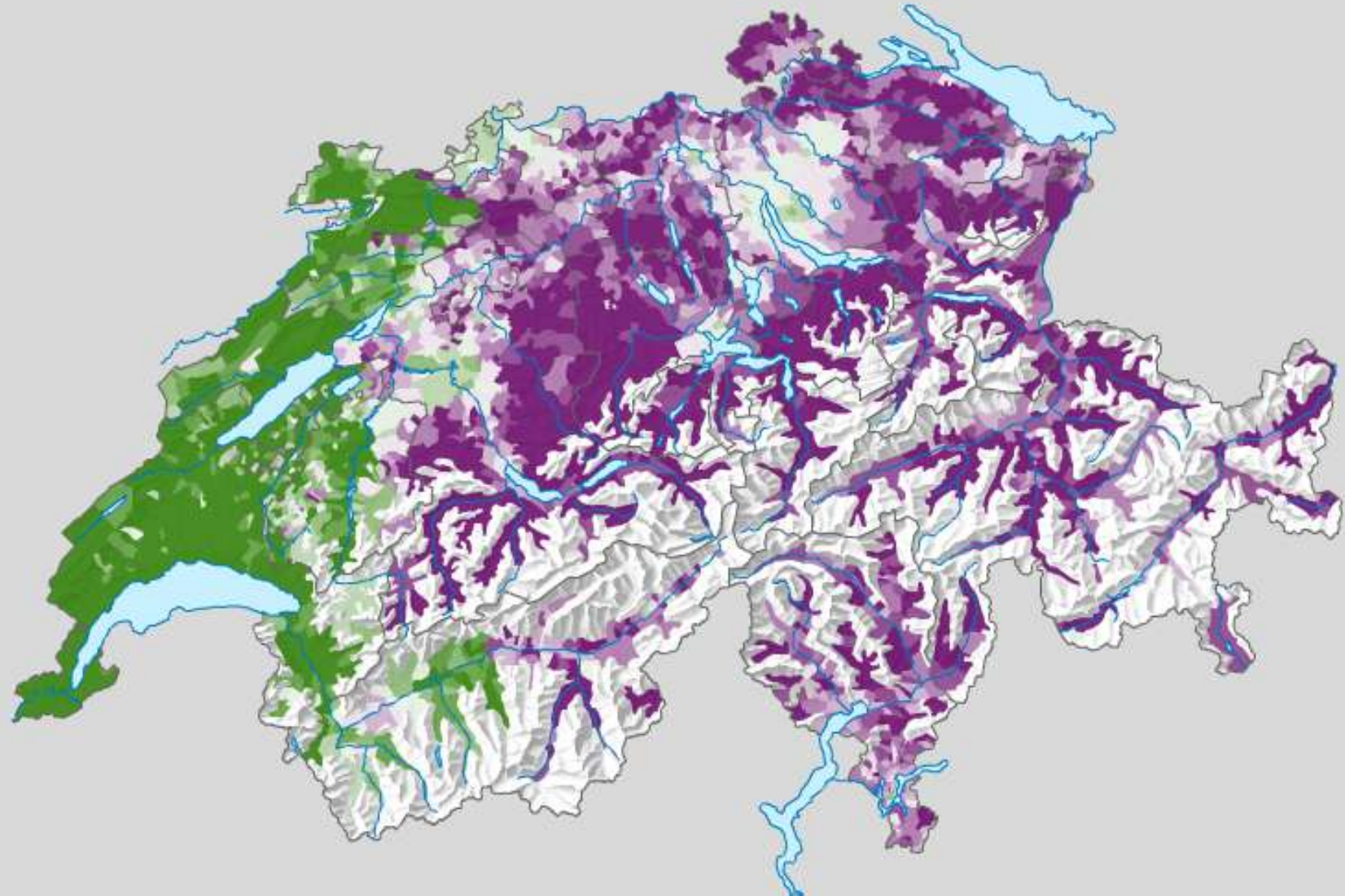
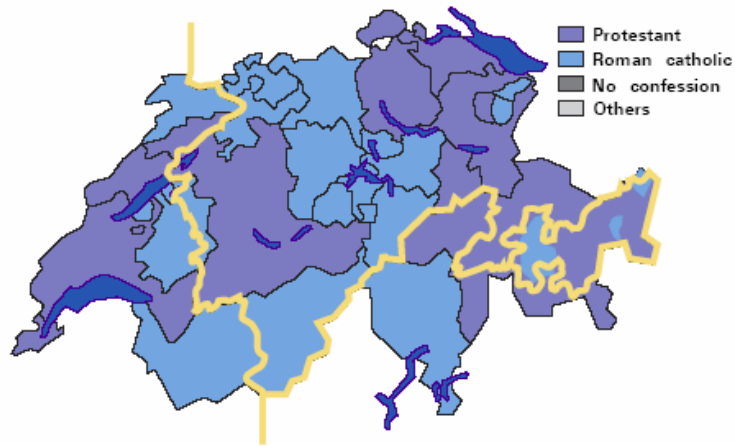
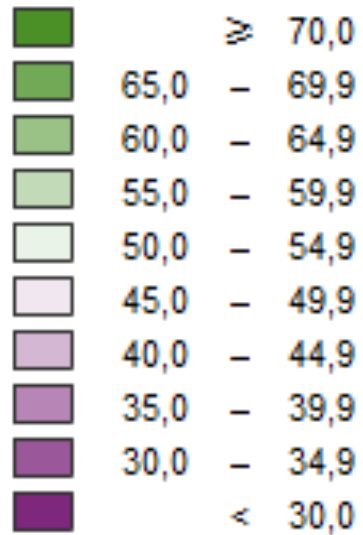


# 1992: Joining the European Economic Area

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Bundesbeschluss über den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum (EWR), Abstimmung vom 06.12.1992

Ja-Stimmenanteil, in %

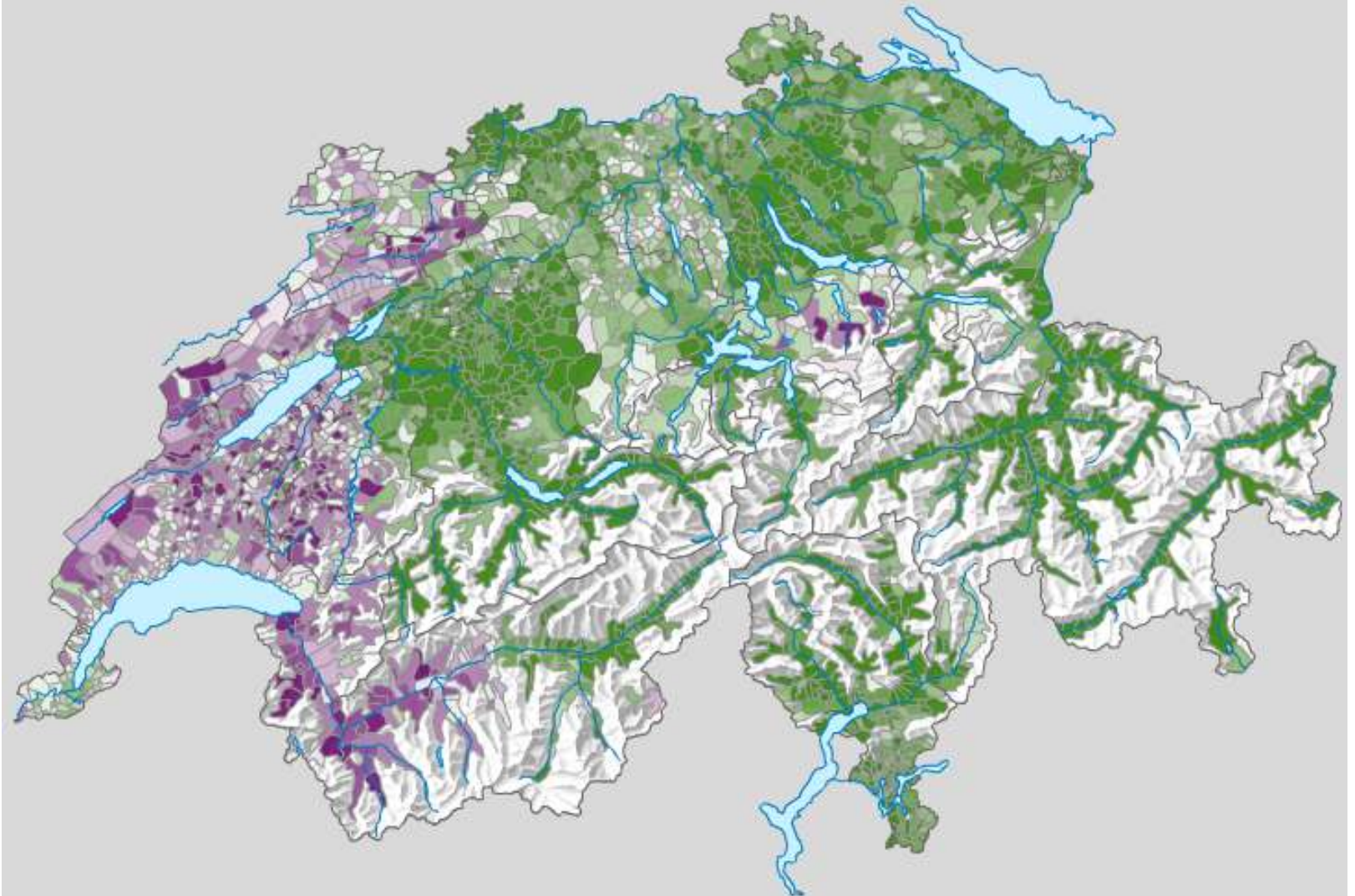
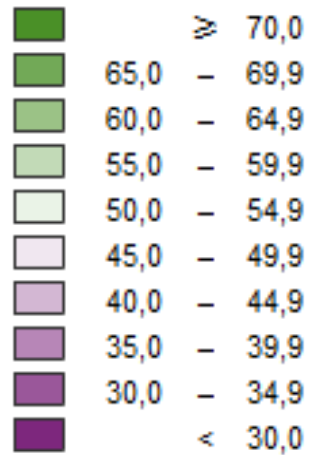


# 1994: Toll Motorway

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Bundesbeschluss über die Weiterführung der Nationalstrassenabgabe, Abstimmung vom 20.02.1994

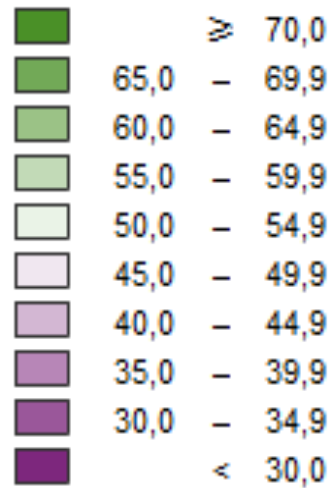
Ja-Stimmenanteil, in %



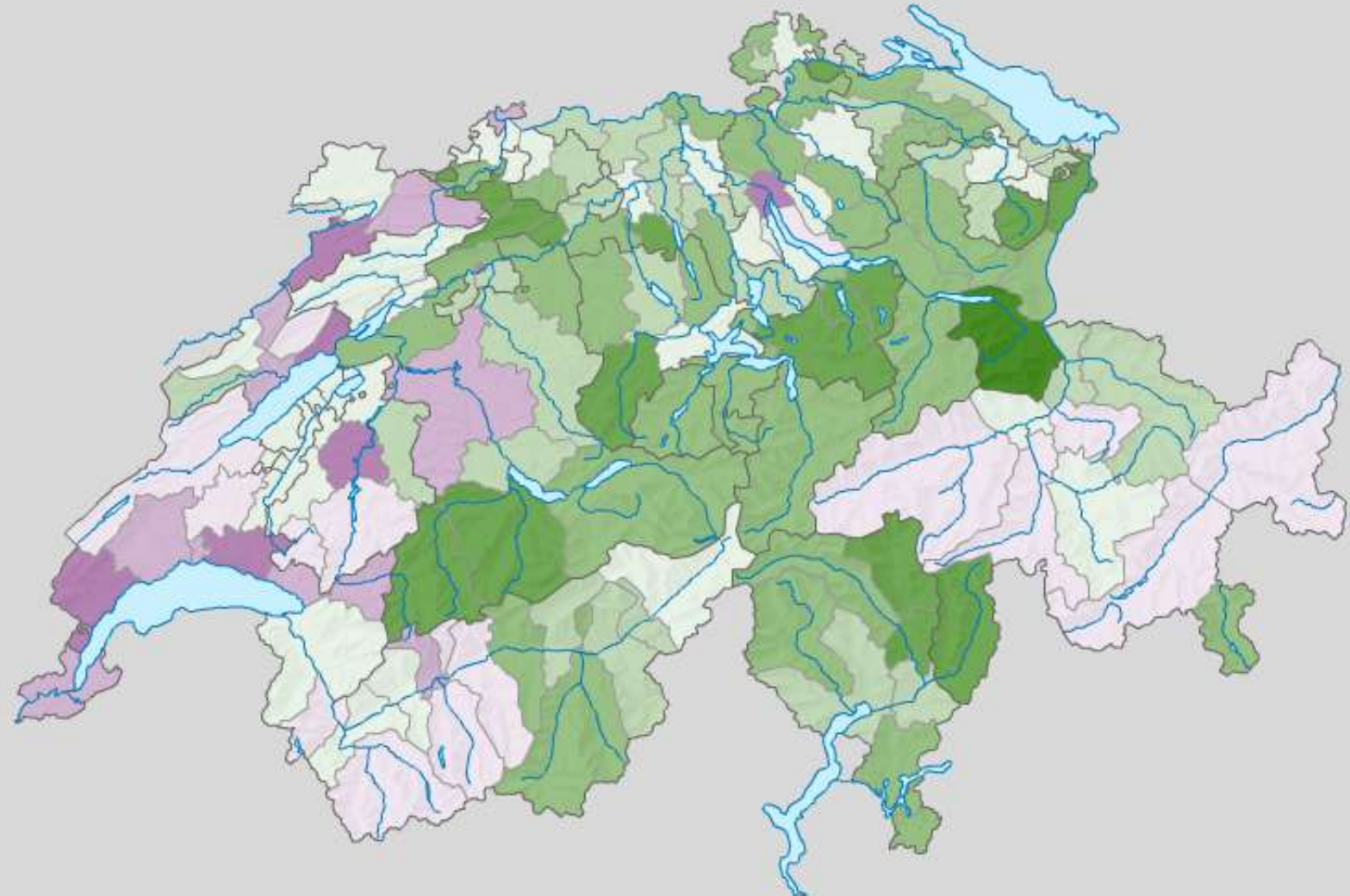
# 2013: Initiative to Send Back Criminal Foreigners

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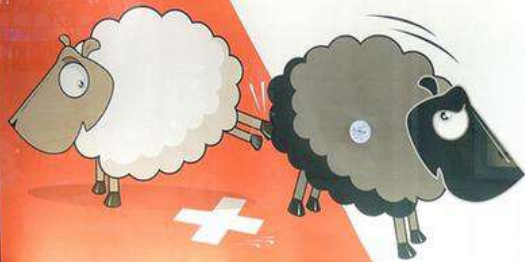
Ja-Stimmenanteil, in %



Volksinitiative «Für die Ausschaffung krimineller Ausländer», Abstimmung vom 28.11.2010



Endlich Sicherheit schaffen!



**JA** zur  
Ausschaffung  
krimineller  
Ausländer



# Switzerland and the EU

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- Tradition of **neutrality** (WWI & WWII)
  - Self-imposed
  - Permanent
  - Armed
- **Nationalistic government** not interested in ceding sovereignty
- Economic policies are designed to **protect local industries** (esp. agriculture) from foreign competition
- Policy of signing **bilateral agreements** with the EU rather than joining it





# Costs of Staying Out

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- **Export** problems
  - Access to EU markets is not guaranteed
- **Inflation** problems
  - Europeans nervous about the Euro due to expansion of the EU invest in Swiss Francs, inflating the value of the currency and restricting Swiss exports
- **Capital flight**
  - High construction costs, expensive labor, skill shortages already make investment in Switzerland unattractive
  - Several multinational corporations, such as Roche, Sulzer and Alusuisse, have frozen planned investment projects in Switzerland



# Costs of Staying Out

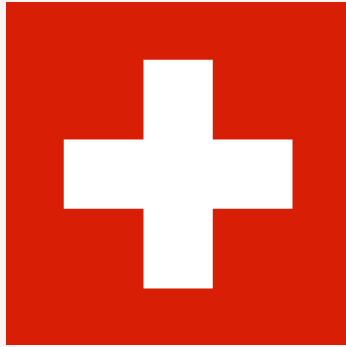
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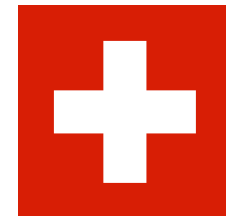
- Large Swiss companies, including Nestle, are shifting activities out of Switzerland in fear of discrimination by other nations
- Already four out of five employees of the top 15 Swiss companies work in other countries
- Scientific information lag
  - EU scientific exchange programs accept Swiss citizens only if they fail to fill such exchanges with persons from EU countries
- Accumulated bilateral agreements and cooperation may create de-facto incorporation in the EU for Switzerland

# Conflict Resolution in Switzerland

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- Before 1848 => Not so peaceful
- Four classical **cleavages**:
  - **Religion**: Catholics- Protestants
  - **Languages**: German-French (Italian and Romansch)
  - **Economy I**: Urban regions- rural regions
  - **Economy II**: Class conflict: capitalist-worker interest
- *How was it possible to resolve deep societal conflicts in a peaceful way?* **Political power sharing + direct democracy**





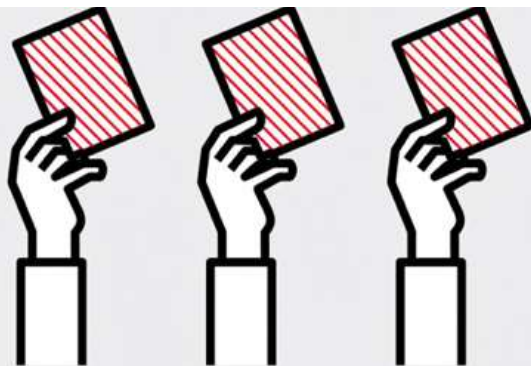
# Important to Note

In Switzerland sovereignty resides with the people, who exercise supreme political power.

## 63%

Swiss citizens are given the right to vote at the age of eighteen.

Swiss women did not gain the right to vote in federal elections until 1971.



In the Landsgemeinde of Appenzell Innerrhoden and Glarus citizens cast their votes in open-air assemblies.

On up to 4 occasions in any given year, the Swiss electorate votes on some 15 different issues.

The Swiss have many rights allowing them to participate in the political decision-taking process and can directly intervene in politics, for example by launching an initiative or a referendum.

There are three ways to cast your vote



at the ballot box



by postal vote (most popular)



e-voting (only in certain cantons)



# Next Session...

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- Switzerland II
- Direct Democracy



**Thank You For Your Attention!**

**Questions???**