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OSA Report

A very close decision:

Swiss National Council does not want to force Banks to accept Swiss Living Abroad

The National Council (NR) has narrowly rejected a motion by Roland Rino Büchel (SVP / SG). Roland Büchel is also an Executive Board Member of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). The motion demanded that all Swiss citizens be allowed to open a bank account with a Swiss system-relevant bank. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) regrets this decision. Since 2008, it has been advocating a solution to the banking problem for Swiss citizens living abroad.

On Thursday, 4 May 2017, the National Council (NR) narrowly rejected with 82 against 79 votes, the motion launched on 25 September 2015 Roland Rino Büchel. The National Council has therefore followed the recommendation given by the Federal Council.

The motion demanded from the Federal Council to create the legal basis within the framework of the 'Too big to fail' regulation so that Swiss nationals can "open an account with a system-relevant Swiss bank at reasonable conditions". Potentially 775,000 Swiss citizens are affected.

While addressing the members of the National Council, Roland Büchel argued the case that "Swiss nationals need a bank account in Switzerland, to maintain health insurance, to receive social security (AHV/IV), for travel and holidays in their home country or to maintain financial transactions related to property." He sees it as untenable that "Swiss citizens abroad, who comply with the tax laws of their country of residence, are denied a banking connection in Switzerland".

The OSA regrets the decision by the National Council. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the many 'yes' votes indicate an awareness of the problem by the government and that a solution to this problem is needed. In effect, since 2008, Swiss citizens abroad have increasingly had difficulties opening a bank account in Switzerland or maintaining banking relationships on reasonable terms.

I think the graphic does not need further explanation. It is clearly visible which Political Parties in Switzerland listen to the problems and hardships the Swiss living abroad have and are willing to support us. For me personally it is a huge disappointment the way the CVP (Christian Democratic People's Party) and the FDP (Free Democratic Party) have shown a complete lack of understanding and/or are not willing to support the Swiss

Swiss Society of New Zealand Inc.

Patron David Vogelsanger, Ambassador
 President Hans Vetsch
 Ph 07 855 3294 or 021 658733. Email: Hans.vetsch@swiss.org.nz
 Secretary Anita Zuber, PO Box 24061, Hamilton 3253
 Mobile 027 498 5170. Email: Anita.zuber@swiss.org.nz
 Vice President Anna Blaettler
 Phone 07 884 9567. Email: tearohacamp@gmail.com
 Editor Heidi Wehrle
 Phone 07 834 9286. Email: cwehrle@ihug.co.nz
 Treasurer Sandrine Smith
 Ph 021 418 695. Email: treasurer@swiss.org.nz
 Riflemaster Manuela Epp
 Phone 07 210 0982 or 0210 8483029. Email: eppnz@farmside.co.nz

Delegates to the Swiss Abroad Conference in Switzerland

Delegate Peter Ehrler, 46 Wesley Ave, Frankleigh Park, New Plymouth 4310
 Ph 06 753 3441. Email: pehrler@clear.net.nz
 Deputy Delegate Peter Canziani, 30 Herekiele St, Turangi 3334
 Ph 07 386 7775. Email: canziap@gmail.com

Secretaries of the Swiss Clubs

Auckland Daniela Bossard, 3C/28 Stanwell Street, Parnell, Auckland 1052
 Ph 027 527 5835, Email: daniela.bossard@swiss.org.nz
 Hamilton Anita Zuber, PO Box 24061, Hamilton 3253
 Mobile 027 498 5170. Email: Anita.zuber@swiss.org.nz
 Taranaki Marianne Drummond, 508 Salisbury Road, RD24, Stratford 4394
 Ph 06 7628 757. Email: littleacres@xtra.co.nz
 Wellington Odile Stotzer, 27 Anne St, Wadestown, Wellington 6012
 Ph 04 586 3095. Email: wellingtonswissclub@gmail.com

Swiss Government Representatives

Embassy of Switzerland Level 12, Maritime Towers, 10 Custom House Quay, Wellington 6140
 Email: wel.vertretung@eda.admin.ch
 Website: www.eda.admin.ch/wellington. Phone 04 472 1593
 Consulate of Switzerland Peter Deutsche, 15 Fifth Avenue, Mount Albert, Auckland 1025
 Ph 09 366 0403. Email: auckland@honrep.ch

abroad in anyway. The bottom line is that it is the work and doing of the CVP and FDP that brought down this motion.

Peter Ehrler – Elected Member of the Swiss Abroad Representing New Zealand

Below is a graphic how the National Council and its Political Parties (Fraktionen) voted:

Political Party (Fraktionen)	Votes <u>for</u> a Bank account	Votes <u>against</u> a Bank account	Did not Vote or were not present to vote
CVP	1	23	6
FDP	1	30	1
GP/GLP	0	12	7
BDP	0	6	1
SVP	57	5	6
SP	20	5	18