

# Alcohol initiative

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1966)**

Heft 1512

PDF erstellt am: **19.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696651>

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image in this country to fail owing to their indifference.

We make no demands, we only plead with all concerned in the best interests of our country. We in England as well as our other compatriots abroad have no greater desire than to be helped as far as possible in holding the esteem of Switzerland high amongst the nations. Give us the tools and we shall know how to use them.

H. W. Egli.

## NEW ARTICLE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

### Voting Details

As was reported in our last issue, the new Constitutional Article 45 *bis* concerning the Swiss living abroad was accepted by the Swiss electorate and all the Cantons on 16th October. The total of 490,992 against 230,415 was lower than had been expected, and surprise has been expressed in the Press and many other quarters. When the Swiss people were asked to decide on Romansh being the fourth national language in 1938, they did this with a majority of 11 : 1. Now that it was a question of acknowledging "Fifth Switzerland", a similar proportion in favour of the proposal was hoped for. Even though the number of "Ayes" is not as high as expected, the result, nevertheless, is convincing.

When the outcome was known, Federal Councillor Spuehler declared his pleasure that the Swiss people had accepted the *Auslandschweizerartikel*. He referred to the psychological effect this would have on the Swiss abroad whose ties with their mother country would be strengthened, and he said that this in turn would not only benefit the Swiss abroad but also those at home. "A new chapter in the history of the Swiss living abroad has been opened today, and with it the way has been cleared for legislature which will allow for the special circumstances of the *Auslandschweizer*".

The detailed figures are as follows:

| Canton                 | Yes     | No     |
|------------------------|---------|--------|
| Zurich ... ..          | 108,209 | 36,389 |
| Berne ... ..           | 81,995  | 37,577 |
| Lucerne ... ..         | 21,975  | 14,215 |
| Uri ... ..             | 3,149   | 1,529  |
| Schwyz ... ..          | 5,498   | 5,171  |
| Obwalden ... ..        | 1,548   | 1,179  |
| Nidwalden ... ..       | 2,260   | 1,473  |
| Glarus ... ..          | 3,629   | 1,648  |
| Zug ... ..             | 3,995   | 1,949  |
| Fribourg ... ..        | 11,733  | 5,996  |
| Solothurn ... ..       | 21,029  | 10,096 |
| Baselstadt ... ..      | 16,034  | 4,078  |
| Baselland ... ..       | 13,791  | 6,091  |
| Schaffhausen ... ..    | 9,122   | 3,855  |
| Appenzell A.Rh. ... .. | 4,628   | 2,882  |
| Appenzell I.Rh. ... .. | 868     | 540    |
| St. Gall ... ..        | 30,021  | 16,956 |
| Grisons ... ..         | 11,137  | 6,212  |
| Aargau ... ..          | 41,582  | 27,669 |
| Thurgau ... ..         | 17,417  | 8,089  |
| Ticino ... ..          | 11,943  | 3,775  |
| Vaud ... ..            | 29,029  | 14,639 |
| Valais ... ..          | 12,977  | 10,111 |
| Neuchâtel ... ..       | 21,117  | 6,694  |
| Geneva ... ..          | 16,306  | 1,622  |

Voting participation: 48%.

[A.T.S.]

## ALCOHOL INITIATIVE

On 30th October 1963, an Initiative with just over 51,000 signatures was handed in by the "Landesring der Unabhängigen". Its aim was to introduce a general tax on wines and spirits, which was to be used for the fight against alcoholism and water protection. The Federal Council, as well as all the Parties but one, recommended rejection; the Socialists did not take sides. On Sunday, 16th October, the electorate rejected the proposals overwhelmingly by 174,882 to 570,132 votes. Not one single Canton accepted it either. In the Canton of Vaud, the proportion was 10 : 1, which indicates that the winegrowers were not going to have their produce taxed.

Whilst the Initiative has been rejected, all quarters are agreed that alcoholism has to be fought energetically. Most Cantons have funds for this purpose, fed by the tenth which the Federal Alcohol Administration has to pass on from its net profit. These funds total over 2m. francs. The net profit of the *Alkoholverwaltung* in the year 1965/6 amounted to 106,856m. francs as against 74,861 in the previous year. Of this, 46.1m. is to go to Confederation and Cantons in equal parts, and 14.5m. to the reserve fund. There is some opposition to this, as it is the Confederation which is in need of money and not the alcohol reserve fund. The budget for 1966/7 is 91m. francs.

Between 1933 and 1938, wine consumption in Switzerland went down from 44 to 33.9 litres *per capita* of the population. Since then it has gradually gone up again, and the latest figures were 38 litres. Everywhere, the danger of "drinking and driving" is stressed. There is a society of "Abstinenten Motorfahrzeuglenker", and in June, all the Cantons except Uri and Appenzell I.Rh. started a campaign against "alcohol at the driving wheel". Figures published by two hospitals in August revealed that of 376 injured persons in road accidents, 118 (31.3%) were under the influence of drink. Of these, 79.6% had more than 0.8 per thousand of alcohol content in the blood, this figure having been decided upon by a Court as being the permissible limit.

There are several organisations dealing with the fight against alcoholism, amongst them "Alcoholics Anonymous" and a Federal Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Virgile Moine, Berne, appointed by the Federal Council.

Two sets of figures recently published: The amount of spirits distilled in Switzerland in 1965/6 has gone down from 3,200,117 to 1,991,238 litres. These figures do not include private distilling which was responsible for 3.4m. litres as against 3.8m. in the previous year.

The Federal Council has asked for a credit of 37m. francs for an alcohol store at Dailens (Vaud) to be charged to the Alcohol Administration.

[A.T.S.]

### Declaration of presumed Disappearance

Three published statutory notices having remained without effect, the following declaration of presumed disappearance is published:

#### Brugg District Court

Zürcher-Weber, Gottfrey Charles, 1928, automobile coach builder, citizen of Trachselwald, BE, and England, last known residence at Schinznach-Bad.  
Effective from 29th May 1957.