

Parlamentsdienste

Services du Parlement

Servizi del Parlamento

Servetschs dal parlament



The Federal Assembly – The Parliament of Switzerland



The National Council





The National Council

The 200 seats in the National Council are allotted to the 26 cantons according to their respective populations (total number of residents = resident population). The population figures are obtained from the registers in the year following the previous election. Each canton is allotted at least one seat.



The National Council

Distribution of seats by canton

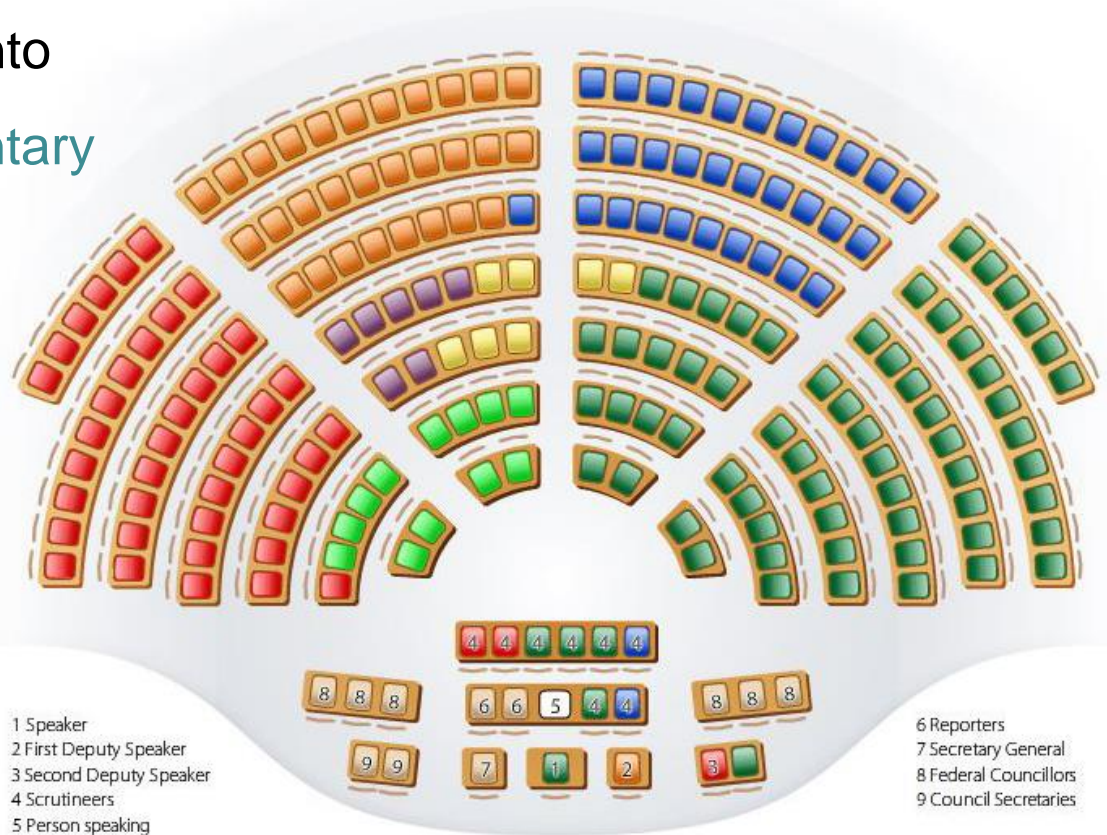
	ZH 35		LU 10		TG 6		ZG 3		OW 1
	BE 25		TI 8		BS 5		SH 2		NW 1
	VD 18		VS 8		GR 5		JU 2		AI 1
	AG 16		BL 7		NE 4		AR 1		GL 1
	SG 12		FR 7		SZ 4		UR 1		
	GE 11		SO 6						



The National Council

Distribution of seats by parliamentary group

Politically speaking, the Federal Assembly is not divided into parties, but into **parliamentary groups**. The groups comprise members of the same party or of similarly-platformed parties.





The National Council

Distribution of seats by parliamentary group

Groups	Members
Swiss People's Party	68
Social Democrats	43
FDP. The Liberal Group	33
Christian Democrats	30
Green Group	12
Liberal Democrat Group	7
Green Liberal Group	7
Non-members	0



The National Council President



President of the National Council
2016 / 2017

Jürg Stahl

Swiss People's Party / ZH



Debates of the National Council





The regulated floor time

20 minutes

Rapporteurs and members of the Federal Council in general debates

10 minutes

Parliamentary group speakers
Other speakers to provide grounds for a motion

5 minutes

Individual members



Debates of the National Council

5 categories

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|
| I | Open debate
All Council members | | |
| II | Organised debate
The parliamentary group speakers,
other members proposed by the groups
and the authors of the proposals | IV | Short debate
Rapporteurs, authors of
minority proposals and
parliamentary initiatives |
| III | Reduced debate
The committee rapporteurs, the
parliamentary group speakers and the
authors of proposals | V | Written debate
No right to take the floor |



The Council of States





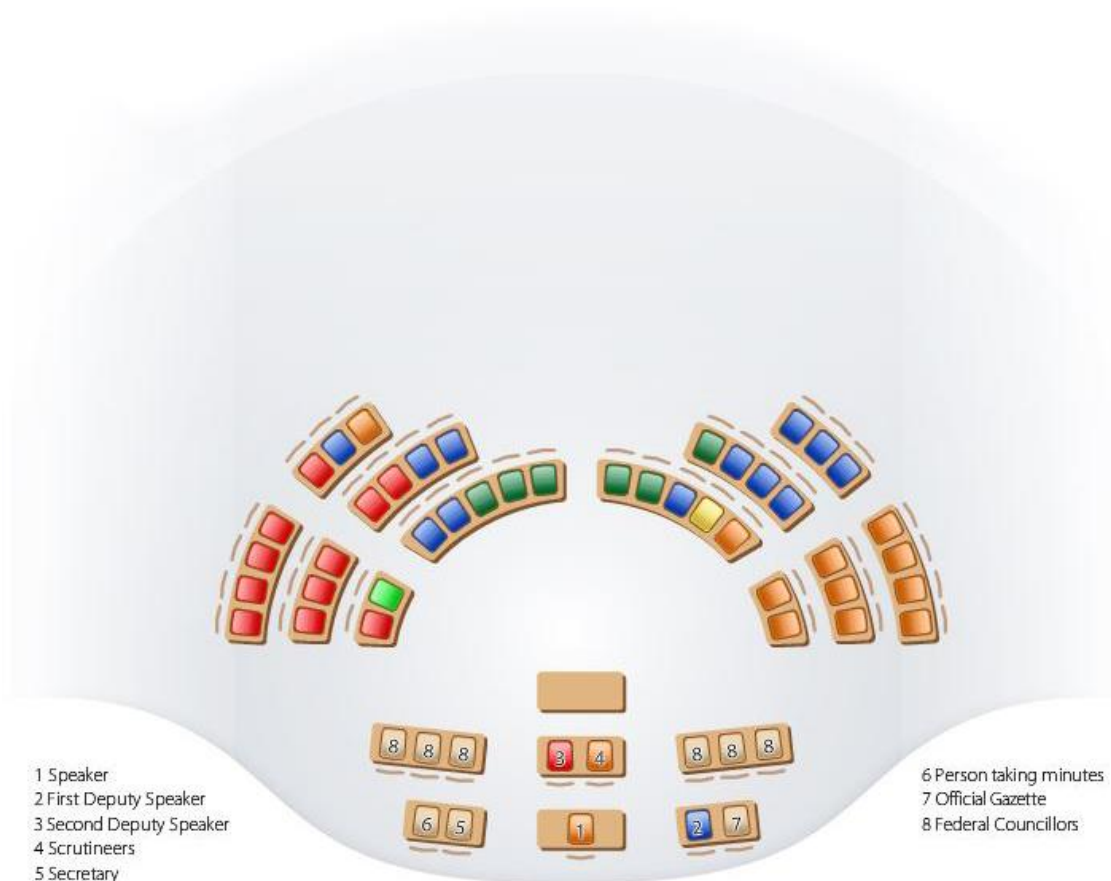
The Council of States

The Council of States has 46 members who represent the cantons. The cantons each send two representatives, with the exception of Obwalden, Nidwalden, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Appenzell Innerrhoden, which each send one.



The Council of States

Distribution of seats by parliamentary group



Only **informal groups** exist in the Council of States.



The Council of States

Distribution of seats by parliamentary group

Groups	Members
Christian Democrats	13
FDP. The Liberal Group	13
Social Democrats	12
Swiss People's Party	6
Green Group	1
Liberal Democrat Group	1
Green Liberal Group	0
Non-members	0



The Council of States



President of the Council of States
2016 / 2017

Ivo Bischofberger

Christian Democratic Party / AI



Debates of the Council of States





Debates of the Council of States

Members who wish to take the floor must submit a request to do so to the president

Order:

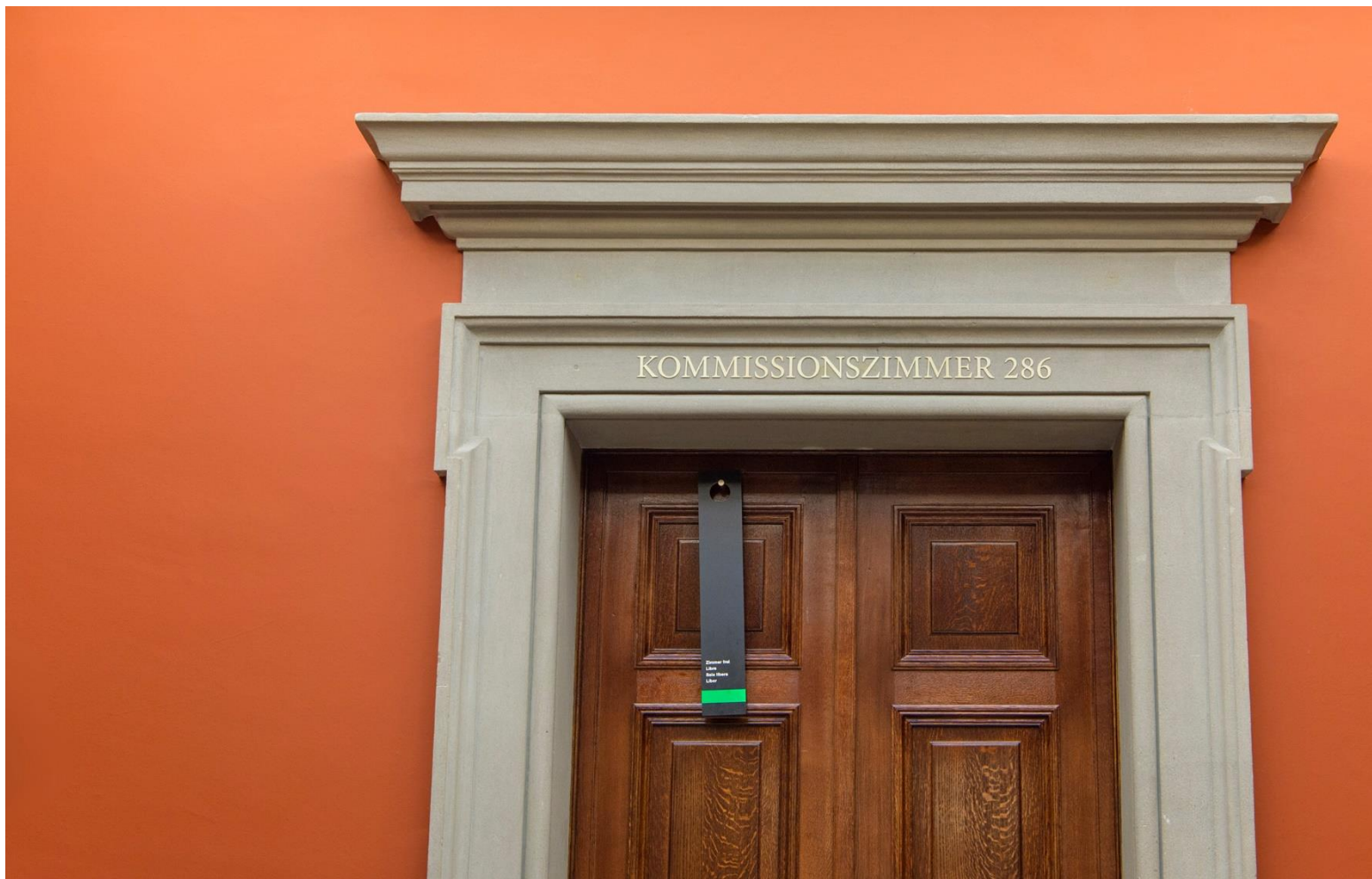
- Rapporteurs
- Committee members
- Other members

Floor time is unlimited

There is no simultaneous translation in the Council of States



The Committees





The Committees

Committees are groups formed from a set number of members of parliament. Their principle task is to discuss the items of business assigned to them before these are debated in the chamber. They also keep abreast of the changes in society and politics affecting their domain, and draw up responses to these developments.



The Committees

The National Council has 12 permanent committees:

- 9 legislative committees
- 2 supervisory committees
- and the Immunity Committee

National Council: 25 members

The Council of States has 11 permanent committees:

- 9 legislative committees
- 2 supervisory committees

Council of States: 13 members



The Committees

Legislative Committees

- Foreign Affairs Committees (FAC)
- Science, Education and Culture Committees (SECC)
- Social Security and Health Committees (SSHC)
- Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy Committees (ESPEC)
- Defence Committees (DefC)



The Committees

Legislative Committees

- Transport and Telecommunications Committees (TTC)
- Economic Affairs and Taxation Committees (EATC)
- Political Institutions Committees (PIC)
- Legal Affairs Committees (LAC)



The Committees

Supervisory Committee

- Finance Committee (FC)
- Control Committees (CC)



The Committees

Other Committees

- Committee on Pardons (CP)
- Drafting Committee (DrC)
- Judicial Committee (JC)
- Immunity Committee (IC-N)



The Committees

In exceptional cases, the Offices of the Council may also order **special committees** to be set up in addition to the standing committees to debate a specific item of business.



The Delegations





The Delegations

Standing sub-committees constitute a **first group** of delegations. They are generally entrusted with special assignments.

The **second group** consists of delegations that represent the Swiss Federal Assembly at international parliamentary gatherings, or that foster relations with the parliaments of neighbouring countries. They constitute a special case among the committees.



The Delegations

Standing sub-committees

- AC – Administration Committee
- FinDel – Finance Delegation
- CD – Control Delegation
- NRLA – Delegation for the Supervision of the New Railway Link through the Alps)



The Delegations

Delegations to international Parliamentary Assemblies

- EFTA/EP – European Free Trade Association European Parliament
- IPU – Inter-Parliamentary Union
- APF – Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie
- PAOSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- DCE – Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- NATO-PA – Swiss Parliamentary Delegation to the NATO-PA



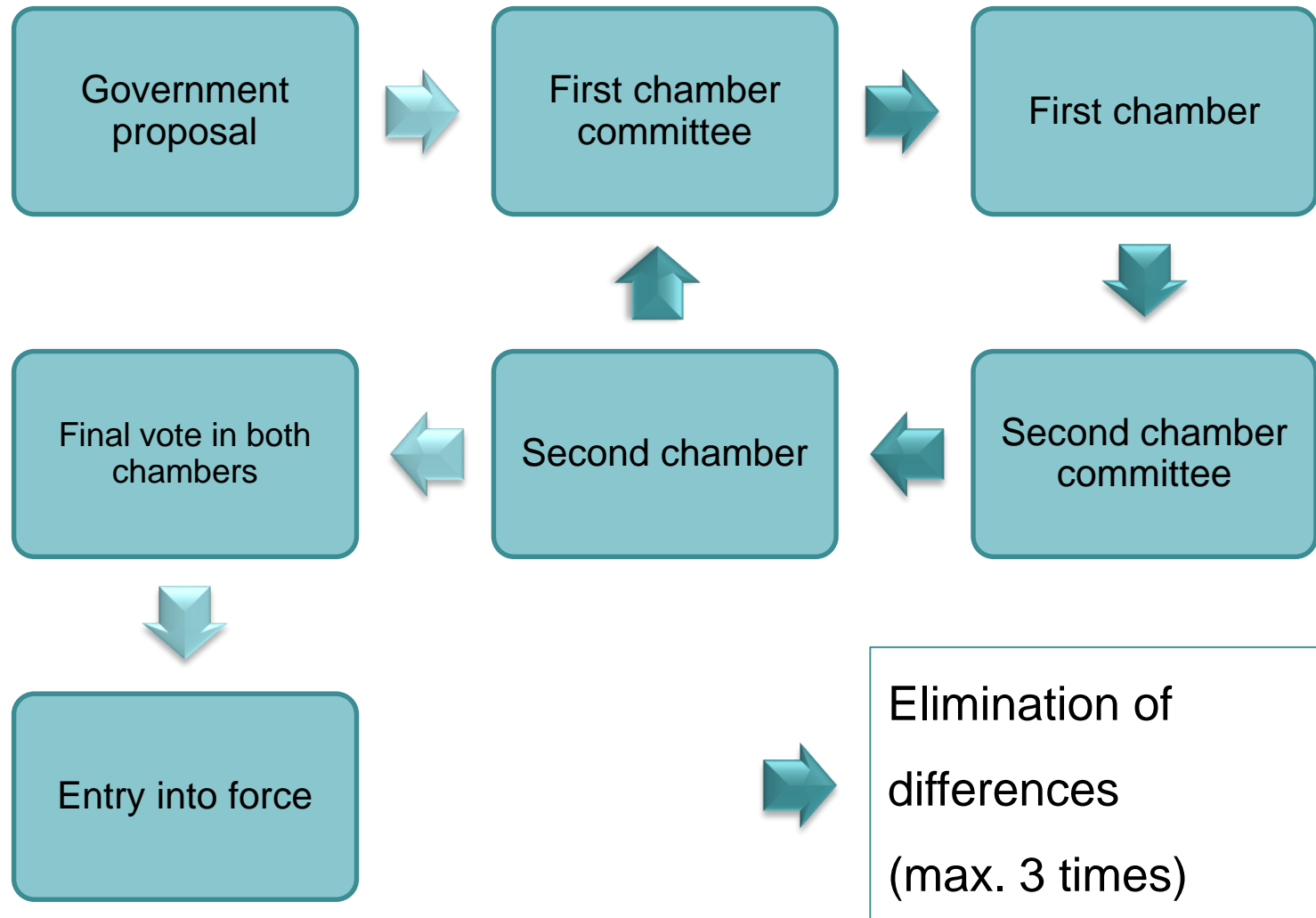
The Delegations

Delegations charged with fostering relations with foreign parliaments

- German Bundestag Del-D
- Austrian Parliament Del-A
- French Parliament Del-F
- Italian Parliament Del-I
- Landtag of Lichtenstein Del-FL



Parliamentary Procedures





Parliamentary Procedures

Referendum and initiative

Optional Referendum

Federal Acts and Federal decrees

50,000 citizens entitled to vote or eight cantons can
request a referendum



Referendum and initiative

Compulsory Referendum

Decisions on a total or partial revision of the Federal Constitution

Can be conducted as the result of a popular initiative (100,000 signatures) or a federal decree

Must be submitted to the vote of the people and the cantons



Parliamentary Procedures

Forms of parliamentary intervention

Parliamentary initiative

Enables members to submit a proposal for a constitutional amendment, law or decree

Members can submit a draft of the bill or propose in general terms that such a text be drafted



Parliamentary Procedures

Forms of parliamentary intervention

Motion

Can be submitted by a parliamentary member, a parliamentary group or a parliamentary committee

Both chambers must approve the motion

The motion obliges the Federal Council to submit a draft bill or decree or take appropriate measures as proposed



Forms of parliamentary intervention

Question

Request for information from the government on important domestic or foreign affairs

The Federal Council replies in writing before the next session



Forms of parliamentary intervention

Postulate

Form of application requiring the Federal Council to determine if a draft bill or decree must be represented or if other appropriate measures must be taken

Approval is only required from the chamber in which the postulate was submitted



Parliamentary Procedures

Forms of parliamentary intervention

Interpellation

Requests information on important events or matters

May be qualified as urgent





The Parliamentary Services

- provide assistance for the Federal Assembly to fulfill its allotted tasks
- plan and organise parliamentary sessions and committee meetings
- carry out secretarial work, translate and draw up reports and minutes
- collate documentation and manage the archives
- advise members of parliament on technical or procedural questions



Secretary General
as of July 2013

Philippe Schwab

