Swiss Refugee Council regrets Federal Council's rejection on the Swiss citizenship law initiative

The Swiss Refugee Council expressed disappointment at the Federal Council's decision to reject, without a counterproposal, the popular initiative "For a Modern Citizenship Law (Initiative for Democracy)". The organisation criticises the current system as unequal and inconsistent, describing it as a "lottery" that depends on the applicant's canton or municipality. OSAR argues that naturalisation should not be treated as a reward for successful integration, but rather as a means to promote integration through active participation in political and social life. It notes that one in four permanent residents in Switzerland is excluded from democratic participation despite living, working, and paying taxes for many years. The initiative would also ease the path to citizenship for recognized refugees and temporarily admitted persons, who currently face numerous bureaucratic obstacles and varying cantonal rules, particularly regarding social assistance and the recognition of years of residence. A uniform federal regulation would eliminate these disparities. While the Federal Council acknowledges the need for greater national consistency in naturalisation procedures, it believes improvements should primarily be addressed by the cantons. The proposal now moves to Parliament, which is expected to debate it in 2026. OSAR calls on the National Council and Council of States to support the initiative and advocate for a modern, fair, and inclusive citizenship law that allows all residents contributing to Swiss society to fully participate in its democracy.

Source(s)

- Swiss Refugee Council | Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe | Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (5 November, 2025), Simplifier la naturalisation et renforcer la démocratie [Simplify naturalisation and strengthen democracy], https://www.osar.ch/communique-de-presse/simplifier-la-naturalisation-et-renforcer-la-democratie

Date of development
05.11.2025
Country
Switzerland
Thematic area(s)
Content of protection

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Development type
Legislation

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