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Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation

of 18 April 1999 (Status as of 13 February 2022)

Preamble

In the name of Almighty God!

The Swiss People and the Cantons,

mindful of their responsibility towards creation,

resolved to renew their alliance so as to strengthen liberty, democracy, independence and peace in a spirit of solidarity and openness towards the world,

determined to live together with mutual consideration and respect for their diversity, conscious of their common achievements and their responsibility towards future generations,

and in the knowledge that only those who use their freedom remain free, and that the strength of a people is measured by the well-being of its weakest members,

adopt the following Constitution¹:

Title 1 General Provisions

Art. 1 The Swiss Confederation

The People and the Cantons of Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden and Nidwalden, Glarus, Zug, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel Stadt and Basel Landschaft, Schaffhausen, Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Appenzell Innerrhoden, St. Gallen, Graubünden, Aargau, Thurgau, Ticino, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel, Geneva, and Jura form the Swiss Confederation.

Art. 2 Aims

¹ The Swiss Confederation shall protect the liberty and rights of the people and safeguard the independence and security of the country.

AS 2007 5225

¹ Adopted by the popular vote on 18 April 1999 (FedD of 18 Dec. 1998, FCD of 11 Aug. 1999; AS 1999 2556; BBl 1997 I 1, 1999 162 5986).

² It shall promote the common welfare, sustainable development, internal cohesion and cultural diversity of the country.

³ It shall ensure the greatest possible equality of opportunity among its citizens.

⁴ It is committed to the long term preservation of natural resources and to a just and peaceful international order.

Art. 3 Cantons

The Cantons are sovereign except to the extent that their sovereignty is limited by the Federal Constitution. They exercise all rights that are not vested in the Confederation.

Art. 4 National languages

The National Languages are German, French, Italian, and Romansh.

Art. 5 Rule of law

¹ All activities of the state are based on and limited by law.

² State activities must be conducted in the public interest and be proportionate to the ends sought.

³ State institutions and private persons shall act in good faith.

⁴ The Confederation and the Cantons shall respect international law.

Art. 5a² Subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity must be observed in the allocation and performance of state tasks.

Art. 6 Individual and collective responsibility

All individuals shall take responsibility for themselves and shall, according to their abilities, contribute to achieving the tasks of the state and society.

Title 2 Fundamental Rights, Citizenship and Social Goals

Chapter 1 Fundamental Rights

Art. 7 Human dignity

Human dignity must be respected and protected.

² Adopted by the popular vote on 28 Nov. 2004, in force since 1 Jan. 2008 (FCD of 3 Oct. 2003, FCD of 26 Jan. 2005, FCD of 7 Nov. 2007; AS **2007** 5765; BBl **2002** 2291, **2003** 6591, **2005** 951).

Art. 8 Equality before the law

¹ Every person is equal before the law.

² No person may be discriminated against, in particular on grounds of origin, race, gender, age, language, social position, way of life, religious, ideological, or political convictions, or because of a physical, mental or psychological disability.

³ Men and women have equal rights. The law shall ensure their equality, both in law and in practice, most particularly in the family, in education, and in the workplace. Men and women have the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

⁴ The law shall provide for the elimination of inequalities that affect persons with disabilities.

Art. 9 Protection against arbitrary conduct and principle of good faith

Every person has the right to be treated by state authorities in good faith and in a non-arbitrary manner.

Art. 10 Right to life and to personal freedom

¹ Every person has the right to life. The death penalty is prohibited.

² Every person has the right to personal liberty and in particular to physical and mental integrity and to freedom of movement.

³ Torture and any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited.

Art. 10a³ Ban on covering the face*

¹ No person may cover their face in public spaces or in places that are accessible to the public or where services are offered to anyone wishing to partake of them; the ban does not apply to places of worship.

² No person may force another person to cover their face on the grounds of their sex.

³ The law shall provide for exceptions. These may only be justified on the grounds of health, safety, weather conditions or local custom.

Art. 11 Protection of children and young people

¹ Children and young people have the right to the special protection of their integrity and to the encouragement of their development.

² They may personally exercise their rights to the extent that their power of judgement allows.

³ Adopted by the popular vote on 7 March 2021, in force since 7 March 2021 (FedD of 19 June 2020, FCD of 31 May 2021 – AS **2021** 310; BBl **2017** 6447; **2019** 2913; **2020** 5507; **2021** 1185).

* With transitional provision.

Art. 12 Right to assistance when in need

Persons in need and unable to provide for themselves have the right to assistance and care, and to the financial means required for a decent standard of living.

Art. 13 Right to privacy

¹ Every person has the right to privacy in their private and family life and in their home, and in relation to their mail and telecommunications.

² Every person has the right to be protected against the misuse of their personal data.

Art. 14 Right to marry and to have a family

The right to marry and to have a family is guaranteed.

Art. 15 Freedom of religion and conscience

¹ Freedom of religion and conscience is guaranteed.

² Every person has the right to choose freely their religion or their philosophical convictions, and to profess them alone or in community with others.

³ Every person has the right to join or to belong to a religious community, and to follow religious teachings.

⁴ No person may be forced to join or belong to a religious community, to participate in a religious act, or to follow religious teachings.

Art. 16 Freedom of expression and of information

¹ Freedom of expression and of information is guaranteed.

² Every person has the right freely to form, express, and impart their opinions.

³ Every person has the right freely to receive information to gather it from generally accessible sources and to disseminate it.

Art. 17 Freedom of the media

¹ Freedom of the press, radio and television and of other forms of dissemination of features and information by means of public telecommunications is guaranteed.

² Censorship is prohibited.

³ The protection of sources is guaranteed.

Art. 18 Freedom to use any language

The freedom to use any language is guaranteed.

Art. 19 Right to basic education

The right to an adequate and free basic education is guaranteed

Art. 20 Academic freedom

Freedom of research and teaching is guaranteed.

Art. 21 Freedom of artistic expression

Freedom of artistic expression is guaranteed.

Art. 22 Freedom of assembly

¹ Freedom of assembly is guaranteed.

² Every person has the right to organise meetings and to participate or not to participate in meetings.

Art. 23 Freedom of association

¹ Freedom of association is guaranteed.

² Every person has the right to form, join or belong to an association and to participate in the activities of an association.

³ No person may be compelled to join or to belong to an association.

Art. 24 Freedom of domicile

¹ Swiss citizens have the right to establish their domicile anywhere in the country.

² They have the right to leave or to enter Switzerland.

Art. 25 Protection against expulsion, extradition and deportation

¹ Swiss citizens may not be expelled from Switzerland and may only be extradited to a foreign authority with their consent.

² Refugees may not be deported or extradited to a state in which they will be persecuted.

³ No person may be deported to a state in which they face the threat of torture or any other form of cruel or inhumane treatment or punishment.

Art. 26 Guarantee of ownership

¹ The right to own property is guaranteed.

² The compulsory purchase of property and any restriction on ownership that is equivalent to compulsory purchase shall be compensated in full.

Art. 27 Economic freedom

¹ Economic freedom is guaranteed.

² Economic freedom includes in particular the freedom to choose an occupation as well as the freedom to pursue a private economic activity.