



Federal Initiative “For Swiss Peace Education”

1. At least 3 per cent for peace

Switzerland has an annual defence budget of around CHF 4 billion. Imagine the extent of the peace work that could be done with just 3 per cent of it; i.e., around CHF 120 million a year.

This reallocation of funds, this new objective, this other effect of our money in the world is the subject of the Swiss popular initiative for which we are taking a stand here.

2. Background (peace education for more “paradises” on earth like Switzerland)

Switzerland is a fascinating place

Many people say that the Swiss “live in paradise”. It is an expression of their fascination with the conditions and circumstances of a life of peace and, for the most part, great security. When asked what makes Switzerland special, they would probably answer: the understanding and form of living democracy, the privilege of almost two-hundred years of peace, the high degree of general security, the capacity for dialogue, the cultural coexistence and the respect for minorities, the social welfare, the economic strength, the moderate level of taxes and fees, the reliability of the public transport, government and administration, the generally good infrastructure, the quality of the education system at all levels, the freedom of the population, and many more things that even the Swiss themselves may not be aware of at all.

Switzerland fascinates us, and it is this fascination that causes people from other nations to come to Switzerland to enjoy at least a part of this “paradise”. Switzerland experiences an influx of foreign professionals as well as refugees. This is very understandable due to the challenges and often limited prospects in the rest of the world. Former Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, formerly Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), sometimes used to say the following about the work and achievements of the diplomatic corps in the FDFA during his speeches: “A little more Switzerland would improve the world.” The intention of the present initiative is to fulfil this appeal in a promising and quite realisable manner, rather than just calling the former Councillor’s vision a wishful Herculean task.

Switzerland needs to remember its values, too

Switzerland is probably privileged, but its seeming perfection is just a veneer. In Switzerland, even under the operational superficiality of private and business life, we are experiencing an erosion of the established values. We are also distracted from ourselves; our values and qualities are being strained by often urgent demands which are imposed on us in many respects and in rapid succession. We are slaves to the clock and driven by operational dry runs and tangible orders, payments, conditions as well as self-created, often manic pressure from consumption, demand, addiction and desire for recognition. We get upset, irritated and are thrown off course by events of all kind and virtually everywhere in the world that often have little or nothing to do with us.

Whether we like it or not, people around the world are prevented from being alone with themselves. We have sacrificed quality human existence. We have forgotten to search for, live and nurture it during our

daily lives. Operative action and noisy enterprise often permeate mankind's present existence and the questionable unstable state of human systems or those influenced by humans themselves.

We can actually no longer afford to remain in the shockingly unconscious state in which mankind has been locked for some time now. The longer we continue in the current manner, the more we risk our existence, the preservation of planet Earth, the availability of resources and our livelihoods and those of future generations. From a sober, even Protestant perspective, which we may very well have after 500 years of reformation – what counts above everything is the urgent preservation of creation, including humanity in its entirety. We believe that it can take place via the path of peaceful mediation and be promoted through the pragmatic and broad-minded establishment of justice in all the regions of the world.

3. Safe places of experience to discover oneself

Switzerland provides safe places of experience around the world to create an atmosphere of peace

The picture is simple and easy to understand: If you are caught up in a storm, it is best to recover in a sheltered place and regain your strength. Taking the above starting point into consideration, the storm is sweeping across the world and Switzerland offers safe places where the world's community can recover and regain their strength. Or in other words again: Switzerland provides mankind with a global network of safe, protected, stimulating and hence real locations where individuals from all over the planet, of every origin, background and descent are invited. These are places which hold accessible, three-weekly courses in which the attendees gain insights into themselves and their current circumstances, as well as the changes they can make to improve their own and the general situation.

Some members of the Initiative Committee and of the International Advisory Council of the initiative formulated below describe such an opportunity as a personal experience that has changed and shaped their lives, their work and their interaction with their environment. Such opportunities have given them the wherewithal to discover their destiny, their position, their role and their strengths.

The more often such important experiences are made available and the more often people return home with such basic experience, the more global, connected and empowering that network of people will become: people who entertain thoughts of and desire peace, justice and the preservation of creation, and pass all this on to others.

Despite their belief in the power of the spirit and the mind, the members of the Initiative Committee and the International Advisory Council are convinced that favourable structural framework conditions are necessary to effectively develop such strengths. The "safe places" mentioned in the heading therefore have a concrete form and are the subject of the popular initiative presented here.

The Initiative Committee (within the framework of the Swiss Guidelines for Federal Popular Initiatives) and the International Advisory Council see themselves as open, ever-growing committees which then formulate and represent the text of the initiative. They act in a sociocratic manner from the level of the individual to the level of the common good, thus starting from their own ideas, which they are always able to connect with the contributions of further new members – without losing the focus on the actual substance of the initiative.

The great transition: “(un)places” and barracks become locations filled with good experiences

Switzerland donates infrastructures and operations for such protected places within its borders, then in neighbouring countries and finally in all the regions of the world. It consciously focuses on the transition/transfer and reuse of (un)places and barracks. In doing so, they change from places of struggle, annihilation and death to ones of encouragement, development and life.

Powerful reference projects

Reference projects for sustainable systems and networks with quite possibly then new everyday forms of a supportive economy, vibrant society, prevalent culture, and conscious perception of one's own and the next expectations and needs arise and are located in the area around the protected places.

Major topics, unique experiences, surprising insights

The attendees will probably delve into major topics such as the following at the envisaged *safe places*:

- Reflection on the history, present and future of one's own person, living environment, culture, religion and strengths
- Reflection on systems and principles of participation, shared power, cooperation and shared responsibility
- Reflection on ethical, social, ecological foundations, systems and principles
- Reflection on economic systems, principles, projects, personal and community initiatives and commitments which are in line with the above insights, beliefs and objectives

Social relationships will be experienced, practised and valued during different activities such as joint cooking sessions, games and sport, collaboration, creation and relaxation. Insights will be gained, beliefs will take root and flourish, resolutions and plans will be made, and initial steps will be taken.

Phenomena and developments in the environment, society, culture and economy will be made latently visible and experienced during thematic excursions. In this manner, insights will be implemented as well.

Sooner or later, the intellectual work in the security and community of the safe places will be followed by the challenging exposure and implementation of this work in the actual reality of one's own field of action and impact at home. Those who have been invited to the safe places will stay connected with each other as alumni for a lifetime, being known by name and effectively reachable to each other. Not only those in responsible and supervisory positions at the safe places remain at the side of the former participants as a source of help. The ever-increasing community of participants themselves does so as well. Increasingly, even a mindset and operational strength that are conducive to the culture of peace, justice and the preservation of the planet are growing at a rapid pace.

It is quite possible that this Swiss model of a safe place will become a success story and soon also be replicated by other nations. May it do so ever faster so it will be easier to replicate and establish the attitude and culture of peace, justice and preservation of creation in the world.

4. Proposed wording of the initiative

The following extension of the Federal Constitution creates the legal legitimacy for such action taken by Switzerland. The proposed initiative text is therefore:

The Federal Constitution¹ shall be amended as follows:

Art. 63b **Peace education**

1 The Swiss Confederation donates and operates a global course and training environment for global peace education. To this end, the Swiss Confederation allocates a peace budget to the Foreign Affairs Department amounting to at least three per cent of the defence budget. The Defence Department shall fulfil its obligations with the remaining percentages.

2 The purpose of the course and training environment is to promote, facilitate and operate by means of accessible offers to the world community the permanent creation and dissemination of knowledge, attitudes and framework conditions to promote peace, justice and the preservation of the planet.

3 Together, the local education management and the Department of Foreign Affairs shall make every effort to maximise the positive impact of the course and training environment.

5. Core of the initiative

In order to facilitate the offer of global peace education, the Confederation shall provide a peace budget which is allocated to the Department of Foreign Affairs in the sense of a redirection of 3% of the defence budget annually. This money is explicitly provided for peace education essentially in the outlined form. Based on the publications of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport, this peace budget will, according to the following compilation, amount to approximately CHF 120 million annually:

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total federal expenses in CHF million	65,243	66,261	68,668	71,027
expenditure of the administrative unit defence	3,751.7	3,892.3	3,915.0	4,181.6
expenditure of armasuisse premises	497.7	541.8	541.6	562.5

Source: <https://www.vbs.admin.ch/de/vbs/zahlen-fakten/armee.html> dated 21.1.2018

6. Global effect thanks to many alumni around the world

When the popular initiative is approved and the vocational offer is realised, the way will be clear for an exponential dissemination of mental awareness, active attention and practical action culminating in comprehensive understanding, peacebuilding, prosperity structures and relative action in every nation and people in the world of their own volition, supported by their own convictions and based on their own resources. It is crucial that this empowerment comes from within if such very special peace education is to have a lasting effect.

A notable aspect of this peacebuilding is the global promotion of the “good life”, which manifests itself in societal, environmental, economic and cultural dimensions. Especially in the case of the urgent global

¹ SR 101

need to counteract the increasingly dramatic global warming in a coordinated and effective manner, the constructive, extensive and careful examination of peace models and future-oriented models of life is helpful and well understood by *all* sides of the world community, including those who consider themselves to be privileged.

Just like the extremely successful example of the hotel management school in Lucerne, the circle of alumni and thus the desired skills will increase rapidly in the world each year, and the network of those that know and those that do will become more intense along with the forces that strengthen promising structures, communities, developments and further perspectives. These alumni will always know each other, support each other, and will always be the supporting framework for other forces that may serve prosperity on a global basis.

7. Initiative committee

The members of the Initiative Committee are presented on www.friedensbudget.ch.

8. International board

The members of the International Board are presented on www.friedensbudget.ch.

9. Contact

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10. Signature collection

The forms to collect the required 100,000 signatures of Swiss citizens to realise the initiative are provided in the national languages of German, French and Italian.