

2021 Swiss Federal Palace in the hands of the women

Besides of celebrating 2021 the 50 years women's suffrage in Switzerland one of the most outstanding topics was the "The 2nd Women's Parliament Session" taking place at the prestigious Federal Palace at Berne. *AllianceF*, a large coordination of national women's organizations, had launched this ambitious project. As participants women from literally all walks of life had been elected. For ADF-SVF Ursula Nakamura was attending it. **(AP 7)**

Being "elected" meant a lot of preparatory work within "parliamentary commissions". The topics covered numerous aspects of life where women are discriminated or underrepresented or simply being "forgotten". Not surprisingly, the motions drafted in advance were completely different from the proposals in the usual male dominated parliaments, and they all were accepted by the plenum almost unanimously!

Keywords: social security in old age, child-care free of charge, collection and use of specific female data for women's health, gender medicine, protection against gender based violence, rights of migrant women, digital gender gap, promotion of women in science etc. **(AP 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)**

This "feminist wave" was later on carried into the official parliaments by the deputies.

Now, a year later, a few motions have already been rejected, but others are very successful...

For example, the promotion of women in STEM professions, particularly connected with digitalisation, or a massive strengthening of preventive measures against sexual violence. Gender medicine now will be taught in an integrated way at universities. **(AP 1,4,6)**

Never before have women been so visibly in the foreground, and never before there had been such a tangible step forward for women's rights!

Focus of ADF-SVF in 2022

Women and gender became an important theme for the ADF-SVF yearly event in 2022. More so because the Basel ADF-SVF section had already dealt with this topic in 2021. Gender medicine might bring a light into the very controversial discussions going on at the moment. **(AP 2,4,7)**

When we were reading the bestseller by Caroline Criado-Perez "Invisible women" we realised that practically all areas of life were seen exclusively from the men's point of view and designed accordingly, starting from the design of furniture or car-seats, sports-outfits etc. up to the misdiagnosis of male or female patients in medicine. Thus unfortunately, heart attacks in women might often get treated incorrectly.

So the theme for the ADF-SVF annual public event was set: **"Invisible stumbling blocks for women"**.



We succeeded in inviting well-known female experts. Their statements were impressive:

Unbelievable! Relevant gender-differentiated data are still missing everywhere, roads and streets are still being built without sufficient safety for pedestrians, mostly women, children or disabled people!

Even worse - women's voices are largely unheard in the context of peace and security! Their suffering is immense. Finally we wanted to know from a young woman-member at the Neuchâtel parliament, whether

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now with a sensational majority (58%) of female deputies the “culture in the assembly” might have changed positively – are the women and their requests now better visible ?

(AP 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

As it was extremely hot in June, we worried whether people might not rather stay at home.

We therefore commissioned a specialist to film the event. All together it is very inspiring event, and the **film** is now available on our [ADF-SVF website in French and German](#). You also find there the relevant documentation.

ADF-SVF -Other activities

Of course, we also dealt with many other issues last year, often in close cooperation with other national organisations. This was done, for example, within the framework of the National Coordination post Beijing NGO, which is primarily concerned with the implementation of CEDAW and regularly writes critical shadow reports **(AP 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)**. This NGO also monitors closely the correct implementation of the Istanbul Convention against gender-based violence. **(AP 1)**

In Switzerland the federal authorities usually ask organisations and political parties for their opinions about various legal propositions. Therefore ADF-SVF recently has handed in several statements, e. g. better retirement-pensions or a non-discriminatory law against sexual violence **(AP 1,6,7)**

ADF-SVF actively supports the federal initiative for nationwide low-cost day care centres to improve the compatibility of work and family life. This is crucial for young mothers, because it increase considerably their chances for a good employment. **(AP 6,7)**

ADF-SVF was also committed in collecting signatures regarding the national initiative for an individual taxation of married couples. **(AP 6)**

But we were most happy about the successful national initiative “Strengthening the Nursing Care” in November 2021. Maybe it was also thanks to Covid but certainly it touched a longstanding serious problem – the glaring lack of professional nurses, their low pay and their difficult work-situations. ADF-SVF had strongly supported it. Now it is up to the national parliament to make the necessary legal changes. **(AP 4)**

Switzerland is also affected by the international backlash. Opponents of abortion have regrouped. They are currently collecting signatures for two national initiatives that are intended to restrict the possibilities of the current legal regulation of unpunished abortion within twelve weeks.

Under the leadership of Swiss Sexual Health ADF-SVF is calling for abortion without penalty even after the 12th week of pregnancy. **(AP 4)**

During the vote on 25 September, many (women's) organisations and some political parties opposed the increase of the women's pension age from 64 to 65 years. We wanted that first of all the disadvantages in terms of wages or unpaid care work should get eliminated. Unfortunately, the opposing side (mostly men!) won by a minimal margin of 0.4%. **(AP 6,7)**

Intensify cooperation and networking

Especially in a small country like Switzerland, it is enormously important to join forces. This makes it easier to achieve the goals. ADF-SVF has cooperated with the Swiss federal bureau for equality preparing CSW66.

ADF-SVF has continued to successfully expand its national contacts with (women's-)organisations and feminist groups. There were several media interested in the activities of ADF-SVF, mostly related to the event where we made invisible women more visible! **(AP 2)**

ADF-SVF now presided by the Basel section has a regular exchange of information and ideas with the ADF sections Vaud and Neuchâtel. We are particularly grateful that possibly new groups or even re-awakened cantonal sections of ADF-SVF might arise, particularly in Berne.

Cooperation with IAW

ADF-SVF is well connected with IAW. Esther Suter is the official ADF-SVF delegate at IAW. Dr. Sibylle von Heidebrand is the main representative of IAW at United Nations in Geneva, where she is joined by Esther.

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Jessica Kehl represents IAW at FAO in Rome. Heidi Bodmer and Ursula Nakamura are very much involved in the IAW "Water and Pads" project.

ADF-SVF Suisse is proud of being a member of IAW, its worldwide umbrella organisation.

The Swiss Suffragettes joined IAW already in 1912, and ever since have closely worked within this framework for the worldwide empowerment of women and girls.

More than ever it is necessary to work closely together with our IAW colleagues, particularly in the Global South.



2nd Women's Parliament Session" October 2021: 3 former and the present President of the Swiss National Parliament:

From left: Maya Graf, Marina Carobbio, Isabelle Moret and Irène Kälin



Meeting and casual exchange of ideas among ADF-SVF Suisse and ADF Sections 26.09.2022 at Berne.

From left : Annemarie Heiniger, Lucie Waser, Marina Schneeberger, Josiane Greub, Martine Gagnebin and Ursula Nakamura

For all further information about ADF-SVF Suisse please visit the website:

www.feminism.ch (French and German)

29.09.2022 Ursula Nakamura and Annemarie Heiniger, Co-presidents ADF-SVF Suisse

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