



Press release of 18 May 2009

Switzerland enshrines complementary medicine in the constitution

On 17 May 2009 the Swiss people voted in favour of a constitutional article for complementary medicine in a national vote. 67 percent of voters supported the new constitutional article. Switzerland is the first country in Europe to set out in the constitution, authority for the state and constituent states (cantons) to take complementary medicine into consideration in the public health service.

During the last few years complementary medicine has been politically marginalized in Switzerland.

Therefore, the complementary medicine sector, including doctors, therapists, manufacturers and specialized traders, together launched and brought about a national popular initiative. This enables Swiss voters to obtain a popular vote for a constitutional amendment if they collect 100,000 valid signatures within 18 months.

Parliament availed itself of its right to oppose the proposers' constitutional article and suggest a slightly diluted form. Since parliament's counterproposal adopted all the core demands on a legal level, the original popular initiative was withdrawn. Therefore, the people only had to vote on a constitutional article, which, experience has shown, increases the chances of them voting in favour. Particularly because parliament and the government support the parliamentary proposal.

On 17 May 2009, Swiss voters clearly approved the constitutional article proposed by parliament. The majority of voters per canton also voted in favour, which is likewise a prerequisite for any constitutional amendment.

In accordance with the referendum, the Swiss Federal constitution will be expanded by the following article:

Federal constitution Art. 118a BV (new):

The Federal government and cantons shall ensure that, within the scope of their jurisdiction, complementary medicine is taken into consideration.

Definite need for action

On this constitutional basis, parliament and the authorities have to implement the following requirements:

1. Admission of doctors of complementary medicine in the fields of anthroposophical medicine, homeopathy, neural therapy, phytotherapy and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) into obligatory health insurance.
2. Creation of national diplomas for non-medical therapists.
3. Integration of complementary medicine into teaching and research.
4. Safeguarding of proven remedies.

For questions please contact:

Walter Stüdeli, Head of politics & media «The future with complementary medicine»

Mobile +41 79 330 23 46, Tel. +41 31 560 00 24 / Fax +41 31 560 00 25 / info@koest.ch