

Petition «Let's have the courage to extend democracy».

Addressed to the Government Council and parliament of the Canton of Glarus, launched on 15th September 2024

The requests of the petition

- a) The communal right to vote and to be elected into public offices for people without Swiss citizenship shall be promoted and implemented in the revision of the “Gemeindegesetz”.
- b) The framework for political participation for people without Swiss citizenship is to be improved through additional targeted actions and services.

Statement of Reasons

Roughly a quarter of the residents in the canton of Glarus do not possess Swiss passports, which prevents them from actively engaging in the political process. Despite not having the right to vote or be elected, many people having lived in Glarus for a long time, call Switzerland and specifically the canton of Glarus their home. They may be second or third generation immigrants or were born here. Most of these residents have become an integral part of our society. They have been raised here, contribute to the workforce, pay taxes, participate in community organizations, and are affected by our collective political decisions. They all play a role in fostering economic prosperity and cultural richness of Glarus, yet they are denied the fundamental right of political participation, apart from the right to submit petitions. Additionally, the canton of Glarus ranks among the three cantons with the lowest rates of naturalization.¹

Eight cantons and 600 municipalities have already extended voting rights to individuals without Swiss nationality. Enabling the largest minority to participate at the communal level would not only be a matter of social recognition but also a significant boost to communal autonomy. It would be a progressive step forward in democratic policy.

In the municipalities of the Canton of Glarus, the extension of municipal voting and election rights faces current limitations as per Article 56 of the Cantonal Constitution. The signatories of the petition are pleased to note the government's intent to discuss and establish the foundation for broadening political participation at the municipal level as part of the legislative planning for 2023-2026. However, this initiative encountered significant resistance within the Landrat, with approval achieved only at the second attempt with a narrow margin of 27 votes to 26. The balance of power in the Landrat is delicately poised, leaving uncertainty as to whether and, more importantly, when the potential expansion of political rights for non-Swiss citizens will be incorporated into our legislation.

The signatories call upon the Regierungsrat of the Canton of Glarus to promptly create the basic legal conditions for persons without Swiss citizenship residing in the Canton of Glarus to be granted the right to vote and to stand for election at the municipal level and to submit it to the Landrat (cantonal council) and the Landsgemeinde for adoption (concern a). The signatories also appeal to the members of the Landrat to support the request and

¹ <https://dam-api.bfs.admin.ch/hub/api/dam/assets/23828703/master>, S. 19 (zuletzt abgerufen am 28.08.2023)

to submit it to the Landsgemeinde for approval (request a). In addition, the signatories would like to call upon and encourage the Regierungsrat of the Canton of Glarus to promote the political participation of people without Swiss citizenship through further measures and offers (concern b).

The Canton of Glarus, known for its direct form of democracy, serves as a vivid example of how inclusive participation opportunities and an easily accessible political process enhance democratic decision-making. Embracing such measures would not only reinforce the values of democracy but also be in line with the canton's democratic traditions.

Comitee of the petition:

Regula N. Keller, Präsidentin GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Ennenda

Kaj Weibel, Vizepräsident GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Mollis,

Eva-Maria Kreis, Vizepräsidentin GRÜNE Kt. Glarus

Christian Büttiker, Präsident SP, Netstal

Dazayini Raveendran, Netstal

Leana Meier, Vorstandsmitglied GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Mollis

Andreas Streiff, Vorstandsmitglied GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Mollis

Sabine Steinmann, Geschäftsleitung und Landrätin SP, Oberurnen

Beatrice Martella, Riedern

Niculò Zubler, Vorstandsmitglied GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Glarus

Marlies Murer, Vorstandsmitglied GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Ennenda

Sarah Küng, Landrätin SP, Glarus

Peter Lampert, Ennenda, Glarus

Ludovic Howald, Vorstandsmitglied GRÜNE Kt. Glarus, Schwändi

Johanna Göring, Glarus

Peter Grimm, Ennenda