

## POLITICAL TRANSPARENCY

# Initiative aims to shed light on party financing

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**Swiss political parties and voting committees must be transparent and say from whom they receive large sums of money. This is the demand of organisers of an initiative who on Tuesday handed in the necessary signatures to the Federal Chancellery.**

“We want everyone’s cards to be on the table. This is crucial for democracy,” said Nadine Masshardt, a parliamentarian for the left-wing Social Democratic Party.



Handing in boxes of signatures for a vote on transparent party funding (Keystone)

The almost 110,000 valid signatures – 10,000 more than required – mean the issue will go to a nationwide vote.

“It’s high time that voters can have a say on this,” Masshardt said, pointing out that parliament had rejected every proposal for increased transparency. “Yet, polls say two-thirds of voters want more transparency.”

If the initiative were to be accepted by voters, parties would have to publish the origin of all donations over CHF10,000 (\$10,250). In addition, individuals and committees who donate more than CHF100,000 to a campaign – or more than CHF10,000 per person – would have to declare the total amount they have donated and where it all came from.

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Accepting anonymous donations would be illegal.

## Informed opinion

Rosmarie Quadranti from the centre-right Conservative Democratic Party said people could only have an informed opinion if they have all the information. "Knowing who is funding which parties and campaigns is an important part of that puzzle," she said.

Another parliamentarian said the initiative was a chance to create some trust. "Switzerland is the only country in Europe to have no rules on party funding, resulting in regular criticism from the Council of Europe's European Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)," said Lisa Mazzone from the left-wing Green Party.

Non-governmental organisation Transparency International has criticised the Swiss system as fostering corruption and abuse of party funds. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has also pushed for more transparency.

Parliament will discuss the initiative at a later stage before the government is due to set a date for a nationwide vote.

*swissinfo.ch and agencies/ts*

## Links

[!\[\]\(c50c8b7b2cc2cf9ff925edec0ee94c0d\_img.jpg\) Initiative for political transparency \(German, French, Italian\)](#)

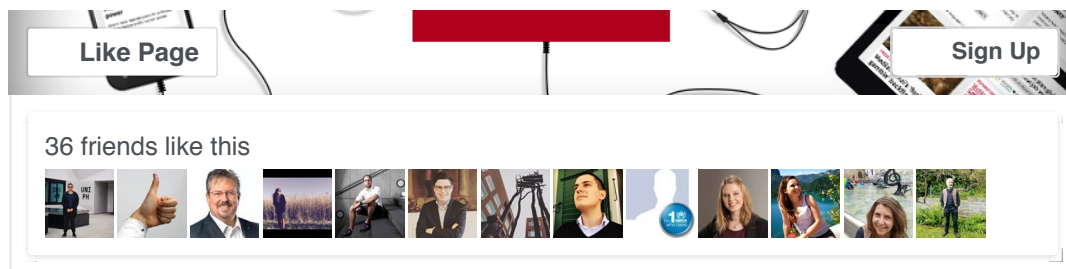
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