

Elżbieta KUŻELEWSKA

University of Białystok

Do the Swiss not want to join the EU? Swiss Referenda on European integration

Abstract: Switzerland is unique in Western Europe, not having joined the European Union (EU). Switzerland is still neither a member of the EU nor of the European Economic Area. However, the Swiss were asked to vote on issues concerning the EU several times. Three times the results of those referenda were negative. The Swiss seem to be satisfied with a relationship with the EU based on bilateral agreements. They do not see the need for closer cooperation, within the structure of the EU. The aim of this paper is to explore whether the citizens of Switzerland want to join the EU or not. Analyzing the negative results of Swiss referenda on issues concerning the EU might be helpful in understanding the Swiss point of view.

Key words: Switzerland, referenda, the European Union, popular initiative

Introduction

In accordance with its long tradition of sovereignty and neutrality, Switzerland is unique in Western Europe, not having joined the European Union (EU). Switzerland is still neither a member of the EU nor even of the European Economic Area (EEA). Switzerland's relationship with the EU, its neutrality, direct democracy and federalism are at the heart of the debate. The preservation of neutrality was the principle goal of Swiss foreign policy when the process of European integration was launched after World War II. Joining the European Economic Community was incompatible with the independence of the Swiss people. Because Switzerland is bordered on all sides by EU Member States, the Swiss maintain a bilateral relationship with the EU. Direct democracy is central to the political process in Switzerland (Lutz, 2012, p. 18).¹ Switzerland remains the most directly democratic polity among advanced democracies (Donovan, 2006, p. 672). The significance of referenda in the Swiss political system has led to it being described as *Monseigneur Référendum* (Kuźelewska, 2011, p. 309). The agreements resulting from the bilateral approach have been submitted to the Swiss electorate and approved at regular intervals having produced a positive result in – six referenda. Several times the Swiss people have been asked to vote on issues concerning European integration, and three times they voted against. My task in this paper will be to explore whether the

¹ There is a fixed calendar currently until the year 2029 with four annual dates when votes will take place.

citizens of Switzerland really do not want to join the European Union and if so, why? The paper is also devoted to the presentation of the negative Swiss referenda results on European Union issues.

EU-Switzerland relations

Switzerland is the third largest economic partner of the EU, after the USA and China. Switzerland is able to participate in the EU's single market thanks to a series of bilateral agreements.

Table 1

Bilateral agreements between the EU and Switzerland

1972 – free trade on industrial products
1989 – insurance (equal rights of establishment for insurance companies, excluding life insurance)
1990 (revised in 2009) – custom facilitation and security (regulations of control and formalities in goods transport; 24-hour rule)
1990 – Bilateral I (Vahl, Grolimund, 2006, p. 12, p. 22 ff) – free movement of persons, technical obstacles to trade, public procurement market, agriculture, research, civil aviation, overland transport
2004 – Bilateral II (Vahl, Grolimund, 2006, p. 29 ff) – Schengen Area/Dublin Convention, taxation of savings, fight against fraud, processed agricultural products, media programmes, environment, statistics, taxation of pensions of EU civil servants retired in Switzerland
2006 – Memorandum of understanding on Swiss financial participation in reducing economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU
2010 – Agreement on education, vocational training and youth programmes
2011 – Agreement on reciprocal protection of registered designations of origin
2012 – Signature of an arrangement institutionalising cooperation between Switzerland and the European Defence Agency

Source: Own study of the author.

The establishment of the Economic Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960 and the signing of the Free Trade Agreement in 1972 between the European Economic Community and Switzerland form the basis of its relations with the EU (EU-Switzerland). The basis for economic exchange was laid in 1972 with the Free Trade Agreement, approved by the nation in a referendum. Switzerland's participation in the EEA put it on the road to full economic integration. The Bilateral I and Bilateral II agreements mean that Switzerland enjoys the benefits of EU Member States and EEA countries on the four core freedoms without having lost any sovereignty or decision-making power.

Legal remarks on referendum and popular initiative

The Constitution of Switzerland of 1999 (in force since 2000) recognises various forms of direct democracy:

I. Compulsory referendum (Article 140):

(1) the following shall be submitted to the vote of the People and Cantons: a) revision of the Federal Constitution; b) entry into organisations for collective security or into su-

pranational communities; c) Federal Statutes declared urgent which have no constitutional basis and whose validity exceeds one year, such Federal Statutes must be submitted to a vote within one year after their adoption by the Federal Parliament; (2) the following shall be submitted to the vote by the People: a) popular initiatives for total revision of the Federal Constitution; b) popular initiatives for partial revision of the Federal Constitution in the form of a general suggestion which were rejected by the Federal Parliament; c) the question whether a total revision of the Constitution should be carried out, if both Chambers disagree.

II. Optional referendum (Article 141):

(1) the following are submitted to the vote of the People at the request of 50,000 citizens entitled to vote, or of eight cantons: a) Federal Statutes; b) Federal Statutes declared urgent with a validity exceeding one year; c) federal decrees to the extent the Constitution or statute foresee this; d) international treaties which: 1. are of unlimited duration and may not be terminated, 2. provide for entry into an international organisation, 3. involve a multilateral unification of law; (2) The Federal Parliament may submit further international treaties to optional referendum.

III. Popular initiative for total revision of the Federal Constitution (Article 138):

(1) 100,000 citizens entitled to vote may propose a total revision of the Federal Constitution; (2) this proposal has to be submitted to the people by referendum.

IV. Popular initiative for partial revision of the Federal Constitution (Article 139):

(1) 100,000 citizens entitled to vote may propose a partial revision of the Federal Constitution. (2) A popular initiative for a partial revision of the Federal Constitution may be in the form of a general suggestion or a formulated draft. (3) If an initiative does not respect the principle of unity of form, the principle of unity of subject matter, or mandatory rules of international law, the Federal Parliament shall declare the initiative. (4) If the Federal Parliament approves an initiative in the form of a general suggestion, it shall prepare a partial revision in the sense of the initiative, and submit it to a vote of the people and the Cantons. If it rejects the initiative, it shall submit it to a vote of the People; the People shall decide whether the initiative should be followed. If the People approve the initiative, the Federal Parliament shall formulate a corresponding draft. (5) An initiative in the form of a formulated draft shall be submitted to the vote of the People and the Cantons. The Federal Parliament shall recommend its approval or its rejection. If it recommends its rejection, it may submit its own counter-draft. (6) The People and the Cantons shall vote simultaneously on the initiative and the counter-draft. The voters may approve both drafts (Musiał-Karg, 2012, p. 121–134). They may indicate which draft they prefer, should both be approved; should one of the drafts obtain a majority of the People's votes and the other a majority of the votes of the Cantons, neither of them shall come into force, in whole or in part.

Referenda on European issues

The Swiss seem to be satisfied with relationship with the EU, based on bilateral agreements (Musiał-Karg, 2012a, p. 208). They do not see the need for closer cooperation, within the structure of the EU. The country's scepticism about joining the EU was seen

firstly in the negative results of the December 1992 referendum on joining the EEA. This negative attitude towards the joining the EU was confirmed in March 2001 referendum when the Swiss voted against the citizen's initiative called "Yes to Europe", aimed at opening membership negotiations. The Swiss have voted nine times in referenda concerning European integration (see table 1). In this paper the concept of Leo Besselink is supported, for whom "no" is more significant than "yes"; "no" makes everyone wonder why the people voted against (Besselink 2006, p. 346). For this reason the referenda with positive results shall only be briefly mentioned, in order to focus on the votes with negative outcomes.

Table 2

Swiss Referenda on EU issues

Date of Referendum	Subject of Voting	Type of referendum	Result	For %	Against %	Turn-out %
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1972.12.03	Federal decree on Agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the EEC Member States of the EC on coal and steel	Customary Mandatory Treaty Referendum	yes	72.53	27.47	52.90
1992.12.06	Federal decree on European Economic Area	Customary Mandatory Treaty Referendum	no	49.66	50.34	78.73
1997.06.08	Citizen's initiative "Negotiations on joining the EU: let the people decide!"	Initiative	no	25.95	74.05	35.44
2000.05.21	Federal decree on Approval of sector agreements between Switzerland and the EC and/or its Member States, or Euratom	Optional Treaty Referendum	yes	67.19	32.81	48.30
2001.03.04	Citizen's initiative "Yes to Europe"	Initiative	no	23.15	76.85	55.79
2005.06.05	Federal decree of 17 December 2004 on the approval and implementation of bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU on the Schengen and Dublin accords	Optional Treaty Referendum	yes	54.63	45.37	56.63
2005.09.25	Federal decree on the approval and implementation of the protocol on the extension of the agreement on the free movement of persons to the new EU member states, between Switzerland on the one hand and the EU and its members states on the other, as well as approval of the revision of the accompanying measures on the free movement of persons	Optional Treaty Referendum	yes	55.98	44.02	54.51
2006.11.26	Federal Law of 24 March 2006 on cooperation with the countries of Eastern Europe	Optional Legislative Referendum	yes	53.42	46.58	44.98

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2009.02.08	Federal Decree of 13 June 2008 approving the renewal of the agreement between Switzerland and the European Community and its Member States on the free movement of persons, and the approval and implementation of the Protocol to extend the agreement on free movement to Bulgaria and Romania	Optional Treaty Referendum	yes	59.61	40.39	51.44

Source: Centre for Direct Democracy Research, <http://www.c2d.ch/>, 26.04.2013.

A. Referenda on EU issues with positive results

The first referendum on European issues was held on 12 March 1972. The Swiss voted on agreement between the Swiss Confederation and EEC Member States on coal and steel. The result was positive (72.53% voted for, the turnout was quite high – 52.90%) because the Swiss realised that the Swiss economy was an export economy by tradition. The Free Trade Agreement provided the basis for intensive trade relations with Switzerland’s most important trade partners, like the EU and its Member States (*Bilateral*, 2007, p. 15). Although Switzerland signed an agreement with the EU that removed all tariffs on industrial products in 1972, it could not become a full member for three reasons: 1. it would have had to relinquish a portion of its sovereignty to the EU; 2. its neutrality could have been affected; 3. economic reasons (Thompson, 2012, p. 252).

In the May 2000 referendum, voters accepted an agreement on dismantling technical barriers to trade. The Swiss voters broke with their long-held isolationism and approved agreements with the EU that linked this tiny alpine nation more closely with its neighbours. The simplified import of EU products gives consumer a wider choice and puts pressure on prices (*Bilateral*, 2007, p. 27). The strongest supporters were inhabitants of urban (70.3%) and francophone areas (nearly 80%). The cantons with the highest percentage of “yes” votes were: Vaud, Neuchatel, Geneve, Jura, Fribourg (*Votation*, 2000).

In the June 2005 referendum, the Swiss voted in favour of joining the Schengen area. It resulted in the fact that on 12 December 2008, Switzerland became the 25th member of the European area of free movement of persons and the third Schengen ‘associated’ country, i.e. a non-EU member, after Iceland and Norway, and just ahead of Liechtenstein. The Schengen agreement facilitates travel by abolishing identity checks at internal Schengen borders; guarantees security, thanks to close cross-border cooperation between the justice and police systems; extends the area of application of the Schengen visa (valid for 3 months) to Switzerland. Because Switzerland is not a member of the EU Customs Union, it is treated as a special case in Schengen: checks still take place at the Swiss border (Ruspini, 2008, p. 177). The Dublin agreement coordinates national responsibilities for asylum procedures; it reduces the load on national asylum systems by preventing multiple applications; it provides access to the EURODAC fingerprint data bank. The strongest opponent to Schengen was Christophe Blocher and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP).

In his opinion, the main reason for rejecting the Schengen agreement and the Dublin treaty was that they constituted a serious attack on Swiss security, freedom and tradition. The SVP also opposed the extension of the free circulation of people from the new EU Member States of Eastern Europe, due to the risk of an excessive influx of immigrants (Mazzoleni, 2007, p. 229).

It should be stressed here that the EU Commissioner for External Affairs, Benita Ferrero – Waldner, said after the vote that Switzerland would not be allowed to join Schengen unless its voters also voted “yes” on a more controversial question in the September 2005 referendum (Thompson, 2012, p. 252).

In the September 2005 referendum, the Swiss approved the agreement on the free movement of persons. Although remaining bilateral agreements were automatically extended to include both Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU in 2007, as far as freedom of movement is concerned, particular negotiations are still being held to decide on quota levels (Ruspini, 2008, p. 174). Every fifth gainfully employed person in Switzerland is a foreign national. The Swiss economy depends on imported labour. Increased labour mobility makes it easier to find suitable staff for specific jobs. The availability of suitable staff improves both productivity and growth. Finally, Swiss citizens have equal access to the EU labour market and can establish themselves in the EU more easily (*Bilateral*, 2007, p. 23). Swiss voters feared that Eastern Europeans would swamp them and take their jobs from them (Thompson, 2012, p. 252).

The positive outcome of the November 2006 referendum meant that the Swiss agreed to continue the support of the democratic, social and market-economy reforms in the former Communist states of Eastern Europe and to give financial support to the new EU Member States. The cantons with the strongest opponents to this cooperation (less than 40%) were: Ticino and Schwyz (*Votation*, 2006).

The protocol on the extension of free movement concerning the ten new Member States, and the subsequent tightening of the accompanying measures, were approved by Swiss electors in a popular vote. In the referendum of 25 September 2009, the Swiss agreed by a majority of 56% to extend the agreement on the free movement of persons concluded by Berne and the EU in 1999 to the ten new states of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe that joined the EU club in 2004. Three and a half years later, they did the same: on 8 February 2009, 59.6% of the Swiss population voted in favour of renewing this agreement and extending it to Romania and Bulgaria, which joined the Union in 2007. Swiss voters decided to support the proposal. This means that from now on workers from all EU Member States can live and work freely in Switzerland, although the country is not itself an EU member. Only three small German-speaking cantons and the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino voted against the pact (Hershman 2009). The positive result of the referendum was quite surprising, taking into consideration the aggressive, antagonistic campaign launched by the right-wing SVP which published a poster on which Bulgarian and Romanian workers were portrayed as black crows biting the country and called the two states “Europe’s third world” (Krumowa, 2009).

Overall, then, the results do not seem that disappointing. Among the nine referenda concerning EU issues, the Swiss voted against in only three cases. Let us try to analyze the reasons for rejection (Switzerland-EU: In-Laws).



Picture 1. An election poster of the right-wing Swiss People’s Party (SVP) showing three crows surrounding Switzerland and reading in French: ‘Open doors for abuse? NO!’

Source: Krumowa (2009), <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/world/swiss-referendum-free-movement-eu-citizens-11690.html>, 6.05.2013.

B. Referenda on EU issues with negative results

– Referendum on EEA agreement

The first referendum held in Switzerland whose outcome was negative concerned joining the European Economic Area,² and the extension of the European single market to the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Switzerland had long been a member of EFTA, and the end of the Cold War removed the main obstacle to it becoming a member of the EC/EU, so an application for accession was made (Nugent, 2006, p. 33).

When the agreement on the EEA was signed in May 1992, polls indicated that most of the Swiss strongly supported it. Moreover, the EEA agreement was also supported by the parliament: 62% votes “for” in the National Council, 85% “for” in the Council of States (Dupont, Sciarini, 2001, p. 231) and cantonal councils. It was almost certain that in the December 1992 referendum the Swiss would approve joining the EEA. The lessons from the EEA negotiations for the EFTA nations were clear. Truly deep economic integration was almost impossible without some form of political integration. The real options facing

² The three other members of EFTA – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – did choose to join the EEA.

Switzerland were either to accept hegemonic authority from Brussels on Single Market matters – or to join the EU. This realisation convinced the Swiss government that joining the EU was the best way to redress the impending discrimination of the Single Market (Clyde Hufbauer, Baldwin, 2006, p. 260).

Despite the fact that the idea of entering the EEA was endorsed by most of the establishment, the result of voting was unexpectedly negative: 50.3% of the voters rejected it and Swiss accession talks never started. Victory in the referendum was missed by fewer than 24,000 votes. Sixteen cantons (of 23) were against (Bernet, 1992, p. 945).³ The turnout was extremely high – 78.73%. Nearly 80% of the people took part in the referendum, having mobilised 30% of these voters who never used to vote before (Landau, 1993, p. 80). Many habitual abstainers turned out to vote against the idea, encouraged by a skilful ‘anti’ campaign which turned the establishment’s earlier doubts about the EC against the EEA (Church, 2003, p. 11).

Among the government coalition, three parties were in favour of the EEA agreement: the Social Democratic Party, Christian Democratic People’s Party and FDP the Liberals. The Swiss People’s Party was against (Papadopoulos, 2001, p. 39), supported by the Greens and Swiss Democrats (Ray, 1999, p. 305). Why did the people vote “no” in the referendum? The main reasons for rejecting were: fear of loss of sovereignty (16%), criticism of the EU and its system (12%), lack of required information (13%), and unclear attitude of the Swiss government – 11% (Sciarini, Listhaug, 1997, p. 427). The Swiss were also afraid to be ruled by foreigners from Brussels as a result of entry to the EU (Gallagher, 1997, p. 77).

The opponents of the EEA gave mainly economic and political arguments. Those who campaigned against the EEA maintained that Switzerland was both sufficiently armed and important enough in the eyes of the EU Member States to be allowed to continue enjoying its customary bilateral relations with the EU (Egger, 1998, p. 98). They focused on loss of neutrality of state policy, disappearance of direct democracy, threat of mass immigration resulting in increased unemployment and wage cuts (Sciarini, Listhaug, 1997, p. 418). Most of the Swiss underlined the need for the continuation of the neutrality policy in accordance with tradition and current politics (Landau, 1993, p. 79). The citizens of Switzerland were afraid of an inflow of foreigners as a result of open borders. They also feared the competences of the parliament would become smaller, and the competences of the Supreme Court would be reduced. The Swiss feared negative results for farmers, as a result of an open national market for the EU’s goods (Schwok, 1990, p. 226–227). The Swiss were convinced that joining the EEA would lead to full membership of the EU in the future. This scenario could not be accepted, as the Swiss were afraid of loss of direct democracy and changes in their traditional life-style. The main forms of direct democracy in Switzerland, like referenda and citizens’ initiatives are significant in the political process (Sidjanski, 1988, p. 31). No one could imagine a situation where the people’s veto would be exercised on European treaties, because it could result in blocking the decision-making process on the European level (Tanquerel 1991, p. 207).

³ Against the EEA agreement were 14 cantons and 4 half-cantons.

Due to this rejection, the EEA Treaty needed to be adjusted and could only enter into force in January 1994. As a matter of fact, Switzerland and the EC were forced to choose a new track, they started to negotiate on so-called bilateral agreements (Beck, Klöti, 2007, p. 8).

– Initiative “Negotiations on joining the EU: let the people decide”

The citizens’ initiative held in 1997, “Negotiations on joining the EU: let the people decide” was also unsuccessful. The turnout was the lowest in history – 35.44%. Fewer than 26% of voters supported the idea. The initiative committee took its lead from the pro-sovereignty, extreme-right Lega dei Ticinesi and the Swiss Democrats. The text stipulated that negotiations on accession could only be undertaken if both the people and cantons agreed so. The aim was to prompt the Federal Council to withdraw its application for membership. All were against this initiative: the Federal Council, the Parliament, the political parties, trade unions, the financial community and media (Schwok 2009, p. 88). The rejection of the initiative was, however, not the result of sudden “europhile” sentiments among the Swiss, but rather was caused by institutional motives (Trechsel, 2007, p. 45). As Hanspeter Kriesi mentions, beyond a certain threshold, the outcome of the vote no longer depends on the intensity of the campaign (Kriesi, 2007, p. 87).

– Initiative “Yes to Europe”

In March 2001, the Swiss rejected a proposal on negotiations regarding Switzerland’s potential entry to the EU. The referendum was a result of a citizens’ initiative. The idea of holding a referendum came from the socialists, the youth organisation “New Swiss European Movement” and the citizens’ association “Yes for Europe” (Centre for Research on Direct Democracy (c2d)). The socialists strongly supported Switzerland’s membership of the EU, accusing the government of being against holding a referendum on this issue and recommending voting against (Marquis, Sciarini, 1999, p. 459). The long-term goal of the federal government was to enter the EU, in the belief that Switzerland’s interests would be better protected as a member of the EU than outside it (DeRouen, Heo, 2005, p. 770). Apart from the main financial and political preconditions, the government realised the most important factor: sufficient domestic support for the entry (unattainable that time). Meanwhile, the initiators of the referendum truly believed that a positive outcome would push Switzerland to become a member of the EU before 2010. The Swiss government having been against the issue, argued its own position on beginning accession negotiations without tied hands (Centre for Research on Direct Democracy (c2d)). In reality, only the Greens conducted campaign that was genuinely in favour of EU membership (CNN.com).

The result of the referendum was interpreted by the government as an objection to immediate negotiations, rather than merely the rejection of potential membership in the EU (Kuźelewska, 2006, p. 194). The outcome was a signal that the EU accession negotiations should start later. The same attitude was presented by the European Commission, according to whom negative results did not mean “no for the EU” but for such a choice in the more distant future. However, one of the nationalist leaders said: “The result of the refer-

endum has shown that we will not join the EU in its present form [...]. The EU is a complete intellectual disaster and it will be empty soon” (Hetherington-Gore, 2013).

“Although this is what the government wanted, the result was, as already suggested, a pyrrhic victory. For though it freed the government from having to start talks at a time when there was little chance of them being successful, whether in Brussels or at home, the fact that this was a technical issue, and not one of principle, was rarely appreciated outside the country, and sometimes not within it either. The ‘Yes’ vote may also have made the start of new bilateral negotiations with the EU even more difficult. It may have encouraged the EU to doubt whether it was worth making concessions to a country which was probably not going to apply anyway. So, direct democracy clearly shows the continuing force of popular doubts about Europe” (Church, 2003, p. 12). The stronger supporters were in urban areas (nearly 23%) and francophone cantons (40%): Neuchatel, Jura, Geneve (*Votation* 2001). The strongest opponents (fewer than 10%) were in two cantons: Appenzell Innerrhoden (6.8%) and Uri 9.4% (*Votation* 2001).

These two initiatives are known as referenda on candidacy for membership, because formal accession negotiations have never been opened with Switzerland (Miller, 2012, p. 4).

Conclusions

Have the arguments against EU membership been the same in these referenda? They have been quite similar. The opponents cautioned against limits on direct democracy and the famous confidentiality of Swiss banks (Surdel, 2001). Membership of the EU was identified with loss of the right to referenda and citizens’ initiatives (Mahon, Miller, 1998, p. 449–450). Switzerland makes greater use of citizen-initiated referenda than any other major polity. For the Swiss, direct democracy is very important (Donovan, Karp, 2006, p. 676–677). Switzerland faces an external identity crisis. The EU has begun to develop into a loose, multinational confederation. The EU will force changes, even if Switzerland stays out. The absolute right of the people to thumb their nose at authority will be limited (Steinberg, 2003, p. 253).

The Swiss doubted the economic profits from accession, as Switzerland’s economic situation was better than some of the Member States. Switzerland has the lowest inflation and unemployment indexes, higher economic growth and a strong currency. For more than 150 years, Switzerland has shown more or less constant, stable economic growth. No one was interested in exchanging Swiss francs for Euros. The feeling that the Swiss would not gain anything from EU membership was quite widespread, and that they would lose their independence and unique federal systems.

Paolo Dardanelli presents quite a different belief. In his opinion, if Switzerland entered the EU, membership would not present a fundamental problem for its federal system and would constitute more an evolution of the present situation than a revolution. What is more, federalism’s connection with direct democracy and national identity would be significant for Switzerland’s relationships with the EU (Dardanelli, 2007, p. 17).

The Swiss case demonstrates that direct democracy and political integration are likely to be intertwined in a troubled relationship; the two might eventually end up reinforcing each other: “the EU built on a still fragile European identity that requires the legitimacy

only direct democracy can lend, while direct democracy might profit from the opportunity to convince its detractors that its potential reaches are well beyond local politics and Swiss political folklore” (Kölliker, 2007, p. 50).

Engaging in bilateral treaties with the EU allows Switzerland to work closely with the EU, without the need for full integration. This situation seems to be more convenient for the Swiss, as the bilateral approach does not require Switzerland to implement EU laws or accept EU legislation above its own. When the Swiss want to negotiate cooperation on a new area of relations with the EU, they establish Joint Bilateral Commissions to work out the details (Ruffle, 2013, p. 3).

Due to Switzerland’s geographical location, cooperation with the EU is essential, as rules in one state have implications on others. Thus, Switzerland does have to take into account the EU’s laws, leading some to claim that Switzerland is a virtual member of the EU. The Swiss government states that bilateral relations with the EU have had no effect on the validity and integrity of direct democracy or federal structures of Switzerland (Ruffle, 2013, p. 3). Because the Swiss do not have to accept every rule of Brussels’ legislation, they can maintain a competitive economy and prosper in the globalised world. Bilateral agreement is a recipe for success. Their relations with the EU are to be continued in this way.

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Streszczenie

Czy Szwajcarzy nie chcą dołączyć do UE? Szwajcarskie referenda w sprawie integracji europejskiej

Szwajcaria jest jednym z nielicznych państw Europy Zachodniej, które nie przystąpiły do UE. Szwajcarzy kilkakrotnie wzywani byli do głosowania w referendum w sprawach związanych z UE, niemniej trzykrotnie głosowali przeciwko. Obywatele Szwajcarii wydają się być zadowoleni ze stosunków z UE opartych na umowach dwustronnych. Nie widzą potrzeby zacieśniania współpracy. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie czy obywatele Szwajcarii rzeczywiście nie chcą przystąpienia ich państwa do UE. Analiza negatywnych wyników referendów w sprawach dotyczących UE może być przydatna w zrozumieniu szwajcarskiego punktu widzenia.

Słowa kluczowe: Szwajcaria, referenda, Unia Europejska, inicjatywa ludowa

