



Canton of Zurich

Government Council 2025/2026



Dear Reader

Are you interested in the Canton of Zurich? Or do you already call it your home? Either way, congratulations! Here you will find both urban cities and a unique countryside. We have world-class training and education institutions as well as great places to relax in unspoilt nature. We get to enjoy a wide range of cultural and sporting activities, efficient transport, health and education infrastructures, and a strong economy.

In our canton the Pfannenstil is not a pan handle, but a beautiful hilly area on the so-called gold coast side of the lake. The village of Wald might be named after the woods, but it offers much more than just trees. The Rheinfall is not a disastrous fall, and Dietikon and Dietlikon are two very different towns. You will find various animals in the Säuliamt besides piglets, and in Zurich's Weinland there is plenty more to drink than wine.

Our canton is as varied as it is innovative, as rich in tradition as it is cosmopolitan. To ensure it stays that way, we need an active and involved population. Thus not only us government councillors, but your participation, too. So please join in and help us continue to make and keep our canton attractive.



Dr. Martin Neukom

President of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich

The Government Council is the supreme executive authority in the canton. Its seven full-time members are elected every four years. The Government Council's duties include:

- Drafting laws, amendments to the constitution and legislation and spending bills
- Managing a cantonal administration with about 37,000 staff
- Determining the interim and long-term goals of government policies
- Supervising the various authorities
- Preparing the budget
- Representing the canton within Switzerland with respect to the Confederation and other cantons
- Negotiating international and intercantonal agreements
- Ruling on administrative appeals
- Recruiting top-level administrative staff

Martin Neukom

Dr. rer. nat.

President of the Government
Council 2025/2026

Head of the Building Department
since 2019

Party: Greens

Date of birth: 7 July 1986



Political activity

2025/2026 President of the Government Council

2017–2019 Member of the cantonal party executive of the Greens

2017–2019 Member of the executive committee of the Swiss Pedestrian Association (Fussverkehr Schweiz)

2014–2019 Member of the Cantonal Parliament; Member of the Planning and Building Committee

2008–2012 President of the Young Greens (political party) Switzerland

Professional activity

2019 Doctorate in Science at the University of Augsburg

2011–2019 Engineer and product manager at Fluxim AG

2016 Master's degree in solar energy engineering from the University of Freiburg (Germany)

2009–2011 Academic assistant at the ZHAW Institute of Computational Physics (ICP)

2009 Degree in mechatronics from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW)

2006 Completed apprenticeship as technical draughtsman (machinery designer)

Building Department

The Building Department is as diverse as the Canton of Zurich itself, both mirroring and shaping this very special living environment. Among the department's responsibilities is planning spaces to ensure that the 1.6 million or so residents have room to enjoy all the things that make the quality of life in our canton what it is: living, working and recreation. This includes a commitment to intact natural landscapes, clean air and water, and to agriculture and forestry.

The Building Department is also responsible for infrastructure: constructing roads and schools. Its job is to preserve this precious built environment — and the cultural legacy of our forebears — for the generations to come.

[Office of Landscape, Agriculture and Environment](#) | [Office for Spatial Development](#) | [Office of Waste, Water, Energy and Air](#) | [Office of Planning and Architecture](#) | [Real Estate Office](#) | [Office of Civil Engineering](#)

Carmen Walker Späh

RA lic. iur.

Vice-President of the Government Council 2025/2026

Head of the Department for Economic Affairs since 2015

Party: FDP.The Liberals

Date of birth: 29 January 1958



Political activity

- 2025/2026 Vice-President of the Government Council
- 2019/2020 President of the Government Council
- 2010–2017 President of FDP.Die Liberalen Frauen Switzerland
- 2002–2015 Member of the Cantonal Parliament; Member of the Commission for Planning and Building (2003–2015)
- 2000–2005 Member of the Constitutional Council

Professional activity

- 2000–2015 Self-employed lawyer in Zurich
- 1988–2000 Deputy building secretary / head of office of the building inspection and legal service, Building Department, City of Winterthur
- 1989 Admitted to the bar
- 1986–1988 Legal secretary, Building Appeal Commissions, Canton of Zurich
- 1984/1985 Junior Associate in law firm, City of Zurich
- 1983/1984 Intern at the District Court, Pfäffikon ZH
- 1983 Degree in law from the University of Zurich

Department for Economic Affairs

The Department for Economic Affairs is committed to uphold attractive und competitive conditions for companies and their employees. Job seekers are provided with support and opportunities to enhance their skills. It facilitates a diversified, connected and future oriented mobility in Zurich's economic and living space. The objectives are an outstanding location quality, attractive jobs and thus prosperity for all.

Office of Mobility and Transport |
Office for Economy | Office for
Labour | Zurich Transport Authority
(ZVV)

Ernst Stocker

Head of the Department of Finance
since 2015

Party: Swiss People's Party (SVP)

Date of birth: 20 April 1955



Political activity

- 2022/2023 President of the Government Council
- 2015/2016 President of the Government Council
- 2010–2015 Head of the Department for Economic Affairs
- 2006–2010 Member of the Steering Committee of the Association of Municipal Mayors of the Canton of Zurich
- 2006–2010 Mayor of Wädenswil
- 1987–2010 Member of the Cantonal Parliament
- 1998–2006 Councillor of Wädenswil
- 2003/2004 President of the Cantonal Parliament

Professional activity

- until 2007 ran his own farm, also training apprentices
- 1983 Farmer (federal master diploma)

Department of Finance

Most of the Department of Finance's duties fall into the «cross-cutting»-category. They include planning and managing the process of preparing the canton's consolidated development and financial plan (KEF) and the annual budget and financial statements. Its cross-cutting tasks also include providing services for the other departments: human resources, all basic IT services, and producing printed matter. The Department of Finance is also responsible for procuring debt capital and ensuring the canton's solvency at all times. The cantonal Tax Office enforces direct taxes, taxes at source and other levies. Among other things, the General Secretariat reviews applications to the charitable fund, financed with Swisslos money.

[Office of Personnel](#) | [Finance Administration](#) | [Office of Information Technology](#) | [Tax Office](#) | [Cantonal Printed Matter and Supplies Office \(kdmz\)](#)

Mario Fehr

lic. iur.

Head of the Department of Security
since 2011

Party: independent

Date of birth: 13 September 1958



Political activity

- 2023/2024 President of the Government Council
- 2016/2017 President of the Government Council
- 1999–2011 Member of the Swiss National Council
- 1994–2010 Councillor in Adliswil
- 2000–2005 Member of the Constitutional Council
- 1991–2000 Member of the Cantonal Parliament
- 1986–1994 Member of the Communal Parliament of Adliswil

Professional activity

- 2006–2011 President of the Swiss Society of Commercial Employees
- 1992–2008 Teacher at the School for Technical Professions Zurich (TBZ)
- 1989–1994 Educational Work Training Facility Uitikon
- 1986–1988 Intern at Horgen Juvenile Court
- 1985/1986 Intern at Zurich District Court
- 1984/1985 Academic assistant at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich
- 1984 Degree in law from the University of Zurich

Department of Security

The Department of Security deals with questions of public safety, social security and the promotion of sports. The Cantonal Police Force protects society, investigates crimes, guarantees traffic safety and provides administrative assistance and law enforcement as required by the authorities. The Road Traffic Office checks vehicles and tests drivers to ensure they are fit to be on the road. The Migration Office issues entry permits, residence permits and visas. The Office for Military Affairs and Civil Defence implements national legislation in the fields of military affairs and civil protection. The Cantonal Social Welfare Office shapes the social security system and coordinates asylum assistance. The Sports Office handles the canton's commitments in non-school sport. The department is also in charge of the fire brigade and the fire safety and buildings insurance authorities.

[Cantonal Police Force](#) | [Road Traffic Office](#) | [Migration Office](#) | [Office for Military Affairs and Civil Defence](#) | [Cantonal Social Welfare Office](#) | [Sports Office](#) | [Passport Office](#) | [Business Permits/Legalizations](#) | [Weights and Measures Offices](#)

Silvia Steiner

Dr. crim. et lic. iur.

Head of the Department of Education
since 2015

Party: The Centre

Date of birth: 14 March 1958



Political activity

- since 2024 Co-Vice-President of the Swiss Conference of Higher Education Institutions SHK
- 2017–2024 President of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education EDK
- 2020/2021 President of the Government Council
- 2007–2015 Member of the Cantonal Parliament; Member of the Justice Commission, the Commission for Economy and Taxes, the Parliament Investigation Committee BVK
- 1986–1998 Secretary of the District Schools Council in Zurich

Professional activity

- 2005–2015 State prosecutor, head of department; specialist and lead state prosecutor in the field of human trafficking
- 2002–2005 Head of criminal police, Zug police
- 2004 Doctorate at the University of Lausanne
- 1995–2002 High-ranking police officer, head of the criminal police, city police of Zurich
- 1988–1995 District prosecutor
- 1984–1988 Intern and court clerk
- 1984 Degree in law from the University of Zurich

Department of Education

The Department of Education ensures that a broad range of high-quality training and education is provided. Our schools and institutions bring together children, young people and adults with different backgrounds and needs. This is where they receive individual support and learn to develop a sense of community. In cooperation with the schools and local authorities the Department is responsible for all educational levels, including kindergarten, primary, secondary and high school, vocational training as well as higher education and adult education. Child and youth welfare, educational grants and career advice also belong to the Department's tasks. In all, the Department of Education supports the people in their working, family and social lives, thus creating the basis for outstanding achievements in academia, science and research.

Office of Elementary Education | Office for Upper Secondary Schools and Vocational Education | Office of Universities | Office of Youth and Careers Guidance | Educational Publishing House Zurich | School Inspection Agency | Educational Planning

Walcheplatz 2, 8090 Zurich

Phone +41 43 259 23 09, zh.ch/bildungsdirektion

Jacqueline Fehr

Head of the Department of Justice and Home Affairs since 2015

Party: Social Democratic Party (SP)

Date of birth: 1 June 1963



Political activity

- 2021/2022 President of the Government Council
- 2008–2015 Vice-President SP Switzerland
- 1998–2015 Member of the Swiss National Council
- 1991–1998 Member of the Cantonal Parliament
- 1990–1992 Member of the Communal Parliament of Winterthur

Professional activity

- 2013–2015 Executive MPA, University of Berne
- 2012–2015 Owner of atelier politique
- 2002–2012 Project associate
- 1997–2002 Self-employed organisational consultant
- 1994–1996 General secretary, Department of School and Sport, Winterthur
- 1991–1994 Second degree course in psychology, management and political science with intermediate diploma qualification
- 1988–1994 Secondary and specialist subject teacher
- 1987 Degree as a secondary school teacher, phil. I

Department of Justice and Home Affairs

The main activities of the Department of Justice and Home Affairs include the prosecution of offences in adult and juvenile courts, the penal system and the administration of prisons. In addition to all affairs related to justice, the department is responsible for relations with municipalities and religious organisations, cultural promotion, aid for victims of crimes, equality, and the integration of foreign immigrants. The State Archives also come under the aegis of the Department of Justice and Home Affairs.

Public Prosecution Service | Juvenile Criminal Justice | Corrections and Rehabilitation | Office of Municipalities | Commercial Registry Office | Statistical Office | State Archives | Aid to Victims | Office for Equality | Cultural Affairs | Cantonal Integration Office | Offices of District Prefects | Chancelleries of District Councils

Natalie Rickli

Head of the Department of Health
since 2019

Party: Swiss People's Party (SVP)

Date of birth: 19 November 1976



Political activity

2024/2025 President of the Government Council

2007–2019 Member of the Swiss National Council; Member of
the Legal Affairs Committee and the Transport and
Telecommunications Committee

2007 Member of the Cantonal Parliament

2002–2007 Member of the Communal Parliament of Winterthur
(Grosser Gemeinderat)

Professional activity

2018–2019 Self-employed communications consultant,
communication@natalierickli agency

2009–2017 Partner relation manager at Goldbach Group

2005–2009 Site relation manager / team leader at Goldbach Group

1995–2005 Several assignments in advertising and marketing
at various media companies

1995 Completed commercial apprenticeship at fenaco

Department of Health

The Department of Health makes sure the public is provided with high-quality, needs-based and economically viable healthcare. The people of Zurich should be able to rely on comprehensive healthcare. Besides hospitals and other medical facilities, this also includes flawless medicines and foodstuffs and protection from animal diseases and pandemics – all of which the Department of Health and its four offices are committed to assuring.

Office of Public Health | Cantonal
Office for the Control of Medicines |
Cantonal Laboratory | Veterinary
Office

Kathrin Arioli

Dr. iur.

Chancellor since 2018

Date of birth: 16 April 1963



Professional activity

- 2013–2017 Secretary General at the Supreme Court of the Canton of Berne
- 2011–2013 Secretary General at the Department of Home Affairs, Canton of Zug
- 1999–2011 Head of the Office for the Equality of Women and Men, Canton of Zurich
- 1990–1998 Research associate at the Office for the Equality of Women and Men, Canton of Zurich
- 1991 Doctorate in law at the University of Zurich
- 1988–1990 Assistant at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich
- 1988 Degree in law from the University of Zurich

Chancellery

As the central office of the Government Council the Chancellery provides services guaranteeing the smooth functioning of the Government Council as a collegial authority. Its regular tasks including preparing meetings, providing advice on legal matters and on matters of policy, strategy and performance management and organising events. The Chancellery is also responsible for communication with the public, in close cooperation with the departments. The Chancellery provides a wide range of other services to the departments, including the operational management and coordination involved in implementing the canton's digital government strategy. The Chancellery is headed by the Chancellor.

Legal Services | Government Council Communications | Governmental Strategy and Performance Management | Digital Government | External Affairs | Administrative Services

From trams to cable cars: every day more than 1.5 million passengers use the public transport network provided by the Zurich Transport Authority (ZVV).

From coaches to club presidents: 52,000 people are involved in sports clubs in the canton of Zurich on a voluntary basis. They invest a good 12 hours a month in their work.

From large groups to SMEs: The canton of Zurich has the strongest economy in Switzerland, with almost every fifth franc in the country generated here.





From star sopranos to folk sessions: With more than 100 professionally managed arts establishments, there's a venue for every art and culture.

From kindergarten to university: Every day, around 320,000 children, young people and adults attend an educational institution, of which more than 53,000 study at a university or university of applied sciences.

From tree to road: Around one-third of the most populous canton in Switzerland is covered by trees. It has a network of 1,310 km of cantonal roads.

From cutting-edge medicine to nursing care: Around 50 hospitals and clinics, 260 old people's and nursing homes as well as 3,500 independent physicians work with other professionals and institutions to provide good health care.





zh.ch/imagefilm