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# Aktuelle Wohnungen Zürich

Immer noch auf der Suche nach einer Wohnung in Zürich? Akt.  
Angebot



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English Forum Switzerland > Living in Switzerland > Swiss politics/news  
American professor denied Swiss citizenship

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Page 1 of 21 1 2 3 4 5 11 > Last >>

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14.10.2014, 00:46 #1



**MennoFloyd**  
Member  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Aug 2013  
Location: Deutschschweiz  
Posts: 184  
Groaned at 0 Times in 0 Posts  
Thanked 310 Times in 132 Posts

## American professor denied Swiss citizenship

Einsiedeln (SZ) rejected the Swiss citizenship application of a 75 year-old retired American, who had been an chemical engineering professor at the ETH, due to lack of integration. According to 20 Minuten, his application was rejected specifically due to his lack of knowledge of local politics and geography although he passed tests of basic Swiss political knowledge and demonstrated sufficient German skills. Furthermore, his financial affairs were in order and he had a good reputation. He has lived in Einsiedeln for 39 years, raised three children there and taught and researched at the ETH for 30 years. The naturalisation commission stated it presumed that he was seeking citizenship for personal benefits and security, although it is not clear from the article whether this weighed on the decision. His CHF 3'600 application fee was not refunded:

<http://www.20min.ch/schweiz/zentrals...rgert-25550285>

Quote

The following 6 users would like to thank MennoFloyd for this useful post:

[Dack Rambo](#), [flow23](#), [HollidayG](#), [Hoppy](#), [kittekat](#), [Potrzebie](#)

14.10.2014, 05:10 #2



**Treverus**  
Forum Legend  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Dec 2007  
Location: SG (the far away one...)  
Posts: 7,579  
Groaned at 139 Times in 114 Posts  
Thanked 12,073 Times in 4,484 Posts

## Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisation.

A retired American professor tried to get a Swiss passport after living over 39 years in Switzerland. He

- has been teaching at ETH for 3 decades,
- has three adult children who grew up in the country,
- is part of various local clubs
- speaks German well enough
- good financial record
- no criminal record and locals recommending him for naturalisation

His request was turned down on the basis of lacking geography and local politics knowledge. (His friends apparently do not live in the village he lives in, he did not name the six next villages around his correctly and he was not aware of some local village politics topics). He will still have to pay 3600 CHF for the application and legal process.

He can bring his case to the court of canton Schwyz if he decides to fight his case.

<http://www.20min.ch/schweiz/zentrals...rgert-25550285>

"He is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions." - 1 Timothy 6:4



The following 2 users would like to thank Treverus for this useful post:

[Dack Rambo](#), [MennoFloyd](#)

14.10.2014, 07:08 #3

[happyrobbie](#)  
Forum Veteran  
★★★★★

Join Date: Apr 2012  
Location: Sion/VS, Fribourg/FR, Bern/BE  
Posts: 715  
Groaned at 11 Times in 8 Posts  
Thanked 255 Times in 147 Posts

Re: American professor denied Swiss citizenship

That's strange.

So he passed the national politics test but lacks knowledge of local politics?

and about geography. I suppose he has some MAJOR problems such as not knowing how many cantons in Switzerland, which canton he lives in and where is his canton capital... Something like this? Otherwise how can it be possible.



14.10.2014, 07:18 #4

[Medea Fleecestealer](#)  
Forum Legend  
★★★★★

Join Date: Jul 2011  
Location: Misery-Courtion  
Posts: 7,799  
Groaned at 88 Times in 63 Posts  
Thanked 5,037 Times in 2,887 Posts

Re: American professor denied Swiss citizenship

Probably petty mindedness on the part of the commune voters.

Moderators we have a duplicate thread so I guess they need to be merged.

<http://www.englishforum.ch/swiss-pol...ml#post2259112>



## Aktuelle Wohnungen Zürich

Immer noch auf der Suche nach einer Wohnung in Zürich? Akt.

Angebot



14.10.2014, 07:29 #5

[Meerkat33](#)  
Member  
★★★★★

Join Date: Aug 2014  
Location: Grigioni  
Posts: 123  
Groaned at 2 Times in 2 Posts  
Thanked 44 Times in 36 Posts

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

well that's a bit incredible. what is also incredible is that he doesn't know the villages around him, but he probably lives in a sleeper village around zürich am i rite? so no suprise him not knowing any1 too. Maybe for naturalization they ask

## Freie Wohnungen Zürich

Noch nichts in Zürich gefunden? Jetzt gratis Suchauftrag abonnieren



too much local, in today's world one can have friends KMs away.



14.10.2014, 07:54

#6



**MathNut**  
Forum Legend  
★★★★★

Join Date: Aug 2007  
Location: Kt. Glarus  
Posts: 3,898  
Groaned at 28 Times in 27 Posts  
Thanked 8,428 Times in 2,695 Posts  
■■■■■

**Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat**

Quote:

**Meerkat33**

*well that's a bit incredible. what is also incredible is that he doesn't know the villages around him, but **he probably lives in a sleeper village around zurich am i rite?** so no suprise him not knowing any1 too. Maybe for naturalization they ask too much local, in today's world one can have friends KMs away.*

Sort of, and I think that may be part of the problem. Einsiedeln is still well within commuting distance of Zürich (less than an hour by train) so this guy probably does think of it as an outer suburb - but it's far enough out that the Swiss don't consider it one.



**This user would like to thank MathNut for this useful post:**

[Wollishofener](#)

14.10.2014, 08:15

#7



**Treverus**  
Forum Legend  
★★★★★

Join Date: Dec 2007  
Location: SG (the far away one...)  
Posts: 7,579  
Groaned at 139 Times in 114 Posts  
Thanked 12,073 Times in 4,484 Posts  
■■■■■

**Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat**

Quote:

**MathNut**

*Sort of, and I think that may be part of the problem. Einsiedeln is still well within commuting distance of Zürich (less than an hour by train) so this guy probably does think of it as an outer suburb - but it's far enough out that the Swiss don't consider it one.*

I understand and agree that there should be a test and in my eyes can the bar be set quite high: I think immigrants need to put an effort into learning the local language in order to really take part in social life (in Germany is the biggest group of immigrants Turkish and the fact that first gen men learn German at work while their wives can live in the country for decades without even minimal German is causing a parallel society which is bad). I also think it's important that any immigrant should understand the social and political system and within the democratic spectrum agree to the fundamentals. You should not just get a passport because it is convenient, you should identify yourself with the new country. But I fail to see why the exact village should be of importance at all. If one knows all the cantons, but not the third village up the hill in the direction he never drives as he goes to Zurich - does this really disqualify him from being a good Swiss?

"He is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions." - 1 Timothy 6:4



**The following 11 users would like to thank Treverus for this useful post:**

[Cactus flower](#), [circe](#), [Dack Rambo](#), [eddiejc1](#), [ellesfah](#), [FMX](#), [greenmount](#), [Mark75](#), [me.anon](#), [Meeyat](#), [miniMia](#)

14.10.2014, 08:17

#8

**nickatbasel**  
Forum Legend

Join Date: Sep 2006  
Location: Albisrieden  
Posts: 3,213  
Groaned at 81 Times in 50 Posts



Thanked 4,324 Times in 1,609 Posts



**Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat**

Just to take the opposite view - the naturalisation decision falls upon the local committee to decide, and the process takes many months. Was it also not incumbent on the guy to swot up about his local area as the questions would very likely be in this direction?

That said, it would not surprise me that the interrogation committee also did not know the names of neighbouring villages until they googled it 5mins before the interview.

Cheers,  
Nick



14.10.2014, 08:20

#9



**greenmount**  
Forum Legend  
★★★★★

Join Date: Feb 2010  
Location: Mitteleuropa  
Posts: 3,419  
Groaned at 119 Times in 89 Posts  
Thanked 3,265 Times in 1,777 Posts  
★★★★★

**Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat**

Quote:

Treverus

*I understand and agree that there should be a test and in my eyes can the bar be set quite high: I think immigrants need to put an effort into learning the local language in order to really take part in social life (in Germany is the biggest group of immigrants Turkish and the fact that first gen men learn German at work while their wives can live in the country for decades without even minimal German is causing a parallel society which is bad). I also think it's important that any immigrant should understand the social and political system and within the democratic spectrum agree to the fundamentals. You should not just get a passport because it is convenient, you should identify yourself with the new country. But I fail to see why the exact village should be of importance at all. If one knows all the cantons, but not the third village up the hill in the direction he never drives as he goes to Zurich - does this really disqualify him from being a good Swiss?*

Agree with you, but what surprises me at this particular case is the fact that he lived here for 39 years and only now did he apply for citizenship. Why now then, why at all?



**The following 9 users would like to thank greenmount for this useful post:**

[3Wishes](#), [abi\\_bouw](#), [Busby](#), [Cactus flower](#), [Dougal's Breakfast](#), [Elephantandcastle](#), [grumpygrapefruit](#), [Samaire13](#), [st2lemans](#)

14.10.2014, 08:21

#10



**olygirl**  
Forum Legend  
★★★★★

Join Date: Oct 2007  
Location: d' Innerschwiiz  
Posts: 4,661  
Groaned at 210 Times in 136 Posts  
Thanked 9,451 Times in 2,868 Posts  
★★★★★

**Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat**

39 years in Einsiedeln and doesn't know the neighbouring villages?

I sense health issues may be the true culprit, however, even this would be discriminatory. This case will be interesting to see how it's played out.



**The following 5 users would like to thank olygirl for this useful post:**

[crazygringo](#), [Dougal's Breakfast](#), [ellesfah](#), [meloncollie](#), [Tom1234](#)

14.10.2014, 08:21

#11

Join Date: Aug 2007  
Location: Kt. Glarus



**MathNut**  
Forum Legend  
☆☆☆☆☆

Posts: 3,898  
Groaned at 28 Times in 27 Posts  
Thanked 8,428 Times in 2,695 Posts  
☆☆☆☆☆

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Quote:

Treverus

*But I fail to see why the exact village should be of importance at all. If one knows all the cantons, but not the third village up the hill in the direction he never drives as he goes to Zurich - does this really disqualify him from being a good Swiss?*

Ah, but the question wasn't "shall we make him a Swiss?" (Or rather, it was but the Bund already considered that question and its answer was "sure, don't see why not".)

The question was, "shall we make him an *Einsiedler*?"



The following 13 users would like to thank MathNut for this useful post:

[3Wishes](#), [Busby](#), [Cata1yst](#), [circe](#), [Corbets](#), [Dougal's Breakfast](#), [grumpygrapefruit](#), [Karl](#), [meloncollie](#), [MennoFloyd](#), [olygirl](#), [st2lemans](#), [Tom1234](#)

14.10.2014, 08:23

#12



**olygirl**  
Forum Legend  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Oct 2007  
Location: d' Innerschwiiz  
Posts: 4,661  
Groaned at 210 Times in 136 Posts  
Thanked 9,451 Times in 2,868 Posts  
☆☆☆☆☆

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Quote:

greenmount

*Agree with you, but what surprises me at this particular case is the fact that he lived here for 39 years and only now did he apply for citizenship. Why now then, why at all?*

There could be numerous reasons including:

- emotional
- US tax laws
- bucket list
- US tax laws

Did I mention US tax laws?



The following 23 users would like to thank olygirl for this useful post:

[11HoursInTheTinPan](#), [3Wishes](#), [abi\\_bouw](#), [Cactus flower](#), [Cata1yst](#), [crazygringo](#), [Dougal's Breakfast](#), [ellesfah](#), [flow23](#), [FuriousRose](#), [greenmount](#), [grumpygrapefruit](#), [kittakat](#), [kiwiguy08](#), [litespeed](#), [Meerkat33](#), [meloncollie](#), [MennoFloyd](#), [Pancakes](#), [porsch1909](#), [Samaire13](#), [st2lemans](#), [Texaner](#)

14.10.2014, 08:26

#13



**Tom1234**  
Forum Legend  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Jan 2007  
Location: Wadi  
Posts: 7,684  
Groaned at 147 Times in 117 Posts  
Thanked 9,856 Times in 4,119 Posts  
☆☆☆☆☆

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Quote:

olygirl

39 years in Einsiedeln and doesn't know the neighbouring villages?

I wonder whether some arrogance on his part didn't help his case?

I mean it would be quite difficult to argue why you didn't have much local geographical knowledge after so many years.



The following 3 users would like to thank Tom1234 for this useful post:

FMX, kittedkat, olygirl

14.10.2014, 08:27

#14

k\_and\_e

Forum Legend



Join Date: Jun 2008  
Location: Zurich  
Posts: 3,210  
Groaned at 80 Times in 60 Posts  
Thanked 5,578 Times in 1,947 Posts  
[Progress bar]

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

he mowed the lawn every Sunday morning and thought he could get away with it 😊

(seriously, I really think it is because some of his neighbor don't like him. can be the only reason)



14.10.2014, 08:32

#15

profetas

Junior Member



Join Date: Nov 2011  
Location: Zurich  
Posts: 58  
Groaned at 9 Times in 4 Posts  
Thanked 9 Times in 6 Posts

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

well in Schwyz it is not surprising, from what I heard from Schwyz they are pretty conservative



14.10.2014, 08:37

#16

CorsebouTheReturn

Forum Legend



Join Date: Aug 2009  
Location: Vaud  
Posts: 3,244  
Groaned at 398 Times in 254 Posts  
Thanked 2,044 Times in 1,079 Posts  
[Progress bar]

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Like usual, I find some comments appalling...

It is that mandatory to know the "surrounding villages" name when you live somewhere, even for a long period?

Then we should denationalize some of my Swiss colleagues because a few of them did not know the villages names like 5 KM where they live.

A few basic possibilities:

- The person use public transports and never gets to other villages since it's far and since the public transport often sucks 🌍
- The person simply does not care about local surroundings (is that evidence of poor integration???)
- The person works a lot and have little time/interests for outings (then kick he Swiss Geeks also)
- The person is not very active (then again, kick my fat and/or lazy colleagues)

Also, don't you find suspicious that some "local judges" (call them integration dictators) are asking such trivial questions to someone... there for 39 years?  
Did they really had to ask those?

Like usual there is more to the story and I'm sure there is some good traditional human nastiness at play, and some were trying to fault that person and succeeded.



The following 9 users would like to thank CorsebouTheReturn for this useful post:

[basher](#), [crazygringo](#), [Dack Rambo](#), [flow23](#), [greenmount](#), [MidfieldGeneral](#), [miniMia](#), [MusicChick](#), [porsch1909](#)

14.10.2014, 08:44

#17

**SteAlka**

Member  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Apr 2010  
Location: Valais  
Posts: 248  
Groaned at 51 Times in 41 Posts  
Thanked 225 Times in 109 Posts



Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Quote:

[greenmount](#)

*Agree with you, but what surprises me at this particular case is the fact that he lived here for 39 years and only now did he apply for citizenship. Why now then, why at all?*

In the same situation I would have applied just to see the outcome. After retirement the citizenship is really not as relevant, a retired person has his own income and a different permit. Maybe he wanted to be able to vote.



The following 2 users would like to thank SteAlka for this useful post:

[greenmount](#), [MusicChick](#)

14.10.2014, 08:45

#18



**olygirl**  
Forum Legend  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Oct 2007  
Location: d' Innerschwiiz  
Posts: 4,661  
Groaned at 210 Times in 136 Posts  
Thanked 9,451 Times in 2,868 Posts



Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Here's the official statement from the Gemeinde:

[http://www.einsiedeln.ch/libraries.f...tober\\_2014.pdf](http://www.einsiedeln.ch/libraries.f...tober_2014.pdf)

p. 17: A biography of the man  
p. 18: Reasons for denial

In a nutshell:

- he couldn't name any friends or acquaintances from Einsiedeln.
- he wasn't involved in Einsiedeln's community life in any way.
- he couldn't name any current political issues in Einsiedeln.
- When asked why he wanted to become a citizen, he replied he was thinking of going abroad over a longer period of time and didn't want to lose his current Swiss permit. He also mentioned his assets are all located in Switzerland.
- he knew very little about politics in Canton Schwyz

Tom's deduction about arrogance is probably right. The candidate was given instructions in advance on what was expected of him in the interview and they felt he didn't even attempt to look up some of the answers that he knew he would be asked.

Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly.



The following 20 users would like to thank olygirl for this useful post:

[11HoursInTheTinPan](#), [3Wishes](#), [abi bouw](#), [amogles](#), [aSwissInTheUS](#), [Big Mara](#), [Cactus flower](#), [Castro](#), [Corbets](#), [edot](#), [FMX](#), [jamjelly](#), [me.anon](#), [Meerkat33](#), [meloncollie](#), [Odile](#), [Phil\\_MCR](#), [Roestigraben](#), [smoky](#), [Tom1234](#)

14.10.2014, 08:46

#19

**greenmount**  
Forum Legend

Join Date: Feb 2010  
Location: Mitteleuropa  
Posts: 3,419  
Groaned at 119 Times in 89 Posts  
Thanked 3,265 Times in 1,777 Posts



Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

Quote:

[k\\_and\\_e](#)

*he mowed the lawn every Sunday morning and thought he could get away with it 😊  
(seriously, I really think it is because some of his neighbor don't like him. can be the only reason)*

Quote:

[CorsebouTheReturn](#)

*Also, don't you find suspicious that some "local judges" (call them integration dictators) are asking such trivial questions to someone... there for 39 years?  
Did they really had to ask those?  
  
Like usual there is more to the story and I'm sure there is some good traditional human nastiness at play, and some were trying to fault that person and succeeded.*

This. 😊



14.10.2014, 08:50

#20



**PaddyG**  
Forum Legend  
☆☆☆☆☆

Join Date: Aug 2007  
Location: Villars-sur-Glâne, FR  
Posts: 7,273  
Groaned at 94 Times in 80 Posts  
Thanked 11,523 Times in 4,164 Posts

Re: Retired ETH professor: After 39 years not integrated enough for Swiss naturalisat

There's fault on both sides; his for not bloody knowing the neighbouring villages after 39 years (this I find incredible), and the Gemeinderat for not properly preparing their naturalisation candidates (deliberately, perhaps?). Before our commune and canton interviews, we were given a crib sheet of things we should know and were likely to be questioned on; local geography, political figures etc. We learnt more about the local political scene than many of our Swiss friends had forgotten.



Page 1 of 21 [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [11](#) [>](#) [Last](#)

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