

The Swiss Constitution features a number of characteristics which often attract the attention of observers from abroad: the direct influence of Swiss citizens on political decision-making by means of popular initiatives and referendums; a uniquely «bottom-up» federal structure reflecting the country's cultural and linguistic diversity; a system of government which vests supreme executive power in a multi-party collegiate body; and, finally, a very special model of constitutional justice. Since publication of the first edition of this book in 2009, Swiss constitutional law has undergone significant developments necessitating in addition to complete revision, the inclusion of a new chapter discussing the tensions that can arise between the increased use of popular initiatives on the one hand and fundamental rights and international law on the other.

This book is addressed to lawyers, political scientists, politicians, diplomats, journalists and all those who need basic and precise knowledge on how Switzerland is governed. The author gives a concise presentation of the special characteristics of the Swiss constitutional order, whilst the reader's understanding is enhanced by numerous comparisons with other well-known constitutions. Rapid access to the information sought is facilitated by the detailed subject index.



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This publication forms part of the «Swiss Law in a nutshell series», with the objective of publishing concise, reliable and complete presentations of choice topics of Swiss Law. The authors are leading academics or practitioners in their field of expertise. The combination of academic excellence and a practical approach make the publications a perfect entry point into Swiss Law for both lawyers and non-lawyers.