
Council of Europe: Switzerland's Berset elected Secretary General. “We will be judged on democracy, the rule of law and human rights”

Switzerland's Alain Berset will be the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for the next five years. In the second round of voting, he obtained a relative majority of 114 votes from the Parliamentary Assembly, while the other candidates, Indrek Saar (Estonia) and EU Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders (Belgium), obtained 85 votes and 46 votes respectively. Born in 1972, Mr Berset has been a leading figure in the Swiss institutions and politics for about twenty years. Indeed, he was a member of the Swiss Federal Parliament from 2003 to 2011, and a Federal Councillor from 2012 until last year. He was President of the Swiss Confederation twice, in 2018 and 2023, and he also served as Minister for Home Affairs from 2012 to 2023. Mr Berset will officially take office on 18 September, succeeding Croatia's Marija Pejčinović Burić, who has been in this post since 2019. Taking the floor immediately after the announcement of the voting results, Mr Berset thanked the Parliamentary Assembly “for its trust and support”. Assuring that he would work closely with the members of the Assembly and all Council bodies to address the “immense challenges” facing Europe and the institution, he concluded by saying: “We will be judged on our capacity to advance democracy, the rule of law and human rights on our continent: a path that is neither linear nor easy, but essential”.

Valentina Bombelli