

+ INFOLETTER 2018 +



Dear fellow citizens, partners and friends,

The eventful year 2018 draws to its end, and we are happy to share its highlights with you in the 4th Infoletter of the Embassy of Switzerland. The festive season is a good opportunity to reflect on a busy period behind us, and to look towards the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the coming year.

In 2018, we have celebrated the 30 years of presence of Switzerland in Armenia, which dates back to the devastating earthquake in Spitak in 1988. By opening a Swiss Embassy in Erevan in 2011, Switzerland set the basis for a continuous, stable partnership with Armenia.

I am proud to see, as the new Swiss Ambassador in this wonderful country rich of culture and history, that since then the relations between the two countries have been constantly growing, be it in the economic, commercial and cultural field, or in the international cooperation where Switzerland is one of the main partners of Armenia. I want to particularly thank You, dear compatriots for your important share in the successes achieved.

At the very beginning of this year, the Embassy was greatly honored by the visit to Armenia of the eleven-member Swiss Parliamentary delegation, headed by the President of the National Council of Switzerland, Dominique de Buman, which lasted four days.

Also Switzerland being an active member of the Francophonie, we did not miss our chance and took part in the 2018 Francophonie Summit in October, hosted by Armenia, with the participation of the President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Alain Berset.

This, in a nutshell, are some of the highlights of the year about to end.

You can find more about our activities in the articles below. You can also stay in touch with the Embassy by visiting our website www.eda.admin.ch/armenia, as well as by following us on social media: Embassy of Switzerland in Armenia, Swiss Cooperation South Caucasus.

Best wishes for a prosperous New Year.

Stefano Lazzarotto
Ambassador of Switzerland to Armenia



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

President of the Swiss Parliament visited Armenia!

Assuming the position of President of the National Council (speaker of the Parliament) in 2018, Dominique de Buman's first official visit abroad led him to Armenia. The visit of the eleven-member Swiss Parliamentary delegation, to Armenia lasted for four days, full of gratifying events and occasions.



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Photo: Asatur Yesayants



The Swiss Parliamentary delegation visited the Swiss funded project “Livestock Development in the South of Armenia.”

The cooperative in Yelpin village is one out of many milk collection points in the target regions of the project, Syunik and Vayots Dzor marzes. During the visit the parliamentarians of the two countries familiarized themselves with the process of milk collection and production of different cheese varieties. The cooperative proved itself to be a distinct example of an effective and impactful cooperation between the two nations.





Embassy of Switzerland donates thermal cameras to MES

Following up on a recommendation of the three-member international expert group, the Embassy of Switzerland in Armenia took the initiative of providing the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations with two FLIR 50 compact thermal imaging cameras. These highly sophisticated cameras allow a thorough control of the temperature of chemical processes such as happened in one of the cisterns at the Nairi plant.



Strengthening the communication of the Territorial and Administrative reform

In order to support the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development in improving the communication of the TARA reform and informing the citizens about its advantages, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation organized a peer-review workshop in the framework of the “Improvement of the Local Self-Governance System in Armenia” program.



Second yearly meeting of the Swiss Armenian Chamber of Commerce

The second yearly meeting of the Swiss Armenian Chamber of Commerce (SA-COC) took place in Bern on 24 March 2018 and was attended by the presidents of both parliaments, Dominique de Buman and Ara Babloyan. Ambassador Gasser pointed out the stellar performance in our two countries' trade relations in 2017, with a record volume 232.68 mln Swiss francs. Switzerland hopes for a continued stable and business friendly environment such as the one that Armenia enjoys since 2016.



Festival de la Francophonie 2018

In the scope of the Festival of Francophonie 2018, Switzerland has participated by presenting two Swiss movies «Le temps d'Anna », by Greg Zglinski and “Ma vie de Courgette” by Claude Barras on the 17th of March at Cinema Moscou. The two screenings have been quite successful among the audience.

The Swiss Embassy in Armenia has contributed to the competition aimed at young Armenians learning French “Dis-moi 10 mots”, organized by the Embassy of France in Armenia and the Alliance Française on the 24th of March 2018. Switzerland has rewarded the winners with three books: Eloge de la faiblesse (A. Jollien), Aline (C-F. Ramuz), Dictionnaire amoureux de la Suisse (M. Arditi).

The Embassy has also supported the production of the plays Amours chagrines, Adagio and La Monstre by the Swiss author Emanuelle Delle Piane, which were performed at the GOY Thea-ter in Yerevan on April 8 2018, under the direction of Ani Janikian and Samson Stepanyan.



Armenuhi Magarditchian presents “Archaeological Guide on Garni”

Book at the right time! The Embassy was proud to be associated with the presentation on April 13 of the book “Archaeological Guide on Garni” by Swiss archaeologist and philologist Armenuhi Magarditchian. Armenuhi’s guide of the Garni temple is a most readable introduction to this rare instance of a pagan temple being turned into a Christian baptistery in Armenia. Armenuhi Magarditchian, a former intern of your Embassy, is presently writing her PhD at Geneva University. Her newest book was financed by the Embassy and Swiss Humanitarian Foundation KASA (<http://kasa.am/>).



Daniel Dickenmann’s “Metropole Zentralschweiz”

During his trip to Armenia, Swiss architect and author Daniel Dickenmann made a call at one of our favourite places in town, the Mirzoyan Library. Enchanted by the stimulating spirit of this institution, he made a donation of his book “Metropole Zentralschweiz” (Park Books, 2012). His discussion of the topic touched upon architecture and landscape in central Switzerland. Scenery and architecture - one of the world’s most stunning landscapes creates a metropolitan space.



ARé Festival

Amid political trouble, an island of sublime art and good wine: The location was new, the Chardonnay and Cabernet franc from Geneva excellent, the displayed art stimulating and the audience a selection of fine connoisseurs. Thanks to ARé performing arts festival and her organizer Mariné Karoyan, we discovered a new architectural pearl in the heart of Yerevan: Vordan Karmir carpet museum. The Swiss artists Silvia Bächli and Eric Hattan were brought by the Embassy and Pro Helvetia, the Arts Council of Switzerland.



The Leather Show

What an opening it has been! On May, 12 the long-awaited exhibition “The Leather Show” by Narek Barseghyan kicked off in Yerevan. Being a combination of an exhibition and a fashion workshop, this Swiss supported multi-part project was truly a cultural highlight.



TRAVERTINE FUTURE

Yerevan has the stuff to become one of the global cool cities of the world, a must-visit place for hipsters, epicureans and aficionados of all ways of life. This was more or less what young Swiss photographer Sebastian Stadler told the Embassy two years ago. Now, he is again in Yerevan, contributing his own share in making this happen. Witness the masterpieces of Patrick Cipriani, Till Martin and Sebastian Stadler at Hay Art Gallery in Yerevan (Երևանի քաղաքապետարանի Հայնրու մշակութային կենտրոն). Our exhibition TRAVERTINE FUTURE has met with considerable success and is open until May 5, after which it will move on to Switzerland.



Abrazo - Tango des Überlebens

Memorable event of theatre and music, thanks to Swiss dancer, singer and actress Alexandra Prusa Straub. She brought ABRAZO, the incredible story of a Swiss émigrée to Argentina, to the Yerevan stage at Nca. Small Theatre on May 14. An unforgettable evening of songs, captivating tales, tango and much passion, with a great performance from the Argentine and Italian musicians. Thanks to Presence Switzerland and Goethe-Zentrum Eriwan for the valuable support!



Our first meeting with the Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

Congratulating the Prime Minister for a peaceful transition and respect of the Constitution, we had our first meeting with Nikol Pashinyan on May 22nd. The talks focused on the next elections, further intensifying our already dynamic economic relations, as well as regional challenges.



Sheep Shearing Festival 2018

Mountain festivals have much in common between Switzerland and Armenia. Ambassador Lukas Gasser felt much at home at the Sheep Shearing Festival near Tatev, although he would have felt more at ease milking a cow than shearing a sheep. But the try was worth it (we hope the animal feels the same). Wonderful ambiance at the Syunik animal market, the site of the festival and the result of fifteen years of Swiss development cooperation in Armenia's South.



Caucasus International Conference 2018

To critically sum up the year 2017 in the region, the Embassy has teamed up with the Caucasus Institute and the Swiss South Caucasus Foundation, organizing the annual Caucasus International Conference. Focusing on various aspects of the Caucasian reality, the discussions revolved around the political trends in the South and North Caucasus in 2017, regional security and international policies.



Nerka Design Project

We were very excited about the Embassy's partnership with Armenian designers and talented curator Emma Harutyunyan for the exhibition Nerka design project HAPPENING. Armenian designers have a lot to show to the public, and the site of the exhibition in the former Ministry of Foreign affairs building, right on the Hraparak, was truly unique.



«Local Self-Governance» Program Phase 2 Planning

The Embassy was happy to announce that Switzerland plans to continue supporting the Armenian government in the process of the Territorial Administrative Reform and Decentralization of power, within the framework of our Cooperation Strategy 2017-2020!

During the two day coordination workshop the partner organizations, once again, gathered around the table to review the program progress since the last meeting in October, as well as discuss the outlook until the end of 2018.



Disaster Risk Reduction – We participate in the UN platform

For the first time in Armenia, a regional meeting of the Second Central Asia and South Caucasus Sub-regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Yerevan. The main aim of the platform was to facilitate dialogue, forge transboundary partnerships, promote integration of disaster risk management in all sectors towards effective implementation, and building resilience.

As a result of the meeting, the participants of the platform elaborated the “Yerevan Declaration,” reaffirming determination to implement Sendai Framework for DRR and coherence with 2030 Development Agenda. The Declaration is to be presented to the Global platform in Geneva, Switzerland, on 13-17 May 2019.



«Voices and Choices» // «Dzayn Aghbyur»

The Embassy of Switzerland in Armenia and HAYP Pop Up Gallery were very proud to inaugurate the exhibition «Voices and Choices» // «Dzayn Aghbyur», the opening of which was a great success on the second of July! Close to hundred-fifty visitors had the opportunity to appreciate hundred years of Swiss and Armenian political posters design, while enjoying a glass of Swiss Chasselas and Cabernet franc from the lake Geneva area. It was our great pleasure to welcome our invited guests among which Dr. Ara Babloyan and Mr. Mike Baronian, President of the Swiss-Armenian Chamber of Commerce who have honoured us with their presence.

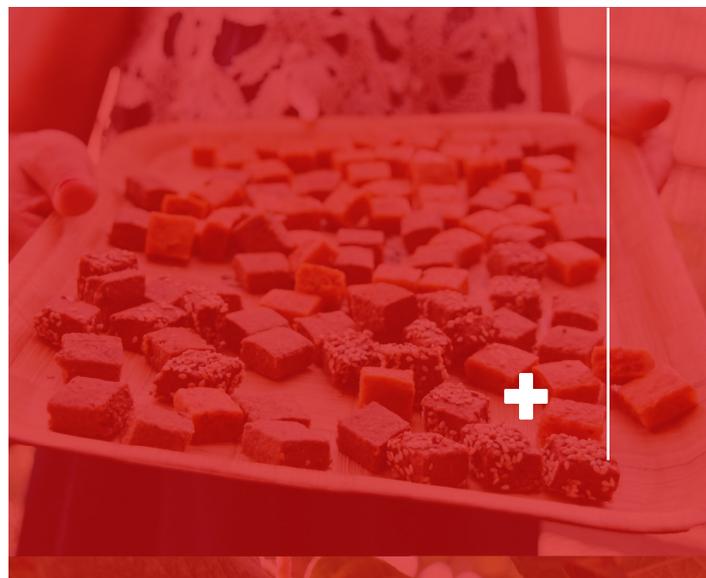
Farmers of Meghri: M4M Project Closure

Summer 2018 marks the completion of the “Markets for Meghri” project, through which Switzerland assisted the fruit-growers of Armenia.

Over the course of 6 years the project covered more than 1800 households involved in fruit cultivation, increasing the incomes of the involved producers by more than 1.000.000 CHF. But who is better to tell the story of the project, other than four of the farmers involved in it.

Read the article by following the link:

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/armenia/en/home/news/news.html/content/countries/armenia/en/meta/news/2018/october/farmers-of-meghri-m4m-project-closure->



Haybuis 2018

Have you visited the Haybuis festival this year? If yes, then you have surely tasted the “Brtutch,” a 20 meters long wrap with Swiss cheese and Armenian herbs inside, made with love by the participants of the festival.

Traveling to Yenokavan every summer to participate in the annual Haybuis festival has become a dear tradition for Ambassador Lukas Gasser and his team. This year our table consisted of three types of Swiss cheese: Emmental, Tête de Moine and Fior delle Alpi, which tasted exceptionally well with Swiss Chasselas grapes, from which our white wine Fendant Clos de Cochetta 2016 is made.



Gathering of the Swiss-Armenia business community

The last two years have been exceptionally successful for the economic and trade relations between Switzerland and Armenia. To celebrate this with a glass of Swiss wine, but also to network and get ready for the opportunities to come, Ambassador Lukas Gasser took the initiative of organizing the last thematic gathering of the Swiss-Armenia business community before his mission's completion.



Timely book by Karen Balyan

The Swiss are a nation of architecture lovers. And Armenia is full of beautiful works of architecture. Only in the recent past, parts of Yerevan's most beautiful modernist heritage was either destroyed or put in danger. This is why we supported the presentation of our good friend Karen Balyan's latest book on the Summer Hall of Moscow Cinema in Yerevan. The book is Karen Balyan's fourth documenting Armenian Soviet modernism in architecture and is published by TATLIN in Yekaterinburg, Russia.



Switzerland in Armenia
Karen Balyan



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ALEXANDER ARUTIUNIAN
International Wind Festival

Yerevan welcomed Stadtmusik Altstätten

Yerevan welcomed Stadtmusik Altstätten, a one-of-a-kind wind orchestra consisting of Swiss musicians of nearly every age group. Directed by Benjamin Zwick, the orchestra filled the Aram Khachaturyan concert hall with unforgettable sounds of Clarinet, Trumpet, Duduk and other wind instruments. Rubén Simeó (Trumpet, Spain) and Davit Gyulamiryan (Clarinet, Armenia/Switzerland) were the masterful soloists of the concert.

The concert was organized in the framework of the Alexander Arutiunian International Wind Festival and proudly sponsored by the Embassy.



Ambassador Stefano Lazzarotto started his mission in Armenia

The team was pleased to welcome the new Ambassador of Switzerland to Armenia, Mr. Stefano Lazzarotto. Before assuming his position in Armenia, and over the course of his 30 years' diplomatic career, Mr. Lazzarotto has been posted to: Brussels, Tehran, Geneva (UN), Rome, Tripoli, Skopje, Muscat and Bern.



Seedstarts Yerevan 2018

Five years of innovation and bright ideas! On September 29, the Ambassador of Switzerland in Armenia, Mr. Stefano Lazzarotto joined the jury of the Seeds-tarts Yerevan 2018, a startup pitching conference supported by the Embassy for already five years in a row.





Livestock Expansion to the North Launched

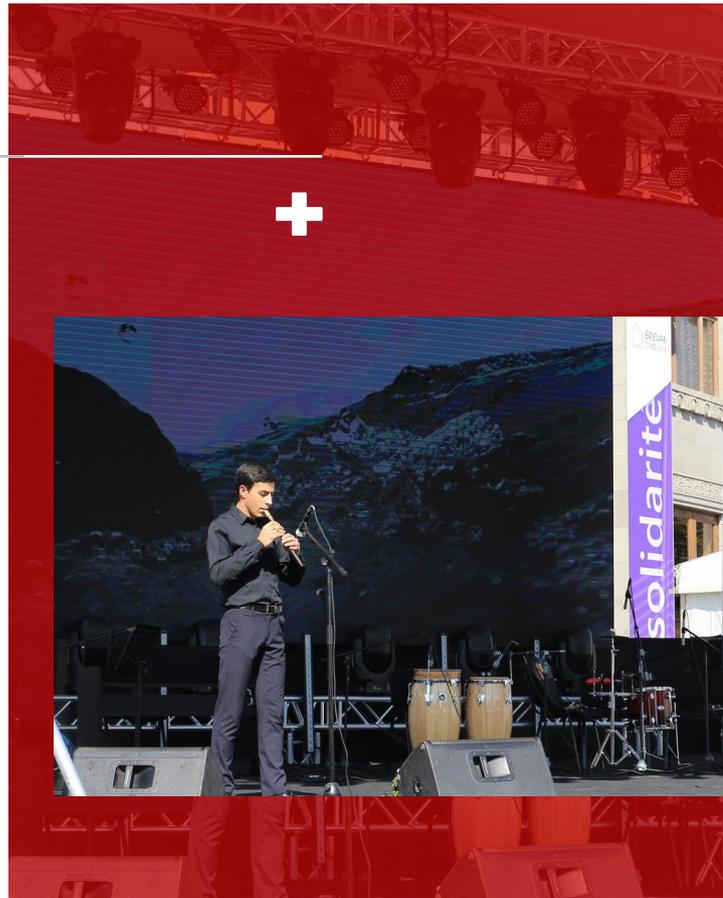
Hundred border communities of Gegharkunik, Tavush, Lori and Shirak will now benefit from improved agricultural services and market access, as the SDC, in partnership with the Austrian Development Agency, expands its Livestock Development project towards the northern regions of Armenia.

The launch event of the project expansion, together with the last steering committee of this year took place in the Marz of Lori.



Sounds of Sevan

The audio-visual project Sounds of Sevan premiered in October, in the frame of the Sommet de la Francophonie 2018 in Yerevan. The artists Georgi Minasyan and Tatev Yeghiazaryan filled the Francophonie Village with live duduk and solo voice performance, accompanied by the ambient electronic music background and recordings of the Lake Sevan surround voices. This Swiss funded project, produced by Music of Armenia NGO, advocates collaboration between Armenian and International musicians and artists as a way of promoting innovation and cross cultural cooperation, while generating environmental awareness and nature protection.



Swiss patterned hats for everybody!

On the 10th of October, the “Village de la Francophonie” welcomed over 20 countries, among which the Swiss Pavilion stood out with the Foreign Policy of Switzerland being presented. Major focus was put on gender equality, women rights and inclusion in peace negotiation processes.



Yerevan Economic Forum within the 17th Summit of Francophonie

On October 11, almost 20 Delegates and business community representatives from Switzerland, alongside with around 350 participants from over 40 countries gathered to discuss topics such as the 4th Industrial Revolution and the Future of Work, Sustainability in Development, and International Commercial.



President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Alain Berset visited us in October

President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset with his spouse Muriel Zeender Berset were on a two-day trip to Armenia, Yerevan, in the framework of the “Sommet de la Francophonie 2018.” Their journey included numerous bilateral talks, official events, as well as cultural visits.



XVIIe Sommet de la Francophonie: Spouses' Program

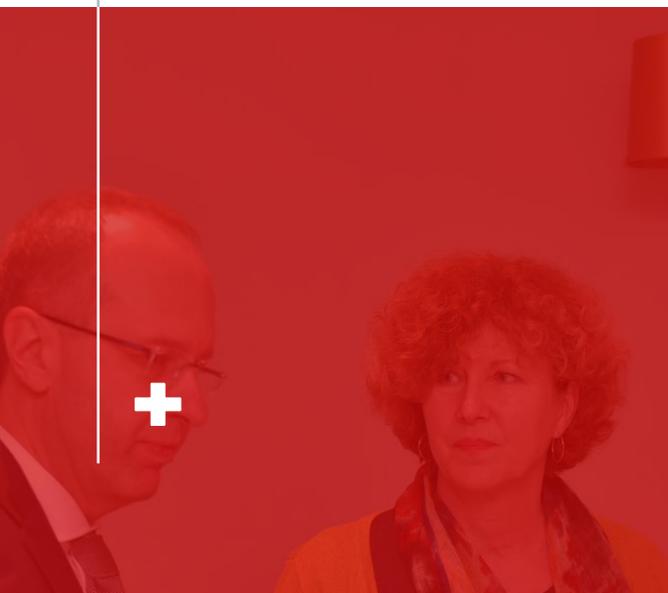
At the XVIIe Sommet de la Francophonie, the program of the participating countries' presidents' spouses was full of discoveries and learnings about the Armenian culture and history.

Visiting the cultural hotspots of the capital city Yerevan, Muriel Zeender Berset got familiar with the art of Armenian rug making at the Megerian Carpet, learnt about the historic origins at the Matenadaran Museum, and picked up on the country's art sphere at the The Cafesjian Center for the Arts and Ervand Kochar Museum.



To feel, to experience, to hear, to see

The opening ceremony of the Swiss funded cultural project “To see with fingers” took place in December, 2018, at the Modern Art Museum of Yerevan. Through its innovative approach this project, curated by Nazareth Karoyan, addresses the socialization problems of one of the most fragile groups of today’s society – the population with serious sight problems, most of whom even happen to be born blind.



“Women’s Economic Empowerment in South Caucasus” project launched in Armenia

To ensure that women, particularly the poor and socially excluded, are economically empowered and participate in relevant decision-making are the main goals of our regional project “Women’s Economic Empowerment in South Caucasus,” implemented by UNDP in Armenia.

30 Years of Swiss Presence in Armenia Exhibition

On December 13th the Embassy had the great honor to welcome its friends and partners to the opening ceremony of the «30 Years of Swiss Presence in Armenia» photo exhibition.

The exhibition showcased a collection of photographs of Swiss assistance projects in Armenia, and provided an opportunity to look back at the 30 year history between the two countries.



Federal elections 2019 – your vote matters !

Your vote matters! Parliamentary elections will be held in Switzerland on 20 October 2019. As a Swiss national living abroad, who is included in the Register of the Swiss Abroad, you are allowed to vote in elections as well as stand as a candidate for election to Parliament.

Linktitel: Information on the 2019 elections for Swiss nationals living abroad

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<https://www.ch.ch/de/wahlen2019/auslandschweizerinnen-und-auslandschweizer-und-die-parlament/>

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