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Dear Swiss compatriots,
Dear friends of Switzerland,

I hope you have all started well into 2025 and wish you only the very best for the new year.

We have had an extremely intensive 2024. With the UN Climate Conference COP29, Azerbaijan became the focus of the world's attention last November. The way in which this mega-event was organized and carried out with little preparation time was impressive. Hopefully, it will also pave the way for Azerbaijan's transformation away from fossil fuels towards a diversified economy. A truly Herculean task, which other countries are also struggling with.

With its limited natural resources, Switzerland had to focus ever since on developing a competitive and innovative economy in which Human Capital plays a major role. Consequently, there is a great deal of expertise in Switzerland that we would like to use for our bilateral relations - with the aim of supporting Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is a land rich in history and culture. It offers an unique blend of tradition and modernity, and as Swiss citizens, we are fortunate to experience its rich culture and warm hospitality. At the same time, as Swiss, we continue to uphold the values that make our identity strong – commitment to democracy, neutrality, quality, innovation and respect for diversity.

These values have shaped the development of Switzerland – be it politically, economically, culturally or even scientifically. Fortunately, Swiss values are still in demand, even though they are increasingly coming under pressure in some field, and in other fields even being questioned.

It is important to me that the Embassy upholds values and “Swissness” here in Azerbaijan. I am sure you feel the same way. My team and I are looking forward to many more exciting events, activities and encounters in 2025.

Warm regards,

Thomas Stähli
Ambassador

News

Swiss and Azerbaijan presidents met in London



The Swiss President Viola Amherd and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met on the sidelines of the 4th summit of the European Political Community. The short meeting took place on 18 July 2024 in London.

The Azerbaijani media reported that during the conversation, the two presidents exchanged views on bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Switzerland and the development of the regional peace agenda.

The presidents also exchanged views on COP29 and climate change and the role of the Swiss and Azerbaijani companies in the bilateral trade and economic relations.

<https://president.az/en/articles/view/66515>

Swiss Federal Councillor and State Secretary meet Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister



The high-level contacts between the Swiss and Azerbaijani officials continued during the whole year. Jeyhun Bayramov, Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, met on 25 September 2024 with Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, on the margins of the high-level week of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting highlighted the pivotal role of high-level reciprocal visits and ongoing political dialogue in expanding the scope of bilateral relations. The ministers discussed the situation in the South Caucasian region.

The Azerbaijani Foreign Minister also met with the State Secretary of the Swiss Federal Foreign Office, Alexander Fasel, on 5 December 2024 within the frame of the 31st Ministerial Council of OSCE in Malta. They discussed bilateral, multilateral issues, as well as cooperation within the OSCE.

https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbajjans_bayramov_updates_swiss_federal_councillor_on_progress_of_reconciliation_between_azerbaijan_and_armenia-3198986

<https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3979047.html>

Azerbaijani speaker visits Geneva



The Chairwoman of the Azerbaijani Parliament, Sahiba Gafarova, visited Switzerland three times in 2024. Gafarova attended the 148th Assembly of the International Parliamentary Union held on 22-27 March in Geneva.

On 17 May, she visited Geneva again to participate in the Organizing Committee of the 6th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. Gafarova has met with her Armenian counterpart, Alen Simonyan, on the sidelines of both events. The two speakers discussed possibilities of launching a dialogue between the parliaments of two countries in order to contribute to the peace process.

An Azerbaijani parliamentary delegation, led by Speaker of the Milli Majlis visited again Geneva for a working visit on 13 October. During the visit, Gafarova participated in the 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

<https://bizim.media/az/siyaset/183784/sahibe-qafarova-ve-alen-simonyan-arasinda-grus-basa-catib-video/>

<https://www.bakupost.az/sahibe-qafarova-ve-alen-simonyan-arasinda-gorus-oldu>

<https://www.azernews.az/nation/232545.html>

Swiss delegation at COP29



The world's biggest international conference (COP29) was held on 11-23 November in Baku. The countries agreed on a new collective financial target of \$ 300 billion annually to be achieved from 2035.

Switzerland was present at the COP29 negotiations with a modest delegation consists of around 20 people from various sectors. Federal Councillor Albert Rösti represented Switzerland for the end of the conference (21-22 November). Switzerland advocated a broadening of funding, particularly from countries with high CO2 emissions.

Federal Councillor Albert Rösti stressed the need for further financing: "All countries should contribute financially if they have the means to do so".

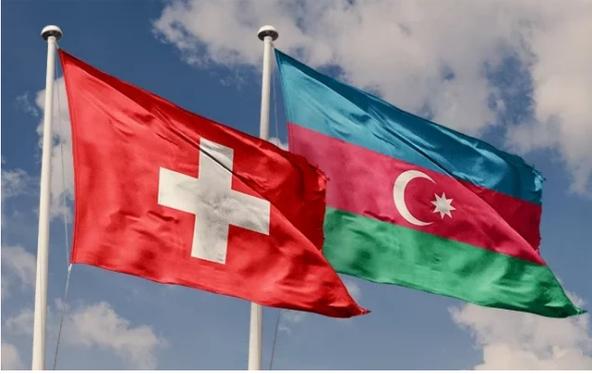
The Embassy team actively supported the Swiss delegation logistically and in the negotiations during the two weeks.

https://www.uvek.admin.ch/uvek/en/home/detec/federal-councillor-albert-roesti/events/COP29-2024.html?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR3PITEnQBUhXp7GZxbWbvZEoQKFhjPn8YUsL-TMUa4cW4o2FVLKkk0b5zs_aem_yp41ND_X7eyoaAjieDWy-Q

<https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/dokumentation/medienmitteilungen/anzeige-nsb-unter-medienmitteilungen.msg-id-103276.html>

<https://cop29.az/en/home>

Political consultations between Switzerland and Azerbaijan



On 9 February 2024, Azerbaijan and Switzerland held political consultations in Baku. Muriel Peneveyre, Head of Eurasia Division at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs led the Swiss delegation. From Azerbaijani side the delegation was headed by the Deputy Foreign Minister Fariz Rzayev.

Bilateral and regional political-economic issues, multilateral cooperation, energy issues, normalization process with Armenia, as well as human rights situation in Azerbaijan were the main topics of discussions. The sides also exchanged views on the 19th UN Climate Change Conference, held in Baku.

Muriel Peneveyre also visited the Turan News Agency's office, which is one of the last remaining independent media outlets in the country. The Swiss delegation was briefed about the current situation of the agency and media in general.

https://mfa.gov.az/az/news/no05324?fbclid=IwY2xjawHHYKZleHRuA2FibQIxMAABHdpYa6gKiXN7I9_59-tE2JFfE0vp_4IVao_ulXfQ_LKHghWNpWogWb0RsA_aem_x6AneNcbxCrOS0XItk3Z0A

https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbajani_swiss_foreign_ministries_hold_political_consultations-2917558

https://x.com/swissmfaeurasia/status/1755964646803091907?s=46&t=hTQbB5L635EqB5E8i4K5Vg&fbclid=IwY2xjawH HYPFleHRuA2FibQIxMAABHS3kPgg0TCLTA-GQ2YHuOO_kzfEsU1aGuS26XiEnyyBEqvlzHRw0IBOscA_aem_xmUDXXLY4zsfRVbrHLdYww

Swiss National Bank Governor meets his counterpart



The Swiss National Bank's new Governing Board Chairman, Martin Schlegel, met with the Governor of the Central Bank of Azerbaijan, Taleh Kazimov. The meeting took place within the frame of both governors' business visit to the US. According to the Azerbaijan's State News Agency, the parties discussed the economic relations and cooperation between the central banks of both countries.

Kazimov also posted on his X account about the meeting and wrote that he extended his best wishes to Martin Schlegel for success in his new role.

https://x.com/TalehKazimov_T/status/1849395871483306168

https://azertag.az/xeber/azerbaycan_ve_isvechre_merkezi_banklari_arasinda_emekdasligin_genislendirilmesi_muzakire_olunub-3244292

President's Special Representative attends Swiss Business Lunch



On 1 March 2024, Ambassador Thomas Stähli hosted the representatives of Swiss companies in Azerbaijan for a traditional "Swiss Business Lunch".

Mr. Emin Huseynov, the President's Special Representative in the liberated territories of the Karabakh Economic Region, gave a briefing about the reconstruction work in Karabakh as well as investment opportunities for foreign companies and related projects. In a lively discussion a few project ideas evolved.

Participants of the Business Lunch shared their views about the business and economic potential in the country, as well as sought opportunities for expanding their operation in the region.

Swiss Embassy co-hosts business dinner



On 27 February 2024, the Swiss Embassy and the Swiss company Bühler hosted a Business Dinner for leading companies in the Azerbaijani food sector. Ambassador Thomas Stähli welcomed the 12 CEOs and Board Members from leading Azerbaijani companies such as Azersun, Veyseloglu, Azersheker, Avroora, Karat, Lezzet, Agrarco and etc.

He spoke about the Swiss values of innovation, quality and service. Representatives of Bühler made presentations about the company's achievements and offers. Following the official parts, the participants continued discussions about potential cooperation.

Swiss Ambassador in Sumgayit

On 8 April 2024, within the frame of his regional trips, Ambassador Thomas Stähli visited the city of Sumgayit. It was Ambassador's first official visit out of Baku. He met with the Head of the Sumgayit City Executive Authority, Zakir Farajov, and his team. The friendly bilateral relations and the perspectives of further developing them in the light of the upcoming COP29 were discussed. Farajov informed the Ambassador about Sumgayit's economic and industrial potential and invited the Swiss companies to invest various fields.



Ambassador Stähli spoke about the dynamic political and economic relations between Azerbaijan and Switzerland. He also paid a visit to the Swiss company Sika operating in the Sumgayit Chemical Industrial Park.

<http://sumqayit-ih.gov.az/az/news/isvecrenin-olkemizdeki-sefiri-sumqayitda-olub.html>

Swiss International Cooperation

Swiss Cooperation Office Director visits Baku

The Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office for the South Caucasus, based in Tbilisi, Barbara Böni, visited Azerbaijan beginning of February 2024. She got acquainted with the ongoing projects supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Azerbaijan and held different meetings.

On 2 February, she met art people who had been recently supported by the Swiss Cooperation Office. Ms. Böni highly rated the good work of the project partners in Azerbaijan.

SDC supports projects related to women's economic empowerment, gender equality, environment, and art and culture as part of regional projects in Azerbaijan.



Switzerland supports capital market in Azerbaijan



Last year Switzerland continued to support the development of capital markets in Azerbaijan through financing projects in different directions implemented by the World Bank (WB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The legal reforms addressed key issues in the primary and secondary debt markets, such as allowing banks to participate in local bond markets without intermediaries and facilitating the establishment of mutual funds. These changes will serve the government strategy envisaging to increase the share of government debt securities in the public debt.

The Public Debt Statistics Bulletin started to be published with the support of Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, helping investors to obtain more information on the securities market. SECO financed projects also supported the Central Bank of Azerbaijan (CBAR) to enable the response of money markets to the changes in its interest rate corridor during the year.

Environmental flash-mob on Absheron peninsula



made.

The Swiss Embassy, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNICEF jointly organized a flash-mob dedicating to saving Azerbaijan's water resources in the easternmost part of the country, the Absheron Natural Resort, on 8 November 2024. The event was held as part of the project Youth for Healthy Future ahead of COP29.

Seventy Azerbaijani youth and 40 athletes, including Olympic medalists, gathered at the resort and marched to the peninsula's tip, which is called Shahdili. Here they displayed the words "We are water" with letters made up of recycled materials. Similar event was held in Bali in April 2024 where the letters were

Ambassador Thomas Stähli said at the event: *"Ahead of COP29, the voices of Azerbaijani and international youth in Baku resonate strongly, carrying a message of hope and awareness in the face of the climate crisis. This tripartite action is a source of inspiration through committed art and sport to accelerate together with young people, the construction of a more sustainable world".*

The sides initially agreed that similar projects will be organized in Azerbaijan in the coming two years too, as Baku will host the 13th World Urban Forum and the World Environment Day in 2026.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJmQg9w36aU>

https://azertag.az/xeber/bakida_olimpiya_mukafatchilari_ve_dunya_chempionlarinin_istiraki_ile_fles_mob_kechirilib_vid eo-3267812

<https://video.azertag.az/site/video/231492>

Culture & Education

Swiss singer performed in Baku



The Embassy of Switzerland organized concerts of Swiss singer Sophie de Quay on 18-19 September 2024. She performed in Baku as part of her world tour to build bridges between Switzerland and Azerbaijan.

On 18 September 2024, Sophie gave a concert at the famous Rashid Behbudov State Song Theatre. She invited the guests to sing together the part of her song: "Let's start building bridges", which was a positive message for the audience. Sophie's songs performed together with Simon Jaccard received massive applause from the audience. Another great concert was held on 19 September at Atelier 61 Events Hall, where the guests again enjoyed Sophie's joyful and thoughtful songs.



Sophie and Simon also held a workshop for the young students of the Azerbaijani National Conservatory.

Born in Switzerland, Sophie de Quay grew up in Singapore and New York. She graduated from a music school in Paris, and learned to speak and sing in Mandarin in Shanghai. Sophie uses her music and words to build bridges between cultures, generations, ways of thinking, and, simply, between people. Azerbaijan was the 16th country where the singer performed her songs.

<https://en.apa.az/show-business/swiss-singer-azerbaijan-is-a-country-i-want-to-discover-interview-448424>

Swiss National Day celebrated in Baku



The celebrations of the Swiss National Day took place on 17 September 2024 at JW Marriott Hotel in Baku. More than 400 guests from diplomatic missions, government, parliament, civil society, political parties, private sector and Swiss community joined the celebrations.



Ambassador Thomas Stähli gave a welcoming speech emphasizing friendly relations between Switzerland and Azerbaijan, which are anchored in a strong foundation laid over the years. He mentioned that the first innovative Swiss startups were already operating or looking at Azerbaijan and expressed hope that with COP29 this cooperation would even get more impetus. Then Swiss singer Sophie de Quay and young Azerbaijani talent Gorgud performed the national anthems.

Following the official part, the guests enjoyed tasty cuisine, including Swiss Raclette, as well as wonderful songs of singers.

Famous Swiss book presented in Baku



On 2 November 2024, the Embassy of Switzerland and the Ali and Nino bookstore organized the presentation of the prominent Swiss book "Heidi". The book was translated into and published in Azerbaijani by the Ali and Nino publishing house.

Swiss Ambassador Thomas Stähli joined the event and gave an interesting explanation to the audience, mostly children, about the book. He spoke about the book and the hero's experience in her life in a rural place, which created a bond between her and nature, gave her identity and important values for life.

An invited actor read out some parts from the book in Azerbaijani. Footages from different landscapes were shown on a big screen during the event.

At the end of the presentation, children were invited to join a drawing competition to depict Heidi and her place in Switzerland using all the information they received during the event. Concurrently, adults enjoyed the buffet of snacks, drinks and sweets organized by the Embassy. As a result of the drawing competition, all the participating children were announced as winners and given a certificate and a copy of the book in Azerbaijani.

Consular Affairs

Quick guide for visa application



Are you living in Azerbaijan and require a visa to travel to Switzerland?

The Swiss Embassy in Baku does not receive phone calls for visa questions. Instead, the Embassy's website is a good friend of visa applicants.

Thanks to the [Step by step Quick Guide](#) in English and Azerbaijani you will find the relevant information and guidance for the application process.



Facts & Figures

 THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS Switzerland. A common priority	
 <p>The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Geneva Conventions were established on the initiative of Swiss businessman Henry Dunant.</p>	<h3>ICRC</h3> <p>The activities of this humanitarian organisation for the protection of victims of war are based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949.</p> 
	 <p>The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law. They protect persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities.</p>
<h3>12 AUGUST 1949</h3> <p>Adoption of the four Geneva Conventions for the protection of wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces, prisoners of war and civilians. Switzerland is the depository state of the Geneva Conventions.</p>	<h3>CURRENT</h3> <p>The Geneva Conventions protect millions of threatened human lives worldwide.</p>
 <h3>GENEVA</h3> <p>is the global centre of expertise for humanitarian affairs.</p>	<h3>UNIVERSAL</h3> <p>196 states have ratified the Geneva Conventions of 1949. They apply to all states and parties to a conflict.</p> 
<small>© FDFA, Presence Switzerland 2024 / Sources: Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, International Committee of the Red Cross</small>	

Useful Swiss links



Swiss authorities online: www.ch.ch



Switzerland.

Discover Switzerland: www.aboutswitzerland.ch



House of Switzerland: www.houseofswitzerland.org



Switzerland Tourism: www.myswitzerland.com



Auslandschweizer-Organisation
Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
Organizzazione degli Svizzeri all'estero
Organisaziun dals Svizzers a l'ester

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA): www.aso.ch

... and please visit the Embassy's Facebook page to stay informed:

<https://www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyBaku/>

Embassy of Switzerland in Baku

Nizami Street 96E (Landmark I building, 5th floor), AZ1010 Baku

Tel.: +994 12 437 38 50

www.eda.admin.ch/baku

baku@eda.admin.ch

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