

SWISS WITH US

NEWS & VIEWS

From the Embassy of Switzerland in the U.S.



May 2023

From the Ambassador's desk

Dear Friends of Switzerland,

We have finally said goodbye to the colder weather, and welcomed spring, which has brought new life, opportunities, engagements, and yes... pollen to Washington, D.C. Most importantly though, here at the Embassy, we are working at full speed to promote Switzerland's interests in the United States and I would like to give you a short update on our successes and engagements.

In March, we had the opportunity to strengthen the friendship between parliamentarians of Switzerland and members of the United States Congress. After welcoming a group of Swiss National Councillors to Washington, D.C. to highlight Swiss foreign direct investment in the U.S., I had the honor to accompany a delegation of five U.S. Representatives to my home country in April. Below, we introduce you to the history of the friendship between our two countries' legislative branches and provide more insight into this year's visits.

Beyond highlighting the strength of our friendship and bilateral cooperation, this edition of our newsletter will focus on innovation and science. One of Switzerland's most innovative industries is rail mobility, which is highlighted in the great new [Switzerland Tourism campaign video with Roger Federer and Trevor Noah](#). In this newsletter, you can find out more about my colleagues' experiences promoting our pioneering public transportation system at this year's South by Southwest (SXSW) event series.

Sure, exploring Switzerland's mountain tops by train is a beautiful sight. But why stop there if we can go even further up? We also were honored to welcome Nobel laureate Didier Queloz and two esteemed researchers to the Embassy to discuss their research on space exploration. Together, they tried to answer one of our biggest questions: Are we alone in the universe? Read on to find the answer below.

From the leading thinkers of today to the stars of tomorrow: as part of Women's History Month, the Embassy hosted a competition for young female innovators. We conclude this edition of *Swiss with U.S.* by showcasing the creativity of talented women in the Washington, D.C. area.

On this empowering note, I invite you to look to the future and the many bright minds who will continue to solidify Switzerland and the United States as countries united by innovation – and friendship.

Sincerely,
Jacques Pitteloud



Jacques Pitteloud is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States of America.

Cultivating collaboration: Parliamentary friendship associations promote cooperation between Switzerland and the United States of America

Swiss-U.S. parliamentary friendship associations

Switzerland and the United States share common democratic values and a strong, long-lasting bond of friendship. To further strengthen the relationship between the legislative branches of the two countries, the Parliamentary Association Switzerland-USA was launched in 2001 and the U.S. Friends of Switzerland Caucus in 2003. Together, they work to promote political dialogue between the legislators of the two countries, and to strengthen Swiss-American relations through regular meetings, discussions, and exchange opportunities.



On their journey through Switzerland, the U.S. delegation visited the Federal Palace in Bern.

In March of this year, members of the Parliamentary Association Switzerland-USA visited the United States, and, in April, members of the U.S. Congress visited Switzerland. A highlight of the Swiss delegation's visit was the launch of the report entitled "[Switzerland's Economic Impact in the United States](#)" on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. On this occasion, the members of the delegation met with Congressmen Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Bill Huizenga (R-MI), the bipartisan co-chairs of the House Friends of Switzerland Caucus, as well as with members of the Swiss business community in the United States. The U.S. delegation, on its visit, had the chance to observe a vote in an extraordinary session of the Swiss parliament, were welcomed by the President of the National Council, and had the opportunity to interact with many members of the parliament.

In addition to fostering exchanges and interaction between legislators of both countries, the visits were an excellent opportunity for the representatives to better understand each other's cultures, achievements in science and innovation, and even cuisine. The Swiss delegation visited the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, while the American delegation toured the Innovation Park of the EPFL in Lausanne, Maison du Gruyère for a cheese tasting and a discussion on agricultural policy, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, an independent humanitarian organization with roots in Geneva.

Innovation in rail mobility: A look into Switzerland's public transportation system



At SXSW, Olivia Gachoud, Head of the Science and Technology Office at the Swiss Embassy, hosted a panel with industry representatives on the future of rail mobility.

South by Southwest (SXSW), an annual gathering of interactive media professionals, musicians, and emerging startups and technologies, took place in Austin, Texas this March. The event is a magnet for musicians, filmmakers, tech innovators, and investors. The Embassy of Switzerland attended the festival and had the opportunity to present the best of Switzerland's public transportation system.

A public forum at the forefront of new technologies, SXSW was the perfect place to show how coordinated, digitalized, and integrated mobility is economically viable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable. At a panel discussion on "Connected Rail Mobility from Across the Pond", the Embassy of Switzerland, together with the Swiss Business Hub USA, organized a dialogue on best practices in rail mobility, drawing from experiences in the United States, Germany, and Switzerland. Over the course of the discussion, Amtrak, Deutsche Bahn, and Stadler Rail put forward solutions and examples for better services for passenger rail.

The panel was part of the SXSW "Transportation Track" series and is a testament to Switzerland's recognized expertise in the transport sector and the concentrated efforts taking place in the United States to advance transportation-related infrastructure and innovation in rail mobility.

Space exploration with Swiss Nobel laureate Didier Queloz



From left to right: Dr. Ezinne Uzo-Okoro, Carl Zimmer, Dr. Kate Adamala, Dr. Emily Mitchell, and Dr. Didier Queloz.

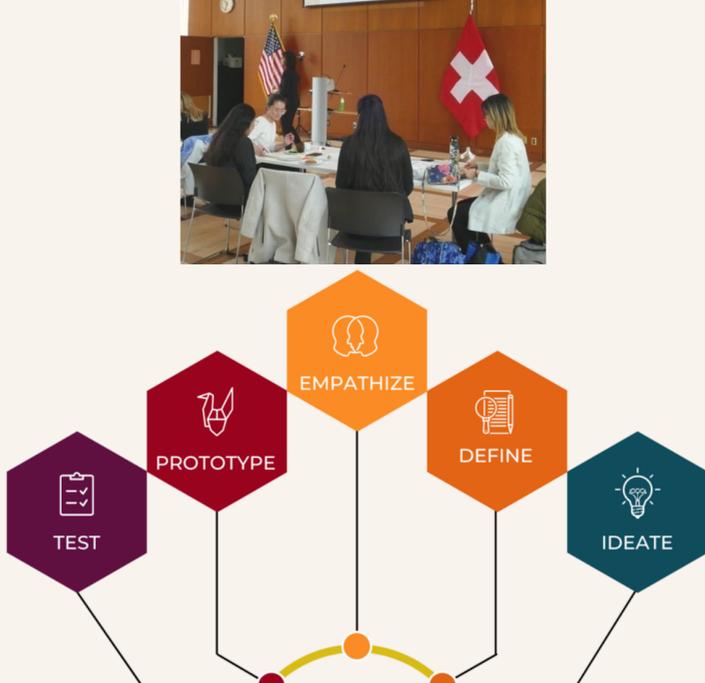
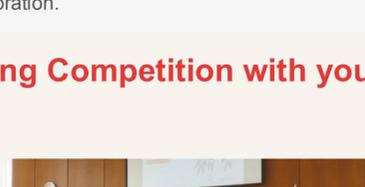
On March 2, the Science Office at the Embassy of Switzerland hosted a panel discussion on space exploration to honor the visit of Swiss Nobel laureate Professor Didier Queloz. Over 80 guests attended, including scientists, academics, and government officials from both Switzerland and the United States.

The panelists, who hailed from diverse scientific backgrounds, shared their perspectives on exoplanets and the exploration of life in the universe. Joining Professor Queloz on the panel were Dr. Kate Adamala, a leading synthetic biologist who has made significant contributions to the research of life in the universe, and Dr. Emily Mitchell, who also provided valuable insights from her extensive research on the evolution of life and biodiversity. *New York Times* columnist Carl Zimmer moderated the panel, following an introduction by Dr. Ezinne Uzo-Okoro, Assistant Director for Space Policy at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Together, the panelists brought a rich diversity of perspectives from astrophysics, synthetic biology, and paleontology to explore the fascinating topic of space exploration and the search for life beyond our planet. Their engaging and informative discussion was well-received by the audience and provided a platform for further exploration in this exciting field of study.

The event was a great success, offering a platform for Swiss and U.S. scientists to come together and discuss their shared passion for space exploration.

Social Design Thinking Competition with young female innovators



The participants were introduced to design thinking, an iterative approach for practical and creative problem-solving that can help teams reach innovative solutions.

To conclude this year's Women's History Month, the Embassy hosted its inaugural "Social Design Thinking Competition" for female students from colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C. area. The goals were to create a space for the next generation of creative minds, as well as highlight Switzerland's commitment to empowering female voices in innovation.

After identifying a problem on their respective campuses related to one of three [UN Sustainable Development Goals, which are also priority areas for Switzerland](#)—namely, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, and Gender Equality—students attended a workshop at the Embassy where they were led through the design thinking method to craft solutions. The students' creativity was on display as they brainstormed ideas and built prototypes in preparation for their pitches to the jury, consisting of women leaders from Nestlé and the Swiss Business Hub USA.

We loved hosting these inspiring women from across disciplines and generations. Seeing their drive and imagination in the face of challenges inspired us and compelled us to continue and grow this competition in the future.

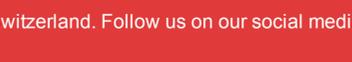
P.S. from Switzerland



After defeating the Washington Capitals just before the playoffs, the four Swiss stars playing for the New Jersey Devils celebrated with our Embassy fan delegation. From left to right: Timo Meier, Nico Hischier, Jonas Siegenthaler, Akira Schmid.

It is playoff season in the National Hockey League and seven Swiss ice hockey players had the opportunity to compete for the Stanley Cup.

Only six countries have more players represented in the NHL than Switzerland. But how did Switzerland become so important in the NHL? Check out our [article](#) to learn more about Swiss beginnings and breakthroughs on the ice!



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