



# SWISS WITH US

NEWS & VIEWS



*From the Embassy of Switzerland in the U.S.*

November 2025

## From the Ambassador's desk

Dear Friends of Switzerland,

As we move into the final stretch of 2025, I am reminded that the strength of the Swiss–U.S. partnership lies not only in our shared values, but in our shared pursuit of excellence in innovation and education, as well as in the human connections that give diplomacy its meaning.

Over the past few months, our engagement across the United States has continued to reflect this enduring spirit of collaboration. I was proud to attend the groundbreaking of Genentech’s new facility in North Carolina as a testament to Switzerland’s deep-rooted commitment to innovation and to the thousands of skilled jobs that Swiss investment continues to create across America. I was also honored to welcome a delegation of Swiss women Parliamentarian leaders to Houston, TX and Washington, DC that showcased how dialogue and exchange can open new pathways for cooperation in technology, workforce development, and leadership between Switzerland and the United States.

This same collaborative energy extended to the frontiers of security and governance. Our discussions on international law in cyberspace with American University reaffirmed Switzerland’s leadership in promoting responsible behavior in the digital domain. The newly signed Letter of Intent between the Swiss Armed Forces and the Colorado National Guard marks a new chapter in defense cooperation, while our joint Congressional briefing on apprenticeships demonstrated the value of Swiss expertise in bridging skills gaps through education and training.

Science and culture remain central to how we connect with American audiences. The film “Doing Research in Switzerland” captures the curiosity that draws young researchers to our universities, while community events – from our open-air film screening in Mount Pleasant to the “Climb to Switzerland” run – celebrated the creativity and spirit that bind our communities together.

As we look ahead, I remain grateful for your continued interest in Switzerland’s work and engagement across the United States. Together with my team, I look forward to new opportunities to strengthen the friendship, cooperation, and mutual understanding that have long defined the Swiss–U.S. relationship.

With warm regards,

Ralf Heckner

Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States



*Dr. Ralf Heckner is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States of America.*

## Ambassador Heckner Attends Groundbreaking of Genentech Manufacturing Facility in North Carolina

On August 25, **Ambassador Heckner** joined Genentech executives, along with federal, state, and local officials, to celebrate the groundbreaking of Genentech's new 700,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Holly Springs, NC.

The Ambassador was accompanied by **Ashley Magargee**, CEO of Genentech, **Susanne Hundsbaek-Pedersen**, Global Head of Pharma Technical Operations at Roche, **U.S. Representative Deborah Ross**, North Carolina **Governor Josh Stein**, **State Secretary of Commerce Lee Lilley**, **State Senators Sydney Batch** and **Lisa Grafstein**, **State Representative Erin Paré**, Wake County **Commissioner Cheryl Stallings**, and Holly Springs **Mayor Sean Mayefskie**.

The new facility will play a vital role in advancing the regional economy and ensuring a secure supply of medications for metabolic diseases to patients across the United States. Genentech, a subsidiary of the Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche, is a leader in the biotech industry. With this new site, the company is investing over \$700 million in North Carolina, underscoring its long-term commitment to innovation and workforce development in the state. This project alone will support more than 1,500 construction jobs, and upon completion, will add more than 400 high-wage permanent positions to the already existing 675,000+ jobs supported by Swiss companies in the United States.

This will be Genentech's first manufacturing plant on the East Coast, joining a network of 13 manufacturing and 15 R&D facilities operated by Roche and Genentech nationwide. Together, these sites employ more than 25,000 workers, reinforcing the Swiss pharmaceutical group's leadership in biotechnology and its commitment to ensuring reliable and affordable access to world-class medicine for patients in the United States.

Ambassador Heckner welcomed the project as a symbol of the strong economic partnership between Switzerland and the United States and looks forward to the positive economic and social impact this project will bring to the region.

Learn more about Genentech's groundbreaking on [SWISS IMPACT](#).



## Swiss Women Leaders Explore Innovation and Collaboration in the United States

From October 5 to 10, a delegation of Swiss women leaders, led by **Maja Riniker**, President of the Swiss National Council, visited the United States, with stops in Houston and Washington, DC. The delegation included several members of parliament, as well as prominent leaders from the business community, academia, and the Swiss administration.

The visit aimed to deepen the delegation's understanding of American innovation and explore opportunities for Swiss-U.S. collaboration. The program featured meetings with leading technology companies in the space and AI industry, Swiss companies, as well as discussions with representatives from the U.S. administration, Congress, academia, and think tanks.

Throughout the trip, the participants gained insights into the vast potential for cooperation on a wide range of areas such as emerging technologies, building on the shared strength of both countries when it comes to top-notch innovation, world-class research institutions, and entrepreneurial spirit.

The delegation developed and strengthened ties with women leaders in Houston and Washington, DC on innovation and trade, nurturing a network for powerful advocates for Switzerland. They identified promising avenues for cooperation in emerging technologies, innovation ecosystems, and workforce development, building on Switzerland's strengths in applied research and the U.S.'s entrepreneurial spirit. The delegation also discussed ways to address the shortage of skilled labor in key U.S. industries, highlighting the potential of the Swiss apprenticeship model as a source of inspiration.

Overall, the mission was a resounding success, fostering new connections and paving the way for stronger future partnerships between Switzerland and the United States.

Learn more about the Women's Leadership Delegation in Texas on [SWISS IMPACT](#).





## Civilian Hackers in Armed Conflicts and International Law

On September 15, the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, DC, in partnership with the Tech, Law & Security Program at American University Washington College of Law, hosted a panel discussion on “Civilian Hackers in State Conflicts – Status and Rules of Engagement under International Law.”

The event brought together experts in international law, cybersecurity, diplomacy, and the private sector to examine the growing involvement of civilians in cyber operations during armed conflicts—a development that poses new challenges for the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

In his opening remarks, **Deputy Head of Mission Adrian Hauri** emphasized Switzerland’s commitment to protecting civilians in armed conflict, including through the application of IHL in cyberspace. He also highlighted the role of International Geneva as a global hub for digital governance and multilateral cooperation.

Moderated by **Danielle Yeow** (National University of Singapore), the panel featured **Tilman Rodenhäuser** (ICRC), **Giacomo Biggio** (University of Bristol), **Fanta Orr** (Microsoft), and **Gary Corn** (American University). The discussion focused on the ICRC’s “Eight rules for ‘civilian hackers’ during war, and four obligations for states to restrain them,” along with broader issues such as accountability, state responsibility, and the role of tech companies. The evening concluded with a reception and continued discussion among participants.

Learn more about the panel discussion on [SWISS IMPACT](#).



## Switzerland and Colorado join Forces through the National Guard's State Partnership Program

On September 15, the Swiss Armed Forces and the Colorado National Guard took a concerted step towards cooperation by signing a Letter of Intent to be paired under the U.S. National Guard's State Partnership Program.

Switzerland and Colorado share much more than their mountainous landscapes—they are connected by cultural, economic, and technological ties, as well as a shared commitment to service through their militia systems. Both the Swiss Armed Forces and Colorado National Guard are composed of citizen soldiers, reflecting similar values of civic responsibility and resilience.

The new partnership opens possibilities for joint activities such as training and the sharing of expertise in mountain operations, cyber defense, CBRN defense, and mine clearance. Further cooperation may also include air defense, the use of each other's training infrastructure, and force development under the militia system.

Beyond military cooperation, the agreement opens avenues for civilian collaboration in science, technology, and education, helping to further strengthen Swiss–U.S. relations. Importantly, the partnership fully aligns with Swiss neutrality, as participation remains voluntary and carries no binding obligations or dependencies.

The letter of Intent, signed in Bern by **Lieutenant General Thomas Süssli**, Chief of the Swiss Armed Forces, and **Major General Laura L. Clellan**, Adjutant General of Colorado, marks the first of two steps in this budding partnership. A Memorandum of Understanding is expected to be formally signed in Colorado next year, paving the way for long-term cooperation and exchange.

Find out more about the agreement by reading the [Letter of Intent](#) and the [press release](#) of the Federal Council.





## Congressional Briefing on Apprenticeships with Swiss Companies

On September 10, the Embassy of Switzerland and the House Career and Technical Education Caucus co-hosted a congressional briefing on “Modern American Careers that are Fit for Apprenticeships.” The event was co-chaired by **Representatives G.T. Thompson (R-PA)** and **Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)**.

In his opening remarks, **Ambassador Heckner** highlighted the 175th anniversary of the U.S.–Swiss Friendship Treaty and Switzerland’s strong apprenticeship model.

Human resources representatives from **Bühler Aeroglide**, **Zurich Insurance**, **Kudelski**, and **Aon** shared insights into how apprenticeships benefit their organizations by addressing skills gaps and strengthening employee development. Former apprentices from these companies reflected on their own journeys, emphasizing the value of combining practical work experience with formal education.

The session concluded with concrete guidance for companies interested in developing apprenticeship programs, starting with assessing workforce needs and building partnerships with local educational institutions.

The Embassy thanks Representatives Thompson and Bonamici, all speakers, and the congressional staffers contributing to a successful and engaging discussion.

Learn more about the congressional briefing on apprenticeships with Swiss companies on [SWISS IMPACT](#).

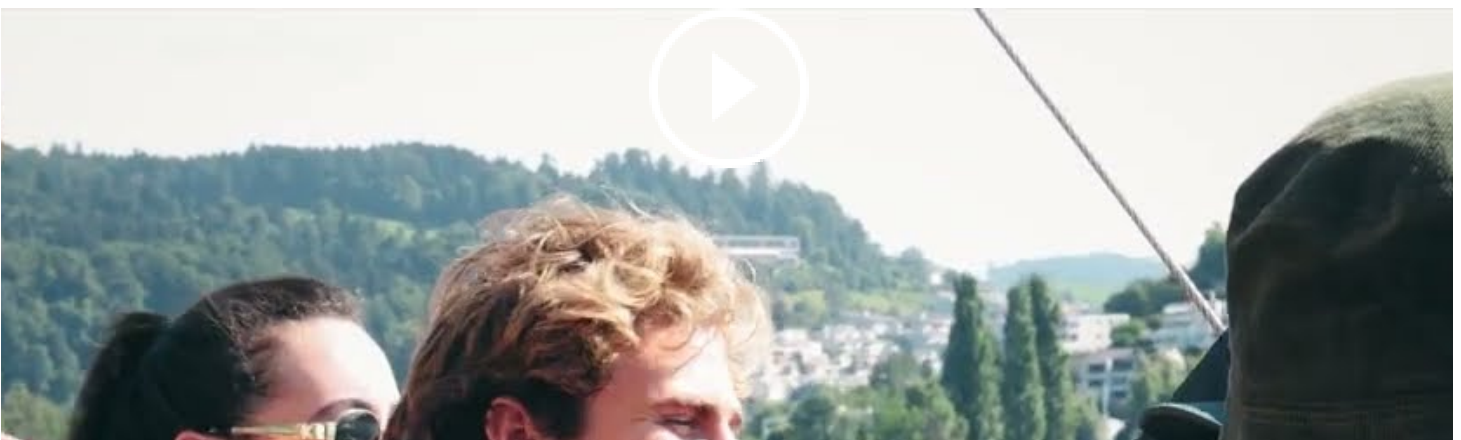


## Doing Research in Switzerland - New Promotional Video now Live!

The Embassy's Science Section is delighted to share our new promotional video [Doing Research in Switzerland](#), highlighting the exciting research opportunities Switzerland has to offer!

The video features ThinkSwiss awardees and Fulbright recipients, who share what makes Switzerland such a remarkable place to conduct research—from its world-class universities and cutting-edge labs to its breathtaking natural landscapes, not to mention the country's famous cheese and chocolate.

**Watch, like, comment, and share** the video to help spread the word about studying and researching in Switzerland!!







The ThinkSwiss scholarship program promotes research exchanges between Switzerland, United States, and Canada, offering students the opportunity to spend two to three months at leading Swiss universities and research institutions.

The 2026 call for applications is now open. Learn more and apply today on our [website](#) !





# Late Summer Activities

As summer turned to fall, the Embassy organized two outdoor events in Washington, DC, celebrating Swiss culture, community, and sport: an open-air film screening in the historic neighborhood of Mount Pleasant and the annual Climb to Switzerland run and reception on the Embassy grounds.

For the first time, the Swiss Film Club took to the streets of Mount Pleasant with an outdoor screening of *Longing for the World* (*L'amour du monde*) by Swiss director **Jenna Hasse**. Set along the shores of Lake Geneva, the tender coming-of-age story follows three wandering souls in search of connection. The film captivated a full audience who enjoyed the warm evening at Lamont Plaza under the stars.



In early October, the Embassy once again partnered with Pacers Running in Georgetown and Swiss athletic shoe and sportswear brand On for the annual *Climb to Switzerland*. About 150 participants laced up On running shoes for a three-mile uphill run from Georgetown to the Embassy. At the finish line, the runners were welcomed with fresh smoothies, delicious Swiss food, and an ice-bath to help with recovery. A trivia game on Switzerland's vibrant running culture added a fun twist, and some participants even enjoyed a dip in the Embassy's swimming pool.

**Ambassador Heckner** joined the run and spoke with fellow participants at the reception, rounding off a memorable afternoon of sport and Swiss hospitality.

Learn more about this year's *Climb to Switzerland* on [SWISS IMPACT](#).







## Progressive Rollout of the new Entry/Exit System (EES) starting October 12, 2025

The Entry/Exit System (EES), Europe's new border management system for registering non-EU nationals travelling for short stays, started operations on October 12, 2025. European countries using the EES, which include Switzerland, will introduce the system gradually at their external borders. This means that data collection will be gradually introduced at border crossing points with full implementation by April 10, 2026.

For more details about the EES, please consult the following [link](#).

## Webinar: Political rights for Swiss citizens abroad

Are you a Swiss citizen living abroad and would like to know what political rights you are entitled to and how you can exercise them?

Then we cordially invite you to review the latest joint webinar organized by the Consular Directorate of the FDFA, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) SwissCommunity, and Soliswiss – Cooperative of Swiss Abroad.

The webinar has been recorded and is available on [swisscommunity.org](https://swisscommunity.org) and [soliswiss.ch](https://soliswiss.ch).

## P.S. from Switzerland

Expats Theatre recently presented the English-language and U.S. premiere of *Kaltes Land (Cold Country)* by Swiss playwright **Reto Finger** here in Washington, DC, running from September 27 to October 19. Set in a remote Swiss mountain village, the play follows young Hanna as she navigates grief, secrecy, and the unsettling arrival of outsiders in a community bound by silence. Infused with poetic language, atmospheric intensity, and mystical elements inspired by Swiss folk traditions, *Cold Country* earned Finger both the Kleist Prize for Young Dramatists and the SSA Author's Prize.

To accompany the production, the Embassy partnered on an Instagram Takeover with lead actress **Sadie O'Connor**, offering our followers a behind-the-scenes look into her day preparing for the role.

Didn't catch it live? Relive the experience on our [Instagram](#).



*Photo: Teresa Castracane, courtesy of ExPat Theatre*



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