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NEWSLETTER



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FORWARD MESSAGE



Dear fellow Swiss citizens and friends

I am very pleased to present you again with a newsletter describing the most important activities of the Swiss Embassy over the last year.

2024 was an intense year for our team when it comes to business events, in particular the “Swiss Days in Yerevan” last spring. While there certainly remains some untapped potential for intensifying bilateral economic relations, quite a few useful encounters between firms from both countries were facilitated. This was done in cooperation with our partners from the Swiss-Armenian Chamber of Commerce (SACOC) who in 2024 have teamed up with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), as well as from the Joint Chamber of Commerce of Switzerland-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Furthermore, 2024 was a busy year in the cultural sphere as well, with various activities in the context of the “Francophonie” and visits by Swiss authors, musicians, and experts.

With regards to development cooperation, we have again decided to establish a separate SDC newsletter exclusively dedicated to this subject ([link](#)), allowing us to go into greater detail and targeted mainly for our cooperation partners. The newsletter you are reading here is intended mainly for our fellow Swiss citizens. Therefore, you will again find in this newsletter an update regarding consular matters with the support of the regional Swiss consular services placed at our embassy in Georgia.

For further activities, projects and initiatives that we have embarked on, follow us on the following social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#).

On behalf of the entire team, let me wish you and your families all the best for your personal health and for a peaceful and prosperous New Year 2025.

Sincerely,

Lukas Rosenkranz
Ambassador of Switzerland in Armenia

OFFICIAL MEETINGS AND VISITS

Ambassador Muriel Peneveyre visits Yerevan



In early February, Ambassador Rosenkranz and the embassy team were honored to welcome and support Ambassador Muriel Peneveyre, the Head of Eurasia Division at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, on her visit to Armenia.

Engaging in a series of crucial political consultations, Ambassador Peneveyre met with key figures from the Armenian Government, including Samvel Mkrtychyan, Head of Europe Division of the Armenian MFA, Vahan Kostanyan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, and Andranik Hovhannisyan, Ambassador of Armenia to Switzerland.

Moreover, the delegation met representatives of the civil society, and the international community, including those of the United Nations.

Ambassador Rosenkranz meets Deputy Chair of RA National Assembly Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights and Public Affair



Photo © RA NA

On November 27, Ambassador Rosenkranz met with Rustam Bakoyan, Deputy Chair of the RA National Assembly Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs, to discuss trade, legislative reforms, and support for vulnerable groups, including national minorities. They highlighted Armenia's Crossroads of Peace project for regional stability and Switzerland's humanitarian aid during the Nagorno-Karabakh refugee crisis. Ambassador Rosenkranz emphasized the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation and bilateral trade, while both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration across various sectors, showcasing Switzerland's role in Armenia's development and peace-building.

Ambassador Rosenkranz Visits Teach For Armenia's Summer Camp for Displaced Students



Ambassador Lukas Rosenkranz visited Teach For Armenia's Education in Emergencies Summer Camp in Geghashen Village, Kotayk region, which supports over 1,500 forcibly displaced students from Nagorno-Karabakh. Funded in part by donations from Swiss Embassy staff, this initiative helps children integrate into new communities and overcome trauma. The Ambassador's visit underscores Switzerland's commitment to education and the well-being of affected children in Armenia.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

During 2024 the Embassy has published the following papers on its website:

- [Economic report 2023](#)
- [Business Travel Guide](#) targeting Swiss Business representatives visiting Armenia
- Coming soon: *Legal Provisions* that will be published in the 1st quarter of 2025 to serve Swiss SME's considering Armenia as a business destination. Follow this [link](#) to access it among the first and share it with your network for whom it will be useful.

Annual Business Roundtable 2024

On March 6, the Embassy hosted its Annual Business Round Table, bringing together Swiss businesses in Armenia, local firms, and other stakeholders to explore opportunities and challenges in Armenia's business environment. Representatives from sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and financial services participated, discussing topics such as the Armenian banking sector, compliance, and government tenders. The event provided a dynamic platform for dialogue and collaboration, strengthening ties within the business community.



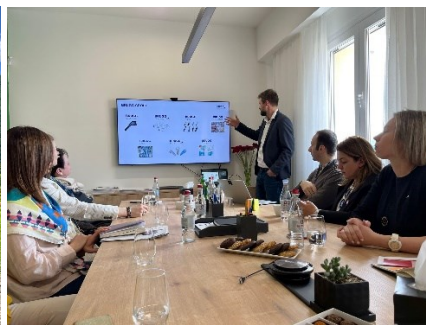
This year's roundtable welcomed representatives from Switzerland Global Enterprise, who shared exciting plans for the upcoming Swiss Days in Armenia on May 14-16, 2024, alongside the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum. The Embassy extends its gratitude to all participants and partners, including the Swiss-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and the European Business Association Armenia, for their valuable contributions.

SWISS DAYS in Armenia: Strengthening Economic and Cultural Ties

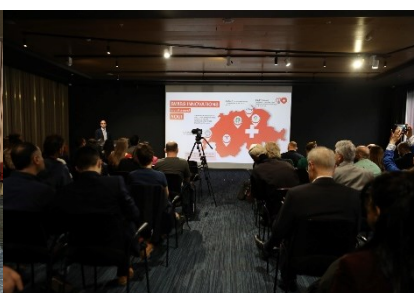


The SWISS DAYS in Armenia 2024 showcased the growing potential and existing successes of collaboration between Switzerland and Armenia. Organized by the Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) and the Embassy of Switzerland in Armenia, the series of events kicked off on May 14 with the conference "Switzerland – a Hub for IT and Innovation." The event highlighted Switzerland's strengths in IT and innovation, featuring presentations from Swiss and Armenian experts and success stories of Armenian businesses thriving in Switzerland. Participants explored opportunities for partnership, research, and development, emphasizing the robust collaboration between the two countries in these forward-looking sectors.

On May 15, the SWISS DAYS project brought Swiss business delegation members to Dilijan, where they visited the office and construction sites of the Green Rock Management Group. Discussions included the company's investment projects, such as the restoration of Aghasi Khanjyan's iconic house, the concept for the new Scana hotel and music hall in Dilijan, and other visionary initiatives. The visit highlighted the dynamic opportunities for Swiss-Armenian collaboration in tourism and cultural heritage development.



On May 16, the Swiss Infrastructure Day brought together key stakeholders to discuss advancements in infrastructure and their relevance to Armenia. Speakers included representatives from leading Swiss companies like AFRY, Condair, and SGS, who shared innovative solutions and insights into future projects. Presentations from the Asian Development Bank and Armenian officials enriched discussions on Armenia's infrastructure challenges and opportunities. The event concluded with engaging Q&A sessions and networking, fostering dialogue and collaboration between Swiss and Armenian business leaders.



The SWISS DAYS concluded with a reception at the Aznavour Center, celebrating a successful series of events. Highlights included speeches from Swiss and Armenian dignitaries and the signing of a Memorandum of

Understanding between the International Chamber of Commerce in Armenia and the Joint Chamber of Commerce Switzerland. This agreement promises to further enhance trade and investment ties. The reception was attended by a high-level Swiss Delegation headed by Ambassador Dominique Paravicini, Delegate of the Swiss Government for Trade Agreements. The evening featured a delightful selection of Swiss and Armenian wines, a raffle with prizes from Lindt & Sprüngli, and a warm atmosphere of camaraderie, marking a milestone in Swiss-Armenian relations.

Market Focus Armenia Event in Geneva: Strengthening Swiss-Armenian Economic Ties

On May 22, 2024, the Geneva Chamber of Commerce (CCIG) and the Switzerland-Armenia Chamber of Commerce (SACOC) hosted the Market Focus Armenia event in Geneva, featuring a video address by Ambassador Lukas Rosenkranz. The Ambassador commended the collaboration between Swiss and Armenian business communities, highlighting Armenia's investment potential and opportunities for partnership. He also emphasized Armenia's strong economic growth, improved business framework, and thriving IT sector as key attractions for Swiss companies, alongside recent successes such as the Swiss Days in Armenia workshops on IT, innovation, and infrastructure.



The event was further enriched by the presence of Armenian officials, including Deputy Ministers Kristine Ghalechyan and Alfred Kocharyan, as well as Ambassador Andranik Hovhannisyman. Their participation underscored the Armenian government's commitment to fostering bilateral economic ties. This dynamic gathering offered a platform for Swiss and Armenian firms to explore business collaborations, with the promise of deepening the economic relationship between the two countries.

Business Promotion Innovation Days 2024



Over thirty Armenian entrepreneurs gathered in Tsaghkadzor on November 18-19 for the Business Promotion Innovation Days 2024, organized by the Switzerland-Armenia Chamber of Commerce with support from the Swiss Embassy in Armenia and in partnership with ICC NCA. The event featured presentations from 24 Armenian companies showcasing innovative products, expert-led discussions on exporting to Switzerland, and the launch of Armenia Commerce Connect, a platform enabling businesses to access Swiss and European markets. Workshops on international sales contracts and European certification standards further enriched the program.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Lukas Rosenkranz emphasized Switzerland's commitment to Armenia's economic development, highlighting the importance of innovation and trade diversification. This annual event continues to strengthen Swiss-Armenian economic ties, fostering entrepreneurship and paving the way for Armenian businesses to expand into European markets.

The Armenia Commerce Connect platform was officially introduced to the audience of the event which allows Armenian exporters to present their products to Swiss and other European markets. (<https://armeniacommerce.com/>).

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



With a renewed project portfolio, Switzerland's International Cooperation efforts in Armenia achieved remarkable milestones last year. Over 20,000 Armenians from rural and remote areas actively participated in sustainable development and decision-making processes, while more than 3,000 Nagorno Karabakh refugees were supported with humanitarian cash assistance and socio-economic integration.

For more detailed information on specific events and portfolio advancements, readers are encouraged to refer to the comprehensive SDC Newsletter [here](#).

CULTURE AND ART

Francophonie 2024

Swiss-Armenian Literary Exchange: Harry Koumrouyan in Armenia

In celebration of Francophonie 2024 in Armenia, the Embassy collaborated with the State Linguistics University after V. Brusov and the Writers Union of Armenia, organizing two discussions with the Swiss author Harry Koumrouyan (who shares Armenian roots) with Armenian authors and literature students.



At these gatherings, Mr. Koumrouyan presented and discussed his acclaimed book "Un si dangereux silence" ("Such a Dangerous Silence") with the audience: participating Armenian authors as well as students from the State Linguistics University after V. Brusov. In this book, the Swiss author tells the story of fictional character Joseph Landolt, a young cellist in his twenties and descendant of an Armenian family who found refuge in Switzerland from the massacres in the Ottoman empire. Moreover, Mr. Koumrouyan was granted with membership into the Writers Union of Armenia, further solidifying his connection with the Armenian literary community.

Laissez-Moi

On March 21, as part of the Francophonie 2024, the Embassy organized the screening of the Swiss movie *Laissez-Moi*. The audience was captivated by this debut feature film by Maxime Rappaz, which depicts the torments of a complex character who's trying to free herself from a prison of her own making.



Francophonie Night at UFAR: Concert, Artistry, and Culinary Delights!



PHOTO © UFAR

The Francophonie Night at the Université française en Arménie UFAR, supported by the Embassy, was a showcase to the vibrant cultural exchange between Armenia and the Francophone world. As a gesture of our commitment to fostering cultural exchange and promoting the French language, the Embassy provided special gifts for the winners. Merci à tous for making this Francophonie Night an unforgettable experience!

We also extend our appreciation to the embassies of France, Belgium, and Serbia, as well as the State Academy of Fine Arts of Armenia for our collaboration.

Swiss renowned lute master Hopkinson Smith gave exclusive concerts in Yerevan and Gyumri



Photo © State Philharmonia of Armenia

Winner of multiple music awards, Swiss lute player Hopkinson Smith over the years has gained international recognition for his virtuoso interpretations of music from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Smith's unparalleled artistry has received the highest praise from world-renowned publications and critics. The San Francisco Chronicle recognized him as "the best lutenist in the world", and the Gramophone magazine called him "the poet of the lute".

The musician's concerts in Yerevan and Gyumri transported the audiences to the high art and impressive world of the Renaissance and Baroque eras. The musician presented to the listeners exceptional samples of English and Italian music of the 16th and 17th centuries with deep musical expressiveness. An important part of the artist's visit to Armenia has also been the masterclass delivered to the students of the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory.



SWISS NATIONAL DAY



For the 733rd birthday of Switzerland the Embassy was proud to welcome its its partners and guests from the Government of Armenia, Armenian Civil Society, and international and local organizations to the celebration of the Swiss National Day.

This year, we were proud to showcase the initiatives and present the produce of some of the small businesses supported by Swiss-funded development projects in Armenia, highlighting the success of our collaborative efforts. The Embassy extends its gratitude to the sponsors of the celebration Revizto, Noa of Areni (NOA Wines) and Coca-Cola HBC.



CONSULAR MATTERS

New Head of Consular Services



It is a great pleasure for me to briefly introduce myself to the Swiss Community living in Armenia in this year's newsletter. My name is Sandro Wittwer, I was born and raised in the Berner Oberland and joined this summer the Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia as the new head of Consular Services, covering the consular district of Armenia and Georgia. Before taking up my new position in Tbilisi, I worked in Algeria for three years, which was also my first posting with FDFA. Before that, I worked for several years in a Bernese municipal administration and completed my business administration studies.

I already had the pleasure of meeting some of the Swiss community in Armenia on the occasion of the national day, celebrated on 12 September 2024 at the Congress Hotel in Yerevan. For everything else, I look forward to hearing from you (tbilisi.consularaffairs@eda.admin.ch / Phone: +995 322 75 30 01) or meeting you in person on one of the next occasions.

Together with my team at the Swiss Consulate in Tbilisi, we are at your disposal for all consular matters (registration, identity documents, civil status, change of address, etc.) concerning Swiss citizens in Armenia. At this point, I would like to point out that you can renew your Swiss identity documents at the Swiss Embassy in Tbilisi or during your next stay in Switzerland. To do this, please fill out the online application on www.schweizerpass.ch and indicate under 'comments' if you wish to have your biometric data recorded in Switzerland rather than in Tbilisi. The Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia will then forward your passport application to the relevant cantonal passport authority and will inform you by email about the further steps and how to make an appointment.

If you are planning a trip to Switzerland and your accompanying persons require a Schengen visa, please note that citizens and official residents of Armenia can lodge their visa application with the Embassy of Poland in Yerevan (visa in representation of Switzerland). Please note, that the Embassy of Switzerland in Tbilisi cannot interfere with the appointment system or any other issue dealt by the Embassy of Poland in Yerevan.

However, citizens and official residents of Armenia can also launch their visa application directly at the Swiss Embassy in Tbilisi. Applicants are requested to make an appointment online at www.swiss-visa.ch or to contact us by email (tbilisi.visa@eda.admin.ch). More information about the visa procedure can be found [here](#) on our webpage.

I am looking forward to my upcoming visits to Armenia and wish you all a happy holiday season and a good start into the new year. See you soon!

Sandro Wittwer
Head of Consular Services
Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia

Invitation to subscribe to the SwissCommunity newsletter



On behalf of SwissCommunity, we would like to invite you to subscribe to the SwissCommunity newsletter as Swiss citizen living abroad. The SwissCommunity newsletter is sent out around ten times a year. It is dedicated to topics that directly affect the Swiss abroad. It contains the following information:

- **Important news for the Swiss abroad:** Information on AHV, health insurance, military service, e-voting and [webinars](#), for example.
- **Tips and tricks for living abroad:** practical recommendations that make [everyday life](#) easier for Swiss nationals living abroad or make it easier for them to return to Switzerland.
- Insights into **Swiss communities abroad:** on the activities of the [online community platform](#) and the "[Living in](#)" project.
- **Young Swiss abroad:** Information on [camps and activities](#) that enable young people to stay connected to Switzerland.

By registering to the newsletter, you maintain and ensure a strong and solidary connection to Switzerland and will always stay informed.

You can read the latest newsletter and subscribe to the newsletter [here](#) or on the website www.swisscommunity.org.

SwissInTouch: Switzerland in your pocket

SwissInTouch, the information and communication platform of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), enables Swiss citizens abroad to stay in touch with their embassy or with FDFA headquarters.

- Information, surveys and events
- Quick contact with your local representation
- Guide to living and working abroad

Register now directly on www.swissintouch.ch.



Travel Admin 3.0: the FDFA's app for your stay abroad, now even more efficient

On 27 February 2024, the [Travel Admin App 3.0](#) went into operation. The latest, completely revised version of the free travel app from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has a new design and is easier than ever to use. The Travel Admin App from the Consular Directorate, launched in 2019, has proven to be a useful tool in the event of an emergency situation occurring while travelling abroad – such as a violent conflict, natural disaster or accident.

The complete FDFA media release on the Travel Admin 3.0 app can be found [here](#).

Once you've registered, you can simply enter your destinations as well as your travel companions and an emergency address directly from your contact lists.

You are also kindly requested to recommend the use of the Travel Admin App to friends and guests who come to visit you. This allows the Swiss Embassy to contact not only registered Swiss citizens abroad but also Swiss nationals travelling temporarily in the consular district in an emergency.

If you're registered on the app and there's a crisis in your destination country, you'll get push notifications from the FDFA. The app also gives you quick access to the address, contact details and website of the nearest Swiss representation, so you can contact them directly by phone, Skype or email. In addition, the app lists emergency numbers (fire service, police, ambulance) for your destination. Last but not least, the [FDFA Helpline](#) is also accessible from the app and can provide you with round-the-clock assistance worldwide.



Download the Travel Admin App for free on your smartphone – for a well-prepared and worry-free trip.

[Travel Admin App for iPhone](#)
[Travel Admin App for Android](#)

Recommendation for Swiss citizen in case of a crisis

We invite you to follow the elementary emergency recommendations "[Preparedness measures and what to do in a crisis situation](#)" which we consider to be a general measure of reasonable preparedness. The document has recently been updated by the Swiss Embassy in Yerevan in collaboration with the Consulate in Tbilisi and is accessible on the [Embassy's web page](#).

In a crisis, the Embassy might need to contact you. Make sure to let the Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia (tbilisi.consularaffairs@eda.admin.ch) know about any changes of address, e-mail-address, phone numbers, etc. and inform us of your final departure from Armenia. Please note, that information would be sent primarily by e-mail and only if not available by post.



GREETINGS FROM THE EMBASSY TEAM

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