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Embassy of Switzerland in Bulgaria

Embassy Newsletter

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Sofia History Museum

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Welcome words by the Ambassador



Ambassador
Pierre Hagmann
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Chers compatriotes et amis de la Suisse,
Chers lecteurs

C'est un très grand plaisir de pouvoir vous présenter notre nouvelle Newsletter qui vient ponctuer une riche année pour les relations entre la Suisse et la Bulgarie.

En août 2025, j'ai pris mes fonctions d'Ambassadeur de Suisse en Bulgarie. Je me réjouis de l'honneur de pouvoir représenter la Suisse en Bulgarie et de me consacrer pleinement au renforcement de nos relations bilatérales, ensemble avec la communauté suisse et tous nos partenaires. Je souhaiterais remercier mon prédécesseur, l'Ambassadeur Raymund Furrer, qui a conduit cette Ambassade de 2021 jusqu'à juin 2025. C'est un privilège de pouvoir lui succéder.

Je dois aussi évoquer un autre changement au sein de l'Ambassade : M. Rolf Ott, notre Chef de mission adjoint, va nous quitter dès la mi-janvier pour prendre ses nouvelles fonctions de Consul général de Suisse à Atlanta aux Etats-Unis. Au nom de toute l'équipe de l'Ambassade, je tiens à le remercier pour son travail et engagement durant plus de quatre ans et demi à Sofia, le féliciter pour sa nomination et lui souhaiter plein succès dans ses futures fonctions. Grazie mille, Mr. Ott !

Plusieurs moments forts ont marqué l'actualité des relations Suisse-Bulgarie cette année. Durant le premier semestre, nous avons eu l'honneur de recevoir à quelques semaines d'intervalle deux Conseillers fédéraux en visite officielle : d'abord le Chef du Département fédéral de Justice et Police, M. Beat Jans, et ensuite le Chef du Département fédéral de l'économie, de la formation et de la recherche, M. Guy Parmelin. Ces visites témoignent de l'importance du partenariat entre nos deux pays. Nous avons également eu différentes visites de travail de la Suisse, tant dans le domaine migratoire, de la culture ainsi que dans le cadre du «Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme».

Un autre fait marquant de l'année a justement été les avancées dans la mise en œuvre des programmes de la contribution suisse, qui constitue un des piliers de nos relations bilatérales. Depuis le milieu des années 1990, la Suisse soutient la Bulgarie dans sa transition socio-économique à travers différents programmes de coopération. Depuis, cette contribution suisse, qui existe également pour [d'autres États membres de l'UE](#), est devenue un élément clé de la politique européenne de la Suisse, nous positionnant comme un partenaire solidaire, fiable et compétitif pour la sécurité, la stabilité et la prospérité en Europe. En 2022, la Suisse a signé avec la Bulgarie l'accord cadre pour la contribution suisse actuelle qui court jusqu'en 2029, d'une valeur de 92.5 millions de CHF. En 2025, nous avons pu assurer le lancement de 10 des 11 programmes, le dernier programme devant être lancé l'année prochaine. En parallèle, la Suisse a identifié la Bulgarie comme pays prioritaire pour notre coopération en terme migratoire et un accord-cadre a été signé en octobre visant la mise en œuvre de différents projets d'une valeur de 21,35 millions de CHF.

Au niveau de la communauté suisse en Bulgarie, nous avons pu accompagner ces derniers mois les efforts visant à l'établissement d'un Club suisse. L'Ambassade se réjouit de pouvoir appuyer cette initiative visant à connecter davantage les plus de 550 Suisses vivant en Bulgarie.

L'année 2026 s'annonce tout aussi intense pour nos relations bilatérales. La mise en œuvre des programmes de la contribution suisse, y compris de son volet migratoire, devrait s'intensifier. Le partenariat avec la BSCC (Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce), la valorisation du travail des compagnies suisses en Bulgarie, ainsi que la coopération en éducation, science et innovation, telle qu'incarnée par INSAIT ou encore le récent CCBRE à Plovdiv (*Centre for Cleantech and Biomass Resource Efficiency*), seront aussi prioritaires. Plusieurs projets culturels, comme le festival Allegra (édition d'hiver en février 2026) ou les célébrations de la Francophonie en mars, auront lieu durant

l'année. Enfin, 2026 sera aussi l'occasion de marquer les 110 ans de nos relations diplomatiques. C'est en effet en 1916 que le premier Ambassadeur de Bulgarie présentait ses lettres de créances au gouvernement suisse à Berne.

Avec toute l'équipe de l'Ambassade de Suisse, nous nous réjouissons de cette nouvelle année pour travailler étroitement avec tous nos partenaires et continuer à œuvrer ensemble au renforcement des liens entre la Suisse et la Bulgarie.

Nous vous souhaitons ainsi qu'à vos familles, de très belles fêtes de fin d'année et vous présentons nos meilleurs vœux pour 2026.

Bonne lecture et à bientôt !

Pierre Hagmann

Ambassadeur de Suisse en Bulgarie

DEUTSCH

Liebe Landsleute und Freunde der Schweiz
Liebe Leserinnen und Leser

Es ist mir eine grosse Freude, Ihnen unseren neuen Newsletter vorzustellen, der ein ereignisreiches Jahr für die Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Bulgarien abrundet.

Im August 2025 habe ich mein Amt als Schweizer Botschafter in Bulgarien übernommen. Ich freue mich über die Ehre, die Schweiz in Bulgarien vertreten zu dürfen und mich gemeinsam mit der Schweizer Gemeinschaft und allen unseren Partnern voll und ganz der Stärkung unserer bilateralen Beziehungen zu widmen. Ich möchte meinem Vorgänger, Botschafter Raymund Furrer, danken, der diese Botschaft von 2021 bis Juni 2025 geleitet hat. Es ist ein Privileg, ihm nachfolgen zu dürfen.

Ich muss auch eine weitere Veränderung innerhalb der Botschaft erwähnen: Herr Rolf Ott, unser stellvertretender Missionschef, wird uns Mitte Januar verlassen, um seine neue Funktion als Schweizer Generalkonsul in Atlanta, USA, zu übernehmen. Im Namen des gesamten Botschaftsteams möchte ich ihm für seine Arbeit und sein Engagement während mehr als viereinhalb Jahren in Sofia danken, ihm zu seiner Ernennung gratulieren und ihm viel Erfolg in seiner neuen Aufgabe wünschen. Grazie mille, Herr Ott!

Mehrere Höhepunkte prägten die Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Bulgarien in diesem Jahr. Im ersten Halbjahr hatten wir die Ehre, im Abstand von wenigen Wochen zwei Bundesräte zu offiziellen Besuchen zu empfangen: zuerst den Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Justiz- und Polizeidepartements, Herrn Beat Jans, und danach den Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Departements für Wirtschaft, Bildung und Forschung, Herrn Guy Parmelin. Diese Besuche zeugen von der Bedeutung der Partnerschaft zwischen unseren beiden Ländern. Wir hatten zudem verschiedene Arbeitsbesuche aus der Schweiz, sowohl im Migrations- und Kulturbereich als auch im Rahmen des «Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme».

Ein weiterer Höhepunkt des Jahres war die Fortschritte bei der Umsetzung der Programme im Rahmen des Schweizer Beitrags, der eine der Säulen unserer bilateralen Beziehungen darstellt. Seit Mitte der 1990er Jahre unterstützt die Schweiz Bulgarien bei seiner sozioökonomischen Transition durch verschiedene Kooperationsprogramme. Seither ist dieser Schweizer Beitrag, [der auch für andere EU-Mitgliedstaaten gilt](#), zu einem Schlüsselement der europäischen Politik der Schweiz geworden und positioniert uns als solidarischen, verlässlichen und wettbewerbsfähigen Partner für Sicherheit, Stabilität und Wohlstand in Europa. 2022 unterzeichnete die Schweiz mit Bulgarien das Rahmenabkommen für den aktuellen Schweizer Beitrag, der bis 2029 läuft und einen

Wert von 92,5 Millionen CHF hat. 2025 konnten wir den Start von 10 der 11 Programme sicherstellen, das letzte Programm soll nächstes Jahr beginnen. Parallel dazu hat die Schweiz Bulgarien als Prioritätsland für unsere migrationsbezogene Zusammenarbeit identifiziert, und im Oktober wurde ein Rahmenabkommen zur Umsetzung verschiedener Projekte im Wert von 21,35 Millionen CHF unterzeichnet.

Auf Ebene der Schweizer Gemeinschaft in Bulgarien konnten wir in den letzten Monaten die Bemühungen zur Gründung eines Schweizer Clubs begleiten. Die Botschaft freut sich, diese Initiative zu unterstützen, die darauf abzielt, die über 550 in Bulgarien lebenden Schweizerinnen und Schweizer stärker zu vernetzen.

Das Jahr 2026 verspricht ebenso intensiv für unsere bilateralen Beziehungen zu werden. Die Umsetzung der Programme des Schweizer Beitrags, einschliesslich des Migrationsbereichs, dürfte sich verstärken. Die Partnerschaft mit der BSCC (Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce), die Förderung der Arbeit der Schweizer Unternehmen in Bulgarien sowie die Zusammenarbeit in Bildung, Wissenschaft und Innovation, wie sie durch INSAIT oder das jüngste CCBRE in Plovdiv (Centre for Cleantech and Biomass Resource Efficiency) verkörpert wird, werden ebenfalls Priorität haben. Mehrere Kulturprojekte, wie das Allegra-Festival (Winterausgabe im Februar 2026) oder die Feierlichkeiten zur Frankophonie im März, werden im Laufe des Jahres stattfinden. Schliesslich wird 2026 auch Gelegenheit bieten, das 110-jährige Bestehen unserer diplomatischen Beziehungen zu feiern. Denn 1916 überreichte der erste bulgarische Botschafter seine Beglaubigungsschreiben an die Schweizer Regierung in Bern.

Gemeinsam mit dem gesamten Team der Schweizer Botschaft freuen wir uns auf dieses neue Jahr, um eng mit allen unseren Partnern zusammenzuarbeiten und weiterhin gemeinsam die Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Bulgarien zu stärken.

Wir wünschen Ihnen und Ihren Familien wunderschöne Festtage und übermitteln Ihnen unsere besten Wünsche für 2026.

Viel Freude bei der Lektüre und bis bald!

Pierre Hagmann

Schweizer Botschafter in Bulgarien

ENGLISH

Dear compatriots and friends of Switzerland,
Dear readers,

It is a great pleasure for me to present to you our new Newsletter, which concludes an eventful year for relations between Switzerland and Bulgaria.

In August 2025, I assumed my duties as Ambassador of Switzerland to Bulgaria. I am delighted and honored to represent Switzerland in Bulgaria and to dedicate myself fully to strengthening our bilateral relations, together with the Swiss community and all our partners. I would like to thank my predecessor, Ambassador Raymund Furrer, who led this Embassy from 2021 until June 2025. It is a privilege to succeed him.

I must also mention another change within the Embassy: Mr. Rolf Ott, our Deputy Head of Mission, will leave us in mid-January to take up his new position as Consul General of Switzerland in Atlanta, USA. On behalf of the entire Embassy team, I would like to thank him for his work and commitment during more than four and a half years in Sofia, congratulate him on his appointment, and wish him every success in his future role. Grazie mille, Mr. Ott!

Several highlights marked Swiss-Bulgarian relations this year. In the first half of the year, we had the honor of welcoming two Federal Councillors on official visits within a few weeks of each other: first, the Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, Mr. Beat Jans, and then the Head

of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Mr. Guy Parmelin. These visits demonstrate the importance of the partnership between our two countries. We also had various working visits from Switzerland, in the fields of migration, culture, and within the framework of the “Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme.”

Another major development this year was the progress made in implementing the Swiss contribution programs, which constitute one of the pillars of our bilateral relations. Since the mid-1990s, Switzerland has supported Bulgaria in its socio-economic transition through various cooperation programs. Since then, this Swiss contribution, [which also exists for other EU member states](#), has become a key element of Switzerland’s European policy, positioning us as a solidary, reliable, and competitive partner for security, stability, and prosperity in Europe. In 2022, Switzerland signed with Bulgaria the framework agreement for the current Swiss contribution, which runs until 2029 and amounts to CHF 92.5 million. In 2025, we were able to launch 10 of the 11 programs, with the last one scheduled to start next year. In parallel, Switzerland has identified Bulgaria as a priority country for our migration cooperation, and a framework agreement was signed in October to implement various projects worth CHF 21.35 million.

At the level of the Swiss community in Bulgaria, we have supported in recent months the efforts to establish a Swiss Club. The Embassy is pleased to support this initiative, which aims to connect more closely the over 550 Swiss citizens living in Bulgaria.

The year 2026 promises to be just as intense for our bilateral relations. The implementation of the Swiss contribution programs, including its migration component, is expected to accelerate. The partnership with the BSCC (Bulgarian Swiss Chamber of Commerce), the promotion of the work of Swiss companies in Bulgaria, as well as cooperation in education, science, and innovation, as embodied by INSAIT or the recent CCBRE (Centre for Cleantech and Biomass Resource Efficiency) in Plovdiv, will also be priorities. Several cultural projects, such as the Allegra Festival (winter edition in February 2026) or the Francophonie celebrations in March, will take place during the year. Finally, 2026 will also be an opportunity to mark the 110th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. Indeed, it was in 1916 that the first Bulgarian Ambassador presented his credentials to the Swiss government in Bern.

Together with the entire team of the Swiss Embassy, we look forward to this new year to work closely with all our partners and continue to strengthen the ties between Switzerland and Bulgaria.

We wish you and your families wonderful holiday celebrations and extend our best wishes for 2026

Enjoy reading and see you soon!

Pierre Hagmann

Ambassador of Switzerland in Bulgaria

News from the Swiss Embassy team in Sofia

Changes in the team

2025 brought some changes within the team of the Embassy of Switzerland. In June, Ambassador Raymond Furrer completed his four-year term. His successor, Ambassador Pierre Hagmann arrived in August. He presented his letters of credence to the President of Bulgaria on October 16. In October, Aleksandra Vicheva joined the Embassy team, to work in the Swiss Contribution Office of the Embassy and take care of the migration related cooperation programmes. The next important change will be the departure in January of our Deputy Ambassador, Mr Rolf Ott, who will take up his new position as Consul General of Switzerland in Atlanta. We expect his successor to arrive in Sofia in June 2026.



*Ambassador Pierre Hagmann and his wife, Ms. Namon Yuthavong, with the team after the accreditation ceremony
16/10/2025*

Some team highlights of the last months

Our team visited for its yearly outing the water treatment plant in Bistritsa and learned about the conditions under which drinking water for the city of Sofia is treated and supplied. The facility and the dedicated specialists impressed the team.



Visiting the water treatment plant in Bistritsa

At the beginning of December, the team devoted some of its time to safety and security issues. We had an intense 1st aid training on how to use a defibrillator, which is extremely important for saving lives. As every year, we also conducted a crisis simulation in which the team tested its readiness to assist in an emergency Swiss citizens living, visiting or traveling in Bulgaria.

Finally, to celebrate Christmas, the team and its family members were invited to visit our office space at Capital Fort, before enjoying a Christmas celebration at the Swiss residence.

Farewell words of the Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Rolf Ott

Time flies! Given the pace of transfers that characterize the life of diplomats, this is even more evident when it comes to packing your bags and setting off for a new destination. Our four years in the magnificent country of Bulgaria have flown by! They have been very rewarding years, marked positively by the country's accession to the Schengen area and its forthcoming entry into the eurozone.

From a professional point of view, it has also been a very intense period, with, among other things, three visits by Federal Councilors and the relocation of the Chancellery. From a personal point of view, my wife Evelyne and I have thoroughly enjoyed Sofia with its many green spaces and have appreciated the kindness of the Bulgarian people.

With one eye on the past and the other on the challenges ahead, I would like to thank all our partners for their collaboration, as well as my colleagues at the Embassy for their support and guidance since 2021: GRAZIE MILLE E ALLA PROSSIMA!



Mr. Rolf Ott

Swiss Community

Reminder: for consular services, Swiss citizens in Bulgaria are invited to contact our Regional Consular Center based at the Swiss Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, directly : <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/bulgaria/en/home/services.html> .

Even though consular services are provided by our colleagues in Bucharest, our Embassy in Sofia remains, of course, a committed partner of the Swiss community in Bulgaria and maintains close contact with it. In this regard, the Embassy welcomes the establishment of a Swiss club in Bulgaria.

Treffen in Sofia zwecks Gründung eines Schweizer Klubs

Am 7. Oktober 2025 trafen sich etwa 50 Schweizer Bürger beim Hilton in Sofia mit Schweizer Wein und Schwyzerörgeli, um den Anfang einer Initiative zu setzen, welche die Gründung eines Schweizer Klubs in Bulgarien abzielt.

Falls Sie Interesse an dieser Initiative haben, bitte sich bei den drei Initianten (Ernst Zwingli, Stefan Reiter und Daniel Heinecke) unter : stephan@reiters.ch ; ernst.zwingli@zwerit.com melden.

Get-together in Sofia to establish a Swiss club

On October 7, 2025, around 50 Swiss citizens met in Sofia with Swiss wine and Schwyzerörgeli to launch an initiative aimed at founding a Swiss club in Bulgaria.

If you are interested in this initiative, please contact the 3 initiators at (Ernst Zwingli, Stefan Reiter und Daniel Heinecke) : stephan@reiters.ch ; ernst.zwingli@zwerit.com.

Réunion à Sofia en vue de la création d'un club Suisse

Le 7 octobre 2025, une cinquantaine de citoyens suisses se sont réunis à Sofia autour d'un cocktail, d'un verre de vin suisse et d'un accordéon Schwyzerörgeli pour lancer une initiative visant à créer un club suisse en Bulgarie.

Si cette initiative vous intéresse, veuillez contacter les 3 initiateurs (Ernst Zwingli, Stefan Reiter und Daniel Heinecke) à l'adresse : stephan@reiters.ch ; ernst.zwingli@zwerit.com



One of the initiators, Mr. Ernst Zwingli and the Ambassador Pierre Hagmann, at the event on 7/10/2025 in Sofia

Swiss high-level visits to Bulgaria

This year, the Embassy had the privilege to receive two high-level visits from Switzerland.

Visit of Federal Councillor Beat Jans, Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), 25 and 26 March 2025



Federal Councillor Beat Jans and his wife with the Embassy team

The visit aimed to strengthen the cooperation between Switzerland and Bulgaria in particular on migration management, security issues and police collaboration, and to pave the way for the migration programme of Switzerland's second contribution to Bulgaria.

Mr. Jans held talks in Sofia with his counterpart and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and visited the Kapitan Andreevo border crossing. He also visited the center for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (UMA) in Harmanli supported by Switzerland.

Press release in French : <https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/missions/mission-eu-brussels/fr/home/actualite/news.html/content/europa/fr/meta/news/2025/3/27/104657>

Press release in German : <https://www.mission-eu-bruessel.eda.admin.ch/de/nsb?id=104657>

Visit of Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, 07.05.2025



Meeting at the Council of Ministers in Sofia

The visit aimed to foster and further develop good bilateral scientific relations between Switzerland and Bulgaria and to take stock on developments around the Swiss-Bulgaria Cooperation Program (Swiss contribution).

In addition to Prime Minister Jeliaskov and President Radev, Mr. Parmelin met also with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev, Minister of Education and Science Krasimir Valchev and Minister of the Environment Manol Genov.

Last but not least, Mr. Parmelin visited the Institute for Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Technology (INSAIT), which celebrated its fourth anniversary.

Presse release : https://www.news.admin.ch/en/newnsb/6L1Yd9_cVszoc8jFZ_HDG

Bulgarian news on the visit to INSAIT: <https://www.bta.bg/en/news/bulgaria/885582-insait-achievements-are-exceptional-switzerland-s-head-of-the-federal-departme>

Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme

SWISS–BULGARIAN Cooperation Programme



In 2026, the Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme has made substantial progress. Ten out of eleven Support Measure Agreements under the cohesion credit have started implementation, and the Framework Agreement under the migration credit was signed.

It is through the Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme (SBCP) that Switzerland implements in Bulgaria the [Swiss contribution to selected EU member states](#). Since 2007, this contribution is helping to reduce economic and social disparities between and within European countries.

The SBCP comprises two separate bilateral Programmes to be implemented until 2029: Since 2022, [one](#) of 92.5 million Swiss francs with 11 separate Support Measures funded under the cohesion credit of the second Swiss contribution, (c.f. our [Factsheet](#)), and since 2025 a [second](#) of 21.35 million Swiss francs funded under the migration credit. The total Swiss contribution to Bulgaria for the period 2022 – 2029 amounts to 113.85 million Swiss francs.

The SBCP targets thematic areas with recognised needs of Bulgaria as well as opportunities for Switzerland to add value with its expertise and experience. It builds upon the successful partnership between our two countries which began in the 90's during Bulgaria's transition to EU membership and was further solidified through the Enlargement Contribution (2010 to 2019).

→ Continue reading on selected highlights of SBCP in 2025 or find an overview of the programmes [here](#).

Signing of the 'Monitoring, control and disposal of obsolete pesticides' Programme / 5.12.2025

On 5 December, the "Monitoring, control and disposal of obsolete pesticides and prevention measures" Programme* was signed by the Bulgarian Deputy Prime minister Tomislav Donchev, the Minister of Justice Georgi Georgiev and Ambassador Pierre Hagmann.



Signing ceremony of SECO Pesticides and SDC AC/PI programmes

With a Swiss contribution of 15 million CHF, the overall objective of the Programme is to reduce the risks for human health and the environment from obsolete pesticides and other expired plant protection products. It is the continuation of a similar project implemented as part of the first Swiss (enlargement) contribution.

It will safely dispose of remaining old pesticides across Bulgaria, further strengthen the capacities for hazardous waste management at all levels and foster international cooperation.

Signing of the ‘Fighting corruption and promoting integrity’ Programme / 5.12.2025

Also on 5 December, the “Fighting Corruption and Promoting Integrity” Programme was signed by the Bulgarian Deputy Prime minister Donchev, Bulgarian Minister of Justice Georgiev and Ambassador Hagmann.

The Programme will be implemented by the Ministry of Justice as Programme operator and aims at strengthening the legal framework, improving institutional and human capacity, as well as increasing transparency and citizen engagement.

The “Fighting Corruption and Promoting Integrity” Programme is the tenth of eleven Support measures co-financed by Switzerland through the Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme under the second Swiss contribution to selected EU member states. The Swiss financial contribution is 1.5 million Swiss francs.

Framework Agreement on Migration / 28.10.2025

On 28 October 2025, Ambassador Hendrick Krauskopf, Director of the International Affairs at the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), signed the bilateral Framework Agreement in the Migration Area with Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria Tomislav Donchev.



Ambassador Hendrick Krauskopf, Deputy Director SEM and Tomislav Donchev, Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria

Switzerland will support Bulgaria with an additional 21.35 million Swiss francs for migration issues by strengthening asylum management and by providing reception facilities for vulnerable migrants such as unaccompanied refugee and migrant children. To achieve this, it will closely work with international organisations (such as UNICEF, IOM) to implement efficient and high-quality asylum procedures in line with Bulgarian and international standards.

More [information here](#)

Opening event for the Civic Engagement and Transparency Facility / 22.10.2025

On 22 October, the Ambassador Pierre Hagmann together with Deputy Prime Minister Atanas Zafirov officially opened the “Civic Engagement and Transparency Facility” (CETF). The “We Act Together” event brought together nearly one hundred representatives of public institutions, non-governmental

organisations and the private sector, as well as international organisations and Swiss partners. The Keynote speaker was Mr Peter Lack, Director of Caritas Switzerland.



Swiss Ambassador Pierre Hagmann (second on the left), the Head of the Swiss Contribution Office Thomas Stauffer (third on the left), the Programme Operator and participants in the event.

The CETF supports civic engagement and democratic participation with a budget of 10 million Swiss francs. It focuses on less developed regions in Bulgaria and aims to encourage citizens' engagement and participation as well as a constructive dialogue within communities and between civil society and public authorities. The Facility supports three Lighthouse projects, two Grant funds, and capacity building along the entire programme duration.

➔ For more information on this program, please consult www.swisscetf.bg.

Opening event of DOMINO 2 / 2.10.2025

The 'Mainstreaming dual vocational education and training (DVET) in Bulgaria (DOMINO 2)' Programme – aimed at mainstreaming dual vocational education and training (DVET) in Bulgaria – was officially launched on 2 October in presence of the Minister of Education and Science, Krasimir Valchev. The Programme seeks to foster economic growth and reduce youth unemployment by integrating Swiss dual education principles into Bulgaria's vocational education and training (VET) system. DOMINO 2 continues the legacy of DOMINO 1 and Swiss support for Bulgaria's educational reform, focusing on sustainable capacity building across public and private sectors. By bringing Swiss expertise to Bulgaria, DOMINO 2 empowers students with practical skills, supports employers in securing qualified professionals, and contributes to long-term, inclusive growth.



Exhibition PRS about D-VET at opening of DOMINO 2

Signing of the ModAIRn Programme / 25.6.2025

Better data for better decisions! The Support Measure Agreement for the 'Improved air quality through a modernised and recognised national air quality measurement system and scientific partnership' (ModAIRn) Programme was signed on the 25 June. With a Swiss contribution of 15 million Swiss francs, ModAIRn aims at improving the state of the environment in Bulgaria. The major goal of the programme is to assist Bulgaria in the process of upgrading the National Air Quality Monitoring System and contributes to reliable data and assessment for better air quality policies. The Support Measure will impact the decision-making process of public authorities in achieving cleaner air and of the general public in adapting their behaviour. The Programme focuses on a) upgrading the automated stations and equipment from the NAQMS, b) creating Data Hub and user-friendly app with data on the air quality, c) raising awareness on air quality, and d) establishing a meaningful collaboration with international organisations and experts to assess the air quality.



Launch of the SBCP and signing of ZOV II / 11.2.2025



Address by former Swiss Ambassador, Raymund Furrer

The SBCP was officially launched on 11 February 2025, marking a renewed commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and reducing economic and social disparities both between EU member states and within Bulgaria. Read more about [the launch here](#).

On the launch, the Support Measure Agreement for the 'Health and Education for All – ZOV II' Programme was signed. ZOV II will address the social and educational needs of vulnerable and excluded

communities by supporting much needed stationary and mobile services in municipalities with distant access to public and other services. Switzerland is contributing 8 million Swiss francs to the development of integrated services in five remote municipalities and will further support the institutionalisation of the role of the educational mediator in Bulgaria.

Vocabulary :

'Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme (SBCP)' means the bilateral programmes for the implementation of the two Framework Agreements on Cohesion and on Migration.

'Support Measure Agreement' means an agreement between Switzerland and Bulgaria on the implementation of the individual programmes of the SBCP.

Timeline of the SBCP

22.09.2022	Framework Agreement on the bilateral Cohesion Programme
01.08.2023	Support Measure Agreement on the Swiss-Bulgarian Research Programme
31.07.2024	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Civic Engagement and Transparency Facility'
30.10.2024	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Improving public safety and security' Programme
11.02.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Advancing Equity: Health and Inclusive Education for All' (ZOV II) Programme
23.04.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Health Prevention and Promotion' Programme
23.04.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Mainstreaming dual vocational education and training (DVET) in Bulgaria (DOMINO 2)' Programme
25.06.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Providing support to migration management and promoting integration measures' Programme
25.06.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Improved air quality through a modernised and recognised national air quality measurement system and scientific partnership' (ModAIRn) Programme
28.10.2025	Framework Agreement on the bilateral Migration Programme
05.12.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Monitoring, control and disposal of obsolete pesticides' Programme
05.12.2025	Support Measure Agreement on the 'Fighting corruption and promoting integrity' Programme

Economy

The economic and commercial sector is an important area of activity for the Embassy. In addition to monitoring the economic situation and drafting the annual economic report ([link S-GE](#)), the Embassy supports Swiss companies.

This support takes various forms, including close cooperation with the Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce ([BSCC](#)). The Deputy Head of Mission participates in board meetings and contributes to evaluate joint activities such as the organization of the event marking the Chamber's 20th anniversary in November 2024 ([BSCC History](#)).

When necessary or when opportunities arise, the Embassy works with the official authorities to promote Swiss companies and/or defend their interests.

A close relationship with the network of Swiss companies or those with links to Switzerland is crucial to get to know partners in the business world and to hear their views on the challenges and opportunities that Bulgaria offers. The Embassy is pleased to pursue the practice of nurturing these links. Our Ambassador would like to thank the Swiss companies' General Managers he has visited since his arrival in August 2025 and looks forward to future exchanges. Please do not hesitate to contact the Embassy if you would like to organize a visit of your Swiss company!



The BSCC Board and Secretariat at the Swiss Residence

Education, research and innovation

CCBRE = Centre for Cleantech and Biomass Resource Efficiency

This [center](#) opened in August at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv. This is a so-called ERA project (funded by EU program Horizon Europe). The Swiss Bulgarian [Prof. Dr. Petar Mandaliev](#) from FHNW (Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz / Institut für Biomasse und Ressourceneffizienz IBRE), received the mandate to lead this ERA Chair. It is an applied science institute, developing solutions to solve concrete problems of the region, from waste or water management to converting organics waste into high-quality recycling products or energy sources. The CCBRE is already showing promising results, and we wish it all the success.



Cleantech Centre opening in Plovdiv in August 2025

INSAIT (Institute for Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Technology)

The [Institute for Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Technology](#), which celebrated its 4th anniversary in May 2025, keeps expanding its activities in Bulgaria, but also on a global scale, while continuing its cooperation with its founding partners ETHZ (Zurich), EPFL (Lausanne) and Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. The Embassy supports the Institute on a regular basis and the Bulgarian authorities highly appreciate this exceptional research, development and innovation hub with a strong Swiss identity located in the country.



Prof. Zurbruchen ETH Zurich, Former Associate Administrator, NASA Science Mission Directorate giving a keynote lecture at INSAIT in Sofia in September 2025

Cultural heritage protection

A delegation from the [Swiss Federal Office of Culture](#) visited Sofia in November for discussions with the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria to reinforce cooperation in the field of cultural heritage protection. This visit follows Switzerland's restitution last May of a rare and precious gladiator's helmet to Bulgaria — a remarkable gesture that gave momentum to discuss the finalization of a bilateral agreement on cultural heritage protection between our two countries. The helmet itself, one of the very few of its kind in the whole world, is exhibited since November 2025 at the [National Museum of History](#) as part of a new and exciting exhibition inaugurated end of November. Switzerland is looking forward to strengthening its cooperation with Bulgaria in this field.



Swiss and Bulgarian experts with the restituted gladiator's helmet at the National Museum of History

Poetry on the Subway

The Embassy took part in the 10th annual edition of this initiative of the network of European cultural institutes. This year's topic was "Faith" and the beautiful poem by Swiss poet and writer Jacques Chessex, "I Found the Skull of the Fox", was read at the official opening of the event by our colleague Theodora Burgudzhieva. The poster containing the poem's full text can be seen until mid-December on the subway at Central Railway Station. What better place for a poem from Switzerland, the land of railways, than this?



The Swiss poem at Central Railway Station in Sofia

European Night of Literature 2025

In September, the Embassy participated again in the European Night of Literature, presenting Elias Canetti's autobiography "The Saved Tongue". Exerpts of his remarkable autobiography, written in Zurich, telling the story of Canetti's early childhood in Rousse, Bulgaria, were read by young ethnographer Totyo Hristov. The Swiss reading nest was located in the National Art Gallery. There were numerous visitors, including a Bulgarian National Television crew.



Swiss writer Tabea Steiner and Totyo Hristov

Swiss dance company "La Méthode"

Swiss dancer Maxime Jeannerat (Compagnie "La Méthode", Neuchâtel) took part in the Alter Ego International Festival, a forum for young talented performers from across the world. The Embassy partially supported Jeannerat's participation.

110 years of bilateral relations in 2026

Did you know that Switzerland and Bulgaria will celebrate the 110th anniversary of bilateral relations in 2026? In 1916, the prominent Bulgarian intellectual Simeon Radev presented in Bern the letters of credence accrediting him as 1st Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to Switzerland.

Allegra Festival in February 2026

*Allegra Director Petar Naydenov and
Ambassador Pierre Hagmann*

We are happy to announce that the next 12th edition of the Allegra Festival will take place from 8 to 11 February 2026 at the Central Military Club in Sofia. The artistic director, Mr. Petar Naydenov (who is both a Bulgarian and a Swiss national and member of Luzern Symphony Orchestra [Sinfonieorchester](#)) has successfully established the festival over the years as one of the most renowned cultural events in Bulgaria: [Allegra](#). The Swiss Embassy is proud to be patron of the festival.



Social Media

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