



**Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia**



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## AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow citizens,  
Dear partners and friends,

Welcome to the 2024 edition of our newsletter! It brings us great pleasure to share highlights of Swiss engagements and initiatives across Georgia. In a year marked by various political challenges, we remained committed to supporting open dialogue and contributing to sustainable growth in diverse sectors.

From high-level meetings to grassroots projects, 2024 has been a year of strengthened ties with partner organisations and meaningful advancement within the Swiss-supported projects, but also of serious complications given some political developments in Georgia. Through cultural exchanges, community projects, and support for democratic processes, Switzerland continues to emphasize the importance of collaboration, inclusivity, and shared progress. Together, we address challenges, celebrate achievements, and explore opportunities for cooperation to help building a stronger, more resilient society.

We invite you to explore the stories of collaboration, empowerment, and exchange featured in this newsletter.

Thank you for being a part of this journey.

I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Respectfully,

Heidi Grau  
Ambassador

## POLITICAL COOPERATION

### Ambassador Peneveyre visits Georgia

 Ambassador Muriel Peneveyre  
@SwissMFAEurasia

Today, in #Tbilisi, I had productive political consultations with Ambassador David Kereselidze of #Georgia. Bilateral, regional & international topics of common interest were discussed, incl. longstanding international cooperation engagement in +. Thanks for your hospitality!



MFA of Georgia

... On 7-8 February, Ambassador Muriel Peneveyre, Head of Eurasia Division at the FDFA of Switzerland, visited Georgia to hold political consultations. The focus of the Ambassador's visit included bilateral relations between the two countries and the Swiss cooperation in Georgia.

### Ambassador Grau meets PM Kobakhidze



Swiss Ambassador to Georgia, Heidi Grau, met with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, on 27 February. They discussed bilateral relations, the SDC's contributions to Georgia's socio-economic development, and opportunities to deepen the partnership between the two countries.

### Georgian Parliament Speaker visits Bern

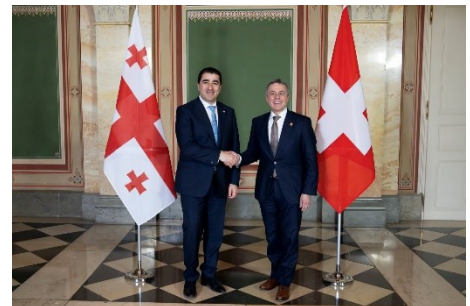
 Swiss Peace and Human Rights  
@SwissPeaceHR

Together w/ @SwissDevCoop DG Danzi, AMB Geissbühler exchanged w/ Chairman of Parliament of #Georgia @shpupuashvili on + partnership in #peace, #HumanRights promotion & sustainable dev, highlighted @SwissPeaceHR coop with + NGOs & emphasized contribution of CSO to #democracy.



... The President of Switzerland's National Council, Eric Nussbaumer, hosted Georgian Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili in Bern. Mr. Papuashvili also met Eva Herzog, President of the Council of States. The invitation for the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament was a follow-up to the high-level visit of a Swiss Parliamentary delegation to Georgia in 2022.

On 14 March, Mr. Papuashvili met with the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Ignazio Cassis; the Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Patricia Danzi; and the Head of the FDFA's Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD), Simon Geissbühler. The discussions gave the Georgian parliamentary delegation the opportunity to learn more about Switzerland's commitments in Georgia and to take stock of the country's future challenges.



The official press release please see [here](#).

## Alain Berset's official trip to Georgia



Former President of Switzerland and candidate for Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, paid a visit to Georgia on 7 April. In Tbilisi, he met with Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and presented his candidacy to members of Georgia's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Mr. Berset also travelled to Odzisi for a briefing by Georgian authorities about the challenges on the ground. In the village of Ergneti he engaged with the local rural community, including beneficiaries of Swiss humanitarian aid.

## Swiss and Georgian foreign ministers meet in New York



On 25 September, on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, Ignazio Cassis, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, met with his Georgian counterpart, Ilia Darchiashvili, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The ministers focused on the close cooperation between Georgia and Switzerland.

"Switzerland remains committed to supporting dialogue and peace in the South Caucasus region. Diplomacy is key to addressing existing challenges," stated Mr. Cassis in his official post.

## Swiss observers in Georgia for the 2024 Parliamentary Elections



A group of eight Swiss Short-Term Observers (STOs) participated in the OSCE-ODIHR observation mission for the 26 October parliamentary elections in Georgia. The Swiss STOs were deployed to various regions across the country.

Switzerland remains committed to supporting and contributing to the strengthening of democracy in Georgia.

## Counsellor on Migration Issues Ms Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet visits Tbilisi

From 18 to 21 November, Counsellor on Migration Issues, Ms Abigaëlle Gotteland-Gobet paid an official visit to Tbilisi. Before her new position, Ms. Gotteland was a policy advisor at the State Secretary of Migration (SEM) in Bern, where she coordinated the negotiation that led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Migration Partnership between Switzerland and Georgia in 2022. Ms. Gotteland is based in Ankara, covering Turkey and Georgia. During her stay in Tbilisi, she met with representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior. In addition, she conducted consultations with WHO, IOM and the EU Migration Liaison office.

## ECONOMIC COOPERATION

### Ambassador Grau visits economic projects



On 24–25 July, Ambassador Heidi Grau visited Swiss-funded projects in western Georgia. She toured the Swiss Pakka AG’s hazelnut plant and met with its representatives. Supported by the SDC as part of a private-sector engagement initiative, the plant aims to enable Georgian farmers to increase productivity and income through organic hazelnut production and export. This initiative is poised to boost the hazelnut industry, creating growth opportunities and sustainable economic development for smallholder farmers.

Ambassador Grau also visited a newly established cheese plant run by a Dairy Farmer Field School (FFS) lead farmer. Supported by the SDC and implemented by the FAO, 20 FFSs, led by women dairy farmers, have been established within the frame of the project which ended in December 2024 (for more information please see below). These schools have trained over 400 women dairy farmers in West Georgia, enhancing their skills and opportunities in small-scale dairy production.



More information about Pakka AG in Georgia please see [here](#).

More information about the FFS please see [here](#).

## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

### Mid-term review of the Cooperation Programme 2022–2025



On 22–24 April, the Swiss Cooperation held a mid-term review of its Cooperation Programme for the South Caucasus 2022–2025 in Georgia. The event brought together cooperation teams from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, alongside the Swiss Ambassadors to these countries, to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the ongoing initiatives.

The review served as a platform to assess socio-political developments in the South Caucasus region, including emerging challenges and opportunities. Participants discussed regional trends such as economic

recovery, political reforms, and efforts to strengthen social cohesion in the aftermath of global and local crises.



A significant focus of the review was on aligning the Programme's priorities with the dynamic needs of the region. This included recalibrating strategies to enhance economic resilience, address climate change, and promote inclusive governance. The sessions also highlighted the importance of partnerships with civil society and international organizations to amplify the impact of Swiss-funded projects. By reflecting on achievements and lessons learned, the participants identified the priorities for future international cooperation, ensuring its continued relevance and alignment with the evolving priorities of the South Caucasus countries.

The mid-term review underscored Switzerland's steadfast commitment to supporting the region through tailored international cooperation, with a focus on promoting sustainable development, economic growth, and the well-being of the people in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

## Project supporting small-scale dairy farmers ends successfully



The SDC has concluded a four-year project supporting dairy women farmers in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. Over the course of the last four years, the project has established 30 Farmer Field Schools in the 8 municipalities of the Samegrelo-Upper Svaneti region. More than 600 dairy women farmers received training in this format on good manufacturing, agricultural and hygiene practices. They also learned about animal health and well-being, the Georgian food safety regulation, and the importance and benefits of cattle registration and identification.

The Farmer Field Schools were established in the homes of 30 Leader Farmers. They received milk and dairy production equipment and tools, supporting them in improving their capacities to produce higher-quality products more efficiently.

Along with other training modules, the Farmer Field School attendants learned how to make 10 varieties of higher-value cheese varieties. Nearly 20 Lead Farmers started producing some of these dairy products commercially and for their households. The project supported them in marketing, labelling and branding their artisanal dairy products.

The SDC-funded project - Fostering Economic Empowerment of Women Farmers by Supporting Homemade Dairy Production in Georgia – was implemented by FAO in partnership with the UN Women.

More information about the project please see [here](#).

## Multi-hazard maps for Georgia



The Climate Change Adaptation project has also tabled tangible results for the Georgian population, especially those living in disaster-prone areas. Switzerland contributes to Georgia's efforts to install the early warning system, build the capacity of relevant institutions and staff, and mitigate risks posed by potential catastrophes. As part of its support, Switzerland facilitated the development of hazard maps for ten river basins across Georgia.

They help identify risk zones, guide urban planning, and raise public awareness. By using these maps, Georgia can build safer communities and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters on both people and environment.

The maps were prepared within the framework of the UNDP-implemented Climate Change Adaptation project.

More information about the project please see [here](#).

## Peace and Human Rights



From 15–21 July, the OSCE Secretariat organized two events—a Model OSCE Conference and an OSCE School. Thirty-six young participants from Central Asia and the South Caucasus honed their mediation and negotiation skills through simulation exercises of OSCE decision-making processes. Ambassador Grau attended the Model OSCE Conference.

The events were financially supported by the Swiss Embassy in Georgia, the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## CULTURE



In partnership with Indigo, the Swiss Embassy supported a multimedia exhibition dedicated to Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia. The exhibition featured a virtual tour and postcards sent from those still residing in Abkhazia to those unable to visit. It was held at the Holoseum-Audio Visual Museum from 22 to 27 February.



On 28 September, Swiss poet Matthiew Corpateaux participated in the Tbilisi International Festival of Literature, presenting a selection of his finest poems. The festival took place from 27 to 30 September 2024, at the Goethe Institute.



In collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Georgia and the Minerva Language Institute as part of Italian Week, the Swiss Embassy took part in a prize-giving ceremony for Georgian students from grades III to XII at the First Classical High School in Tbilisi. Students summarized their favorite books through drawings or written compositions. The event was further enriched by inspiring musical performances.



The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supported the participation and performance of the Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra (PCYO) at the 2024 Tsinandali Festival. The PCYO, composed of talented young musicians from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan, collaborates with world-class international coaches, conductors, and soloists during the festival.

### New Head of Consular Services



It is a great pleasure for me to briefly introduce myself 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 Tbilisi as the new head of Consular Services, covering the consular district of Georgia and Armenia. 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 Georgia on the occasion of the national day on 1 August 2024, celebrated at the Ambassador's Residence. For everything else, I look forward to hearing from you ([tbilisi.consularaffairs@eda.admin.ch](mailto: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, we are at your disposal for all consular matters (registration, identity documents, civil status, change of address, etc.). 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](http://www.schweizerpass.ch) and indicate under 'comments' if you wish to have your biometric data recorded in Switzerland rather than in Tbilisi. The Embassy 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.

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

### Invitation to subscribe to the SwissCommunity newsletter



Auslandschweizer-  
Organisation (ASO)

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](http://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.



Register now directly on [www.swissintouch.ch](http://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 citizens 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 and is accessible together with an earthquake concept and further information 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](mailto: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 Georgia. Please note, that information would be sent primarily by e-mail and only if not available by post.

## 1 August – National Day of Switzerland



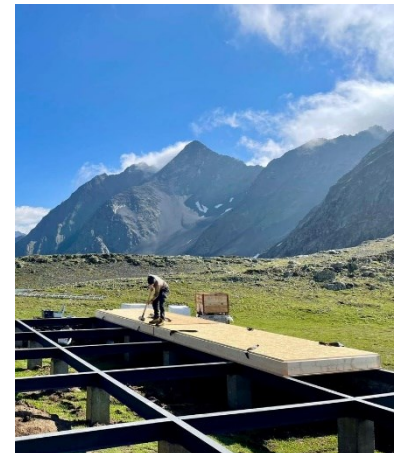
The Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia hosted a vibrant 1 August celebration, bringing together the Swiss community living in Georgia. From traditional Swiss dishes to iconic cantonal flags, the event exuded an atmosphere of Swiss traditions and culture.

## Swiss mountain huts in the Georgian Mountains



As part of the project connecting Kazbegi, Pshav-Khevsureti, and Tusheti protected areas, seven Swiss mountain huts are being installed along the Juta-Roshka-Arkhoti-Shatili-Tusheti route. The huts have been manufactured in Switzerland and are transported and assembled with the help of Swiss and Georgian specialists.

The project is funded by the World Bank and state budget.



Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia  
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