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A word from the Ambassador

Dear Swiss compatriots and dear Swiss friends in Korea,
dear Readers

I arrived in Seoul as new Swiss Ambassador two months ago, to take over from my colleague Ambassador Thomas Kupfer - who replaced me as Ambassador in Singapore - and just on time for our two sons to start the new school year in our new host country. Korea has been on my list of preferred countries and I am therefore very pleased that the Swiss government is giving me this opportunity to look after Switzerland's interests in Korea. My first visit to Korea goes 38 years back when I was studying at the University of St. Gallen. There I was active as President of AIESEC - the international association of students in economics and commerce - and in that function I was invited to visit the sister organization in Korea.



Before joining the Swiss civil service and besides doing my duties in the Swiss army, including officer's school, I was involved in a number of activities: I was a journalist, an university lecturer and worked for a trading company with headquarter in Bangkok. In my 32 year career with the Swiss government I spent initially a large part of my time dealing with trade issues with the Americas and in the field of development cooperation mainly in Africa, Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia. I got more closely involved with the Asia again when I became on the Swiss side chairman of the bilateral economic commissions also with China, Japan and Korea from 1999 and later as Governor of the Asian Development Bank.

The last four years we had a fascinating time in Singapore. Both Switzerland and Singapore had a lot at stake as important financial centers during the turbulent times after the near financial meltdown in 2008 and the subsequent enhanced regulatory framework cumulating with new rules also in the field of exchange of information among tax authorities! But even after these difficult times the Swiss banks have kept their strong positions in Asia and in their main fields of competence, specifically also because of the excellences of their back-offices, who are running wonderfully like Swiss watches. This is the strength of the Swiss economy in general and our partners and clients know it: Others might have more wonderful front offices, but the Swiss concentrate on the services and competence of reliable back offices.

When I spent 2 weeks in Seoul back in 1974, I stayed with a wonderful Korean family. At that time there was no facebook to keep contacts and I regret very much that I lost contact with 'my' Korean family. All I remember was that they had a small workshop/factory to produce pots and pans and a son and daughter about my age. I really hope that at the end of my present function in Korea in about four years, I will have found this family and at the same time deepened the understanding and cooperation between Korea and Switzerland.

The Swiss community and the number of Swiss companies in Korea are still of a size which will allow me to get to know a large part personally. I am working on that and I am looking forward to meeting my fellow country women and men and to making many new Korean friends.

Jörg Alois Reding
Ambassador of Switzerland





Ambassador Reding welcomed at the Blue House



On October 5 Ambassador Jörg Al. Reding was invited to the Blue House to present his letter of Credentials to President Lee Myung-bak. This ceremony marked the official beginning of Ambassador Reding mandate in Korea. During the discussion that followed the ceremony the President noted the excellent status of the relations between our two countries. Ambassador Reding congratulated the President for the extraordinary development of Korea during these past decades and insured him to work hard to further strengthen our bilateral relations.

Getting to know Institutions and Swiss Companies in Korea



Besides establishing his network with the Government and national institutions, Ambassador Reding is dedicating his time at the beginning of his mandate in Korea to visiting Swiss companies in order to get to know the local management, their activities and clients, and their challenges they are facing. Throughout his professional life, Ambassador Reding has been a trade diplomat and therefore likes to confront the realities in different markets and to help to promote Swiss goods and services. Even though Switzerland has a different – that is less direct - approach regarding the role of the government in the economy, there are also occasions where interventions from the side of the Embassy are more than justified in order to fight against discrimination.

▶ Ambassador Reding meets Mr. YongHwan Kim(right), President of Syngenta Korea Ltd.

Korea wins the bid for the Green Climate Fund Secretariat



Environmental topics drew international delegations to Korea in October with three important back to back events. On October 16 the Forum on the Future of the Green Climate Fund took place in Seoul. From October 17 to 20 a Swiss delegation headed by Ambassador Jürg Lauber of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs promoted in Songdo the Swiss bid of Geneva to host the Green Climate Fund Secretariat. Five other candidates including Germany and Korea competed for hosting this new United Nations entity. The Korean Candidacy of Songdo was finally chosen by the board of the GCF. The decision of the board will be officially confirmed during the Doha Conference in December. Another Swiss delegation attended on October 22 & 23 the Pre-COP 18 in Seoul. This ministerial meeting was the last preparatory meeting before the Doha Conference.

▶ Courtesy: Yonhap News Agency



Gold Award for the Swiss Pavilion at Expo 2012 Yeosu



Expo 2012 Yeosu, which was finished last August, left high marks for Switzerland's participation: The Swiss Pavilion obtained the "Gold Award" for the best interpretation of the theme of the expo. With half a million visitors, the Swiss Pavilion entitled "The Source. It's in your hands." was one of the most popular and most visited pavilions. Not to mention the high number of visitors, the popularity of the Swiss Pavilion was also reflected in extensive and positive South Korean media coverages, including some 615 reports on Switzerland's mountain landscape and its significance as a water reservoir and water source for Europe.

▶ *Swiss Pavilion Wins Gold in its Category for Best Creative Display from the Bureau of International Expositions*

Science & Innovation at the Embassy



Mr. Christian Schneider has been assigned to the newly created position of Senior Science & Innovation Officer at the Swiss Embassy in Korea. In this position, Mr. Schneider will promote Swiss science, innovation and education (including vocational education) in Korea and facilitate bilateral links between Swiss and Korean researchers and universities. Currently, a special focus is laid on promoting connections between Swiss and Korean businesses in R&D; Mr. Schneider is currently undertaking a survey among Swiss firms to assess the potential for increased Swiss-Korean R&D collaboration. Please contact Mr. Schneider or the Embassy if you are interested and would like to learn more.

Prior to his arrival in Korea, Mr. Schneider was in charge of Science, Technology and Education at the Swiss Embassy in Canberra, Australia and General Manager of the Swiss-Australian Academic Network SAAN. Mr. Schneider is a graduate of the University of St.Gallen (HSG) and the University of Canterbury in New Zealand and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand in the field of International Affairs.

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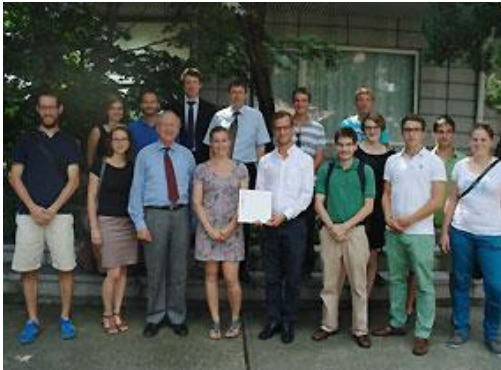
Visit of Prof. Badoux, the pioneer of Science & Technology co-operation with Korea



On September 12, Ambassador Reding hosted a dinner on the occasion of the visit of Professor Jean-Claude Badoux, former President of EPF Lausanne. Prof Badoux led in 1995 the first high-level Swiss delegation to Korea in order to explore possibilities of Swiss-Korean collaboration in science, research and innovation. That delegation was tripartite, comprising high-tech industries, research institutions and government. It was received by then Korean Minister of Education and Science Kun Mo Chung. The 1995 visit initiated the Swiss-Korean cooperation in Science and Technology, led by so-called focal points at EPF Lausanne and KAIST. In 2008 a bilateral Science & Technology Cooperation Agreement between the Swiss and Korean Governments was formalized. The visit of Prof. Badoux was a special event as it reunited some of the pioneers and supporters of those programs including former Minister Chung. It was also an occasion to get in contact with the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering (IABSE) of which Prof. Badoux is an honorary member. Founded in 1929, IABSE is based in ETH Zurich in Switzerland. The Seoul Conference provided a good occasion for the Embassy to get in touch with Swiss, Korean and international members of IABSE.



Visit of Swiss Foreign Policy Think Tank "foraus" and students



A group of young Swiss students and professionals took part in an East Asia Tour (Japan, Korea, China), which was organized by the Initiative for Intercultural Learning (IFIL), in collaboration with the Swiss foreign policy think tank "foraus". On September 10 Ambassador Jörg Al. Reding hosted a lunch for the group at his residence. Together with his deputy Daniel Cavegn, he had a discussion with the group on Korea's rapid economic development, its foreign policy and the Swiss image in Korea. In Seoul, the group had also several exchanges with think tanks and policy institutes.

Swiss Education Fair 2013



After having organized the very first Swiss Education Fair on February 25, 2012, a second edition will be held in Seoul on February 16, 2013. In this year's fair a total of 14 high profile Swiss Education Schools (incl. hotel schools, boarding schools & public universities) presented their academic programs to interested Korean visitors. The upcoming event in 2013 shall again serve Korean parents and students to get firsthand information from representatives of each individual school. The Swiss Business Hub Korea is looking forward to welcoming a lot of Koreans who strive to receive a premium education in one of the participating schools in Switzerland.

For further information please get in contact with the Swiss Business Hub Korea via seo.sbh-korea@eda.admin.ch

Swiss Films at Busan International Film Festival 2012



Switzerland was again well represented at this year's Busan International Film Festival with five films and co-productions. With two World Première and one International Première Switzerland presented high quality films. For the first time ever at the BIFF a Swiss Film was selected to compete. It was the film "Annelie" of Antje Farac in the "Flash Forward" Competition. Ambassador Jörg Al. Reding with the support of Presence Switzerland hosted a SwissFilms luncheon at Haeundae Grand Hotel and Korean VIPs, Swiss and Foreign directors and SwissFilms representatives attended.

► f.l. Film Director Silvio Soldini; Mr. Youn-Kwon Kim, International Ambassador of Busan; Mr. Yong-Kwan Lee Festival Director of BIFF; Ambassador Reding; Ms. Maria Stergiou, Swiss Films; Mr. Duk Kwang Bae, Mayor of Haeundae-District; Film Director Rolando Colla; Film Producer Zoé Farac; Film Director Antje Farac



Jean-Jacques Rousseau remembered in Seoul



For the celebration of the tri-centennial anniversary of the birth of famous Geneva born thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau, the 'Société d'études Franco-Coréennes' organized a forum in his honor on November 10 at the Ewha Women's University. With other specialists of Rousseau, Mr. Guillaume Chenevière, former President of the Swiss Television (TSR) participated to the forum and gave talks on Rousseau in various Universities in Seoul.

<http://www.francehak.com>

Tage der deutschen Sprache 2012

For the two years in a row the Swiss Embassy together with the Austrian and German Embassies in Seoul organized the Days of the German Language on September 17 & 18.

A forum for Korean translators and students took place at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies on September 17 under the motto "Language-Translation-Understanding".

On September 18 a public reading evening of Germans speaking writers was organized at the Goethe institute with the participation of Austrian writer Peter Simon Altmann and Swiss writer David Signer.



▶ *Michael Guggenheimer, President of PEN-Schweiz (2nd f.l.) at Forum: Sprache - Übersetzen - Verständigung*



▶ *Public Reading with David Signer*



Events Calendar

21.11.2012	Location for doing business in Europe A selected number of high-profile decision makers from Korean companies will be invited to a dinner and networking gathering. This event hosted by Swiss Business Hub Korea shall highlight the favorable investment environment in Switzerland with its numerous advantages. Due to a continuous internationalization from Korean companies, Switzerland could become the hub for their expansion towards Europe and beyond.
30.11.- 01.12.2012	Swiss Participation to the European Christmas Market organized by Seongbuk Global Village Center For more information: http://global.seoul.go.kr/seongbuk/
02.12.2012	Samichlaus for the children of the Swiss Community
05.12.2012- 31.01.2013	2012 seoulsquare media canvas swiss mediaart exhibition 2012 서울스퀘어 미디어캔버스 스위스 미디어아트 전시 with Camille Scherrer, Ursula Scherrer, Fabian Chiquet, Yves Netzhammer Venue: Media Canvas of Seoul Square Building Mediacanvas show time: every Mon. Wed. Fri. 18:00 ~18:10, 19:00~19:10, 20:00~20:10, 22:00~22:10, 23:00~23:10 www.ganamplanet.com
16.02.2013	Swiss Education Fair 2013 http://www.sefseoul.or.kr

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