



2014 - Switzerland and the world: young people, work, an open outlook: 10 December

2014: Status as at: December 2014

Goals of the 2014 Presidency of the Swiss Confederation

Politics – meaning “the affairs of the city” – serves the interests of society as a whole. In 2014, there were three main areas of focus: young people, work and an open outlook.

Firstly, young people – allowing the younger generation to achieve their aspirations and to enjoy good prospects is a key objective of political action. Establishing good framework conditions to provide jobs, especially for young people, and ensuring a high-performance system of education and research – through the combined school/work-based vocational model in particular – are key factors. At a time when some countries are experiencing a severe crisis in terms of prospects for young people, Switzerland must make every effort to hold on to its strengths.

Work is a key element for including everyone in society. Switzerland enjoys good conditions in this respect; jobs are being created here. We must ensure that this remains the case in future. We must also continue to

promote work as a virtue that is necessary to achieve success and maintain Switzerland’s leadership qualities.

The controlled opening-up to the world around us has always been one of Switzerland’s strengths. Since the days of the old Swiss Confederation, trade across the Alps has always been a key economic factor for our nation. Today, Switzerland earns every other franc from trade abroad and one in three francs from trade with Europe. Switzerland knows how to take advantage of a globalised world by opening up markets and focusing on quality and innovation. An open outlook is a success factor for Switzerland and is in keeping with its values of individual liberty, solidarity and responsibility towards the world around us. This outlook is also in the country’s interest because a stable and more secure world is better for Switzerland.

Young people, work and an open outlook are three key assets in continuing to ensure that the constitutional objectives of independence, prosperity and national security are achieved.

<p>Young people politics serving the interests of future generations</p> <p><u>Some concrete projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen training and research, in particular through agreements with the EU and international contacts in strategic countries; promote the combined classroom/work-based vocational education and training model at the international level • Model OSCE for youth: young people observe, contribute their points of view, and make their proposals throughout the Swiss 2014 Chairmanship • Projects for the health of young girls; combating infant mortality; countering the recruitment of child soldiers; MOOCs (massive open online courses to provide opportunities) • 100th anniversary of WWI; debating war and peace with young people in Switzerland (war yesterday and today, humanitarian operations and humanitarian law, peace policy); visit to battlefields with young people in Switzerland • “Young witnesses” present at major events (trips, visits) • Increased involvement of young people during events in Switzerland (e.g., conferences, inaugurations, Federal Council outing) 	<p>Work politics serving the interests of individuals and families</p> <p><u>Some concrete projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main trade partners = neighbours. Pursuing and intensifying ongoing contacts and efforts with regard to taxation, transport and energy (1st strategic axis of Swiss foreign policy) • Vote on free movement of persons, decisive factor in preserving prosperity and independence by way of privileged access to the EU internal market (foreign policy axis 2) • Renewal of the bilateral way to enable it to be continued and developed (foreign policy axis 2) • Stability and development at the borders of the continent and in fragile regions: responsibility of Switzerland and in its own interests (foreign policy axis 3) • Strategic partnerships (e.g., China, India, Russia, Turkey, Korea, Singapore, Myanmar, Latin America, Gulf countries, ...) • Scientific and economic diplomacy • Systematic promotion of international Switzerland through Geneva 	<p>An open outlook politics serving the interests of prosperity, responsibility and Swiss solidarity</p> <p><u>Some concrete projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous contacts abroad and international visits in Switzerland: forging links (see list) • Key votes and debates in Parliament on European policy • Swiss-EU negotiations on institutional issues and other topics (e.g taxation, research and energy) • Negotiations and parliamentary debates on agreements with strategic partners • OSCE Chairmanship = opportunity and responsibility for Switzerland – European stability, border regions and fragile parts of the world, safeguarding interests and exercising responsibilities (foreign policy axis 3) • Strengthen Switzerland as a location for peace, IHL, human security, health, environment, work (Syria conference, strengthening of international Switzerland through Geneva) • Participation in regional forums (Asia, Latin America, ...) • An open outlook – a long history: 200 years of diplomatic relations Switzerland – Russia; 150 years Switzerland - Japan
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Progress towards the goals of the 2014 Presidency of the Swiss Confederation

1. Young people: politics serving the interests of future generations

Strengthening professional education, training and research

- International exchange on the dual vocational model combining classroom education and work-based training, in particular during visits to Austria, Poland, Japan and the United States
- Topic discussed during the state visit by the president of South Korea with a visit to a vocational education institution
- Swiss-Polish economic forum in Warsaw during the presidential visit, with vocational education and training as one of its themes
- Topic discussed at the opening of the WEF
- Various invitations sent to take part in the international conference addressing the combined model of vocational education and training in Winterthur in September 2014
- Solution with the EU for Switzerland's participation in the Horizon 2020 research programme until 2016; transitional solution at the national level for the Erasmus programme
- Support for vocational education and training and online studies in the francophone context

“Model OSCE” for young people

- The 57 young representatives of the participating States began their work in January in Vienna. Opening in the presence of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE
- 2nd round of negotiations in Belgrade on 8-10 July
- Youth action plan adopted by consensus
- Presentation of the action plan at the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Basel from 4-5 December

Development on behalf of young people

- Project for the health of young girls: one of Switzerland's priorities during the 15th Francophonie Summit in Dakar.
- Project to counter the recruitment of child soldiers: action plan presented to the public in October
- “CMELL” project (freely accessible online courses): review after two years at the Francophonie Summit in Dakar (November) and launch of a new phase
- Launch of a model Francophonie organisation to raise awareness of peace and development issues among young people in the French-speaking world

Remembrance of the First World War

- Launch of a discussion about the war within post-compulsory schools in Switzerland as part of a presidential competition
- Meeting with ten school classes participating in this project in Geneva at the start of September
- Visit to Ypres (Belgium) together with the three school classes that produced the best projects, beginning of November

Young witnesses

- The granddaughter of a survivor of Auschwitz, Nathalie Gelbart from Lucerne, accompanied the Swiss president on a visit to Auschwitz.
- A young woman from Geneva and member of the Geneva Youth Parliament, Louise Morand, accompanied the president to the Appenzell Landsgemeinde.
- A young woman from Appenzell, Katrin Wyss, accompanied the president to the 200th anniversary of the canton of Geneva's accession to the Swiss Confederation. Together with Ms Morand, they discussed the topic of national cohesion.
- Switzerland's youth rep, Damian Vogt, accompanied the Swiss president to the opening week of the UN in New York (September).

Strengthened contacts with young people in Switzerland

- Presidential gifts assembled by apprentices that showcase the quality of Swiss apprenticeships (penknives, watches from various brands).
- Participation of young people at a reception on 12 December 2013 in Neuchâtel (apprentices, choir, orchestra, schools, young Colombians from disadvantaged regions, etc.)
- New Year's speech in the presence of FDFA interns
- Official photograph of the Federal Council taken in collaboration with young trainee photographers
- Presence of young people at the traditional media dinner to mark the start of the year (11.2).
- Participation of young apprentices at the official opening of the Geneva Motor Show in March 2014 and of young breeders at the Swiss OLMA fair in St Gallen
- Inaugural speech of the St Gallen Symposium at the University of St Gallen (theme: the clash of generations)
- Presence of Victorinox apprentices who made the knife presented by the president of the Swiss Confederation during the Federal Council's extramural session in Schwyz; speech made by a young person
- Meeting with apprentice foresters, watchmakers, catering professionals, art history and microtechnology students during the Federal Council's annual excursion ("school trip") on 3 and 4 July 2014 in Neuchâtel
- Brunch with young people from la riviera lucernoise on the Swiss national holiday
- Meeting with young Swiss people from abroad on the Swiss national holiday at Tellskapelle in the canton of Uri
- Meeting with various school classes and groups of children in the Federal Palace
- Exchange with pupils from the Lycée-Collège la Planta in Sion as part of a day excursion to Valais
- Speech at the youth parliament conference, the federal youth session and the young citizens' celebration of the city of Bern
- [Complete list](#)

2. Work: politics serving the interests of individuals and families

Achieving progress on issues of neighbourhood relations

- Austria: meeting with the president, chancellor, vice-chancellor and the minister of foreign affairs (Vienna, Bern, Rostock, Berlin)
- Italy: meeting with the minister of economy and finance in January, state visit to Switzerland by the Italian president (May); visit by the prime minister, the foreign minister and the minister for economic affairs and finance to Rome at the end of July. Meeting with the foreign minister at various multilateral forums (NATO summit and UNGA in Sept.; ASEM summit in Oct.)
- Germany: frequent contact with the MFA, meeting with the federal chancellor in February (Berlin) and October (Milan), visit to Switzerland by the German president in April, meeting with president and MFA in Rostock and Berlin in Sept. and Nov.
- Visit to French president (Paris, October); several meetings with the MFA on the margins of multilateral events
- Meeting with the Lichtenstein head of government, hereditary prince and foreign minister (Sochi, Rostock, Berlin)

Renewing the bilateral approach under the banner of a new approach to managing immigration

- Numerous contacts with neighbouring countries and EU member states (EU, Greece, Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Finland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Malta, Belgium, Visegrad Group (POL, HUN, CZE, SLO),...)
- Analysis of the Federal Council's medium-term strategy with regard to the EU following the popular vote of 9 February 2014 and projects that are being developed (concept, legislation, etc.)
- Negotiations on institutional issues and several other dossiers under way
- Coordinated implementation of the results of the popular vote of 9 February 2014 by the Swiss Confederation in June 2014
- Talks with the EU and its member states to seek solutions to the unresolved dossiers that are in the shared interests of all parties
- Vote of 30 November

Stability and development in Europe's border regions and in fragile contexts

- Montreux - Geneva II conference on Syria
- Activities as OSCE chairperson-in-office:
 - Swiss mediation and de-escalation efforts with regard to the situation in Ukraine, several trips to Ukraine and Russia
 - Address to the United Nations Security Council (February, NY)
 - Conference in Paris with the foreign affairs ministers from FR, GER, POL, USA, UK, and RU in particular, in March
 - Address to the Council of the ministers of EU foreign affairs and discussion with the president of the EU Council (Brussels, May)
 - Travel to the South Caucasus and Western Balkans
 - OSCE Ministerial Council and Civil Society Forum Basel (December)

Strategic partnerships, scientific and economic diplomacy

- Japan: 150 years of bilateral relations and strengthening of relations. Meeting in Japan with the emperor, crown prince, prime minister, minister of foreign affairs, representatives from the fields of business, the media, regional authorities and the general population (February). Visit to Switzerland by the crown prince of Japan (June)
- Visit to Russia and meeting with the president and the MFA, in the scope of OSCE activities
- State visit to Switzerland by the South Korean president, Park Geun Hye
- Meeting with the Chinese minister of foreign affairs
- Contact with the Turkish prime minister and foreign minister
- Meeting with several presidents from the Pacific Alliance countries (Mexico, Peru, Colombia) and beginning of Switzerland's observer status
- Several meetings with the United States secretary of state and vice-president Joe Biden
- Visit to Switzerland by the president of Singapore
- Visit to Bern by president of Myanmar

- Opening of a CH-SLO innovation forum in Bratislava (Dec.) and a CH-POL economic forum in Warsaw (Jan.)

Promoting international Switzerland by virtue of Geneva

- Organisation and hosting of the peace conference on Syria in January/February in Montreux and Geneva
- Renovation of the Palais des Nations: agreement in principle of the UN GA
- Several requests for renovation or construction work submitted
- Numerous contacts with the UN Secretary-General and the Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
- Development of the joint strategy, preparation of the Federal Council dispatch to Parliament (Nov.)
- Topic of International Geneva and Geneva as host city for the secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty raised during visits
- Prix de la Fondation pour Genève
- Launch of the universal monument project in Geneva

3. Open outlook: politics serving the interests of prosperity, responsibility and Swiss solidarity

Developing international links

- Numerous meetings and trips ([see separate list \(fr\)](#)): 34 trips, 29 states visited, representatives of 58 different states met for talks at least once

Votes and debates in Parliament concerning Switzerland's policy towards the EU

- Votes of 9 February and 30 November: explanation of the FC's position
- Follow-up to the vote of 9.2.: discussion in the FC and with the cantons, parties and social partners, adaptation of the FC strategy, international contacts. Presentation of an implementation concept (June), preparation of a dispatch

Renewing and pursuing the bilateral approach

- Negotiations on institutional issues and several other dossiers under way

Negotiations and parliamentary debates on various agreements with strategic partners

- Free trade agreements (FTA) under negotiation with Vietnam and India
- Entry into force of FTA with the Gulf Cooperation Council on 1 July 2014
- Entry into force of FTA with China on 1 July 2014; bilateral agreement concerning cooperation in the field of work and employment entered into force in June
- Entry into force of FTA between the EFTA and Costa Rica and Panama (29.8.)

Chairmanship of the OSCE

- Launch of the OSCE Chairmanship in Vienna (16 January) and young people's forum
- Numerous contacts concerning the situation in Ukraine (see above)
- Visits to the Balkans (April), the Caucasus (June) and central Asia (November)
- Address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in Baku (June) and Geneva (October)
- Opening of the OSCE Conference on Human Rights Defenders in Bern (June)
- Annual security review conference, Vienna (June)
- Opening of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague (September)
- Opening of the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin (November)
- Talks on this topic at all international meetings; development of specific partnerships (e.g. Poland, Slovakia, Japan, Italy, Estonia, Germany, etc.)
- Ministerial Council in Basel (4-5.12.14)

Switzerland as a location for peace

- International conference on peace in Syria: Genève II/Montreux
- Discussions on Iran's nuclear programme

- Inauguration of the Maison de la Paix in October 2014
- Renovation of buildings including the Palais des Nations and the strategy on international Switzerland by virtue of Geneva (dispatch to Parliament)
- Switzerland's engagement in the conflict in Ukraine through the Chairmanship of the OSCE (see above)
- Numerous international contacts in this respect

Participation in regional forums

- Pacific Alliance: Switzerland's entry as an observer state and contacts in 2014
- ASEM summit in October in Milan
- Francophonie Summit in November in Dakar
- Launch of Switzerland's candidature for the Arctic Council
- Other meetings and regional conferences (e.g. V4+)

An open outlook – a long history

- Opening of the House of Switzerland at the Sochi Olympic Games. Launching of the commemorations of the 200th anniversary of relations between Switzerland and Russia
- Visit to Japan to launch the commemorations of 150 years of relations between Switzerland and Japan, numerous contacts.