

AUS IHRER REGION

DE VOTRE RÉGION | FROM YOUR REGION

Kyrgyzstan and Switzerland mark 30 years of cooperation

In 2024 Switzerland and Kyrgyzstan marked 30 years of cooperation. The two countries enjoy good relations. Over the years, Switzerland has granted more than CHF 520 million (USD 600 million plus) to Kyrgyzstan through technical, financial and humanitarian support and continues its support.

What has been achieved over the 30 years?

Jointly with the Kyrgyz government and implementing partners, Switzerland has been able to successfully reinforce national development efforts in Kyrgyzstan. Over the 30 years, jointly they have achieved many successes. We list just some of them here.

In economic development, Switzerland provides support to improve the business climate. Over 4,200 new jobs have been created in agricultural and light industrial sectors. More than 3,500 small and medium enterprises (out of 13,000 registered) have improved their productivity and viability. Around 1,700 companies have gained access to international markets (fruits, vegetables, textile, tourism). Digital banking has been made available to entrepreneurs and private persons in remote areas. Hundreds of farmers now deliver milk to the successful Swiss-Kyrgyz cheese making company Suit Bulak (trademark “Dairy Spring”).

In the water domain, a basin approach was applied to five river basins, including improvement of water monitoring procedures. Water management, accountability and governance were improved by assisting more than 450 water user associations all over the country. In all, 250,000 farmers have benefitted from irrigation and drainage services in more than 750,000 ha out of 1 million ha of land. Around 300,000 rural community members have increased their resilience through disaster risk reduction (DRR) infrastructure solutions, cash-based support, trainings and new agroinsurance schemes. The modernized At Bashy Hydropower Plant has a life span of around 50 years and contributes to the security of supply in the Naryn region and nationally. Energy sector reform includes a tariff reform for financial sustainability. Bishkek, Karakol, Kant, Naryn, Osh and Jalal-Abad cities (nearly 1.5 million people living in urban areas) have better access to safe drinking water and



wastewater services. In governance, over half a million people in the country have access to better municipal services and participate in the public budget planning, including in remote areas. This includes inter-municipal cooperation in 13 percent of rural municipalities; access to drinking water; waste collection and disposal; road maintenance and street lighting; recreation services for children and young people and pre-school education. Women's participation in local decision-making has increased (by up to 43 percent). More than 600 NGOs and cultural events have provided services and inclusive participation in all areas of the country.

The health system has been strengthened through a budget dedicated to primary health care at a national level; modernised medical and nursing education; proper waste management and early detection and control of non-communicable diseases (hypertension detection increased by 5 percent, around 800,000 people had a first check-up in the last year). More doctors are working in rural areas, retraining courses for hospital managers are ongoing, and 1,600 village health committees promote health literacy and healthier behaviour in rural areas.

Much progress had been made, but much more remains to be done.

Women and children in Osh (south of Kyrgyzstan) have access to drinking water thanks to a project supported by the SDC.

Photos: Keystone, Andree Noelle Pot

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Asia: Switzerland strengthens ties with ASEAN

In 2016, Switzerland established a sectoral dialogue partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 2024, as the Lao People's Democratic Republic assumed the presidency of ASEAN, the ties between Switzerland and this influential regional body reached new heights.

In July 2024, Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Alexandre Fasel represented Switzerland at ASEAN's 57th Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the Laotian capital, Vientiane. During the event, he met with the foreign ministers of Laos, Thailand and Singapore as well as with key non-ASEAN partners, strengthening Switzerland's diplomatic ties both within ASEAN and beyond.

In September 2024, Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs Helene Budliger Artieda participated in ASEAN's 56th Economic Ministers' Meeting, also held in Vientiane. She met with the economic ministers of Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and with important non-ASEAN economic partners of Switzerland. The partici-



State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Alexandre Fasel at the 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting

Photo provided

pation of our state secretaries in these high-level meetings underscored Switzerland's political and economic interests in Southeast Asia, a region of growing importance with dynamic and expanding markets. State Secretary Budliger Artieda's visit was both preceded and followed by engagements with stakeholders in Bangkok to advance negotiations on a free trade agreement between the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Thailand. Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway are the current members of EFTA.

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND TO THAILAND, CAMBODIA AND LAO PDR

Singapore: A New Chapter for the Swiss Embassy in Singapore

At the beginning of this year, the Swiss Embassy team moved back to the original premises at 1 Swiss Club Link. The 35-year-old Embassy building had undergone extensive renovations over two and a half years (July 2021–December 2023), modernising its appearance and expanding its capacity to meet the needs of a team that had grown significantly over the years.

Led by the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics and designed by Swiss architecture firm Berrel Berrel Kräutler, the renovation preserved the building's essence while introducing state-of-the-art facilities, flexible workspaces, conference rooms, and a spacious entrance area which is

marked by a raised roof to welcome guests and visitors.

Sustainability was at the heart of the project. The building meets the Singapore Green Mark standards and is the first outside of Switzerland to receive a Swiss Minergie certification. Features such as solar panels, high-insulation glass, and EV charging stations contribute to its energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Reflecting Swiss values of openness and transparency, the new design fosters collaboration and brings together the embassy's diplomatic and consular services alongside Switzerland Tourism, the Swiss Business Hub, and the Defence Attaché office under

Region Zentral-West-Südasiens: Ein faszinierendes Mosaik von Ländern beteiligt sich an den Direktwahlen

Sri Lanka, Teil des grossen Wahlkreises Zentral-West-Südasiens, schlägt die Brücke zu den Direktwahlen für eine ganze Region, die aus kulturell diversen Ländern mit kleinen Schweizergemeinschaften besteht. Konkret heisst das, dass Schweizer Bürger:innen, die über 18 Jahre alt sind, ihren Delegierten für den Auslandschweizererrat (ASR) direkt – und zwar per E-Voting – wählen können (mehr dazu auf Seite 35 dieser «Revue»). Gleichzeitig kann man sich auch als Kandidat:in für die Wahlen aufstellen lassen.

Die Wahlkoordinatorin in dieser Region, Marina Fernando, arbeitet seit Wochen unermüdlich daran, den Bekanntheitsgrad dieser tollen Initiative via Schweizer Klubs, Botschaften und Konsulaten in diesen Ländern zu steigern und erhofft sich, dass sich interessierte Kandidat:innen melden werden und Bürger:innen diese Chance zu einer Direktwahl, komfortabel via E-Voting, wahrnehmen werden.

Sollten Sie sich für die Wahlen aufstellen wollen, oder leben Sie in dieser Region und haben noch Fragen zu den Wahlen, können Sie die Wahlkoordinatorin direkt kontaktieren: nmfernando65@gmail.com

MARINA FERNANDO, WAHLKOORDINATORIN

Zum Wahlkreis Zentral-West-Südasiens gehören Afghanistan, Armenien, Aserbaidschan, Bahrain, Bangladesch, Bhutan, Georgien, Indien, Iran, Irak, Jordanien, Kasachstan, Kuwait, Libanon, Malediven, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, die besetzten palästinensischen Gebiete, Katar, Saudi-Arabien, Sri Lanka, Syrien, Tadschikistan, Turkmenistan, Usbekistan, Jemen.



Photo: Khoo Guo Jie

one roof. We are delighted to have returned to a space that represents Switzerland's commitment to innovation and sustainability, and that embodies a strong presence in Singapore.

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND IN SINGAPORE

Israel: The Jerusalem Foundation welcomes the new Swiss Ambassador to Israel, the Honourable Simon Geissbühler

In the over 30 years that I have had the pleasure to welcome Swiss ambassadors to Jerusalem, Simon Geissbühler is the one who has left the greatest impression. His deep knowledge of the traces of the shtetl in Eastern Europe and his books on the topic [including “Romania and the Holocaust”] were unexpected. When the Ambassador accepted an invitation to celebrate the Festival of Sukkot with the Swiss community here in October those present were all very impressed. His visit in November with Jael Wyler, the long-time cultural attachée at the Embassy in Tel Aviv, was just as cordial and pleasant.

Our first stop was the Hand in Hand school, including conversations with the Jewish and Arab high school principals. The Ambassador was told about the impact that the school alumni have on the discourse in universities and other civil society enterprises. For those youngsters, the interaction between Jews and Arabs is normal and being completely bilingual is an enormous asset.

Over 20 years ago the Swiss classroom building received generous support from the Swiss government and private donors through the Jerusalem Foundation. The guests were impressed to see the Swiss cantonal flags in the classrooms, indicating the year when the cantons joined the Swiss Confederation in three languages: the language of the canton, Hebrew and Arabic. Private Swiss donors also helped in the construction of the high school building in the same campus that was inaugurated in May 2022.

From there the trip continued to the ART CUBE Artists’ Studios where the legendary director Lee He Shulov introduced us to several of the artists, including Mihal Shema whose landscape exhibition reflects the view from the window of the hospital in



Geneva where her father lay dying years ago.

With the help of friends in Switzerland, the Jerusalem Foundation was able to give ART CUBE the space it now occupies, enable a large-scale

Ambassador Geissbühler in front of the Swiss classroom building in the bilingual Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem
Photo provided

renovation, and provide more besides. Some of these friends, especially the Dr. Georg and Josi Guggenheim Foundation, are still involved and support ART CUBE in the reconstruction of the building’s roof – a project that will double the building’s available space for art and cultural activities. Dr. Ellen and Michael Ringier from Switzerland are also supporting ART CUBE programs. As stipulated by the donors, we are anticipating new travel regulations and are hoping to renew the cultural exchange with Switzerland in ART CUBE.

Both projects build bridges and foster interaction between the multicultural populations of Jerusalem.

An in-depth discussion with Ruth Diskin, the Jerusalem Foundation’s Chief Director of Programs generated many more ideas that were of interest to the Swiss Ambassador. We are all looking forward to more such visits and recommend a visit to one of the Café Europa branches for Holocaust survivors that are supported by the Jerusalem Foundation.

IRÈNE POLLAK-REIN,

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Niederlande: Egal, ob Kandidat:in oder Wähler:in – verpassen Sie die Wahlen in den Auslandschweizerrat nicht

Die Wahlvorbereitungen für das Pilotprojekt «Direktwahlen» sind inzwischen auch in den Niederlanden in vollem Gang. Für Ihre Teilnahme als Kandidat:in oder Wähler:in gibt es Daten, die Sie auf keinen Fall verpassen sollten:

15. Februar 2025	Einsendeschluss für Bewerbungen von Kandidierenden für den Auslandschweizerrat (ASR)
bis 31. März 2025	Wahlunterlagen treffen bei registrierten Wähler:innen per E-Mail vom EDA ein
31. März 2025	Save the Date: Online-Wahlveranstaltung (NL) – Kandidierende präsentieren sich
12. April 2025	Delegiertenversammlung in der Botschaft Den Haag: Kandidierende werden eingeladen, sich persönlich vorzustellen
11. April – 11. Mai 2025	Direktwahlen ASR online
23. Mai 2025	Resultate werden von der ASO bekanntgegeben
22./23. August 2025	Offizielle Konstituierung des ASR in Bern

Behalten Sie für die aktuellsten Informationen auf jeden Fall unsere lokale Website im Auge:

Für die Niederlande: www.revue.link/asrniederlande

Allgemein: www.revue.link/asrdirektwahlen

GIUANNA EGGER-MAISSEN, WAHLKOORDINATORIN

Niederlande: LAGER-SPONSORING – Unvergessliche Erlebnisse in der Schweiz

Ab dem 14. Januar 2025 können sich Schweizer Jugendliche wieder für tolle Sommer-Camps des Jugenddienstes der SwissCommunity (Juli/August 2025) anmelden, und zwar bis am 15. März 2025. Siehe: www.revue.link/lager



Auch dieses Jahr möchte die Dachorganisation der Schweizer Clubs in den Niederlanden (NHGH) ein bis zwei Schweizer Jugendliche finanziell unterstützen, damit sie daran teilnehmen können. Dabei übernimmt die NHGH 60 % der Lagerkosten (bei insgesamt max. 1200 Euro/Teilnehmer:in). Bei mehr als zwei Anmeldungen entscheidet das Los.

Wohnst du in den Niederlanden? Sprich dich ein Lager an und hast du dich schon angemeldet? Melde dich dann schnell bei Caroline Rouwendal mit deinen Personalien. Sie freut sich auf dein E-Mail! secretariaatnhg@outlook.com

GIUANNA EGGER-MAISSEN, REGIONALREDAKTORIN NL

Erinnerungen früherer ASR-Delegierter

Ruth Eversdijk, ASR-Delegierte von 2005 bis 2013

In meiner Zeit als ASR-Mitglied habe ich vor allem die Einblicke in das politische Geschehen als sehr lehrreich erfahren.

Wir konnten das Zustandekommen und den Inhalt des Auslandsschweizergesetzes beeinflussen, das war spannend. Besonders eindrücklich war die Ratssitzung im Bundeshaus. Beim Kongress lernt man engagierte Schweizer Landsleute aus aller Welt und verschiedene Regionen der Schweiz kennen.

Schade fand ich, dass das Standardwerk über die Auslandsschweizer «Globale Schweiz» des ehemaligen ASO-Direktors Rudolf Wyder den ASR-Mitgliedern nicht als Lektüre empfohlen wurde.



Ruth Eversdijk 2016 an der ASR-Sitzung im Nationalratssaal. Foto ZVG

Valérie Estoppey, Stellvertreterin und ASR-Delegierte 1995 bis 2013

Als die Schweizer Gemeinschaft in Holland nur durch einen Delegierten im ASR vertreten war, war ich Stellvertreterin des ASR-Delegierten Roland Niederöst. Ich habe sehr gute Erinnerungen an diese Zeit. Wir fuhren immer gemeinsam an die Sitzung in die Schweiz. Während der Reise mit dem Auto konnten wir die Traktandenliste besprechen, uns eine Meinung bilden und einen Stimmentscheid fällen. Ich habe es immer sehr geschätzt, dass Roland meine Meinung mit einbezog, obwohl wir nur einen Stimmzettel hatten.

Eine negative Erinnerung betrifft die uferlose Diskussion und Unentschlossenheit zum E-Voting.



Valérie Estoppey war von 1995 bis 2013 im ASR engagiert. Foto ZVG

GIUANNA EGGER-MAISSEN, REGIONALREDAKTORIN NL

Praktische Informationen / Informations pratiques

Schweizer Vertretungen im Ausland:
Die Adressen aller Schweizer Botschaften und Konsulate finden sich im Internet auf www.eda.admin.ch > Reisehinweise & Vertretungen
Représentations suisses à l'étranger:
Vous trouverez les adresses des ambassades et consulats suisses sur www.eda.admin.ch > Conseils aux voyageurs & représentations

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