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### Welcome message from the Ambassador

Dear Swiss citizens and friends of Switzerland,

What an incredible autumn! Shortly after successfully moving into our beautiful new premises in Qadsiya, we had the great privilege of welcoming to Kuwait our Foreign Minister, Mr. Ignazio Cassis, and Parliament President, Ms. Maja Riniker, on the 24-25 of October.

The big success and positive impact of this high-level visit underscored the deep and special friendship that has bound our two countries for decades. It is a friendship that puts people at its heart, fueled in particular by the deep ties that so many Kuwaiti families have had with our country for generations.

Solidly supported by this rich past, our gaze is now naturally turned towards the future.



To begin with, 2026 will be a very special year, with celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. Without disclosing the details at this stage, together with various partners and friends, we are working on a number of cultural, economic and social events to be held over the next 12 months, following a first big and special surprise in preparation for early February.

Yours sincerely,

**Tiziano Balmelli**

Ambassador of Switzerland to the State of Kuwait



# BILATERAL RELATIONS & EMBASSY'S ACTIVITIES

## Ministerial visit and inauguration ceremony



On the 25.10, Switzerland's new embassy and residence in Qadsia were officially inaugurated during a high-level ceremony attended by Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, Swiss Parliament President Maja Riniker, and Assistant Secretary of State for the MENA Region Monika Schmutz. The guest of honor, H.H. Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, was accompanied by Foreign Minister H.E. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya. More than 200 distinguished friends from Kuwait and Switzerland attended the ceremony on a Saturday afternoon.

This event marked an important milestone in the bilateral relations and received exceptional media and social media coverage, as you can see in the following pages.

As part of this visit, the Swiss delegation was also received by H.H. Sheikh Nasser in his palace, and by H.E. Al-Yahya in his family's Diwaniya, a powerful symbol of the special long-standing friendship with Switzerland for many decades.

## Reception with Schengen Consular Partners

Switzerland being part of the Schengen area, we value our good cooperation with the colleagues of the other relevant countries.

On the 12.11, our Deputy Head of Mission Jérôme Charbonnet hosted a reception at the new Swiss residence, for consular officers and visa officers.

This event was organized on the occasion of the visit of Ms. Daniela Hill from the Swiss Regional Consular Center in Doha, which is responsible for decisions on visa applications from persons residing in Kuwait, after the applications have been registered via VFS



here in Kuwait. The evening provided an opportunity to review and celebrate the strong cooperation between Schengen partners in Kuwait and in the GCC.

## Swiss Financial Expertise in Focus

The Embassy, in collaboration with the Swiss private bank Bordier & Cie, hosted an event on the 26.11, with an insightful presentation titled "*Global Economic Challenges and Market Outlook 2026*" followed by dinner and networking.

The event brought together guests from the financial and business sectors for a timely discussion on key-global trends, including the AI race, the changing dynamics between the U.S. and China, and the long-term impact of U.S. debt. It offered a valuable opportunity to showcase Switzerland's expertise in financial matters and to encourage exchange on the evolving challenges shaping international markets.





















# Swiss Foreign Minister inaugurates new Swiss Chancery in Kuwait

## The Times Kuwait Report

A grand inauguration ceremony was held for the new Swiss Chancery in Kuwait. The high profile event, hosted by the Ambassador of Switzerland H.E. Tiziano Balmelli, was attended by former prime minister His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed, the Swiss Foreign Minister, Ignazio Cassis, and Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, along with an eclectic mix of distinguished guests and special invitees.

In his address to the gathering, His Highness Sheikh Nasser stated: "Kuwait, since its independence, has attached special importance to its foreign relations, especially with countries that hold a prominent position in the international system. These relations have reached their peak at the present time, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who wisely leads the country during a delicate and sensitive stage in the region's history, extending his hand of friendship to brotherly and friendly countries in the East and West.

"The opening of the Swiss Embassy in the State of Kuwait evokes memories of the beginnings, when the State of Kuwait and the Swiss Confederation decided on 16 June 1966, to establish relations between them. I was honored to lay the first foundation stone in the edifice of relations between the two sides. In the same year that the two sides decided to establish relations, I was appointed Consul General of the State of Kuwait to the Swiss Confederation, based in Geneva, and I served in that position for two years."

He continued: "I left Switzerland, a country I feel deeply attached to, having studied there since 1959, where I built a network of relationships and came to appreciate its spirit of order, perseverance, and excellence. In that same year, the Swiss government appointed its ambassador to Lebanon as its accredited ambassador to Kuwait. A year later, an honorary consulate of the Swiss Confederation was opened in Kuwait, and the late Murad Yusuf Behbehani was appointed as the honorary consul of the Swiss Confederation. Thus, Kuwait became the second Gulf state to establish relations with the Swiss Confederation.

"During that period, relations between the two sides developed, which prompted the Swiss government to open an embassy in Kuwait City in 1975. When I assumed the premiership in February 2006, the Kuwaiti government decided to open an embassy for the State of Kuwait in Bern in April 2006, recognizing the importance of our relations. I also paid an official visit to the Swiss Confederation to further develop our relations, from 12-16 September 2011."

He added, "Switzerland is not merely a global center for wealth management and sovereign investments, or a safe haven for funds; it represents an embodiment of excellence. It serves as a model of a successful and independent state, despite its small geographical size. On the international level, it acts as a discreet communication platform between major powers, having proven itself over the past decades as a reliable mediator in regional issues, thanks to its historical neutrality and the trust placed in it by international parties. Its diplomacy is characterized by its quiet, confidential, and non-confrontational approach, which aligns with the Gulf diplomatic style.

"This is perhaps what has made it a preferred choice for Gulf states when they require neutral mediation or an informal communication channel, such as its role in protecting the interests of other countries. Since the end of World War II, Switzerland has undertaken the task of protecting interests in more than 200 cases between different countries, and at its peak, it represented more than 70 countries, from Washington to Tehran, from Riyadh to Havana, and from Moscow to Tbilisi. Switzerland played the role of a state preserving human connection in a world rife with division, which led to it being described as a global protector state.

"This is in addition to its hosting of indirect

talks concerning regional issues in Geneva, such as those related to Yemen, Syria, and Iran. The world's recognition of Switzerland's neutrality is longstanding, which explains the Vatican's decision to choose Swiss citizens to form the Papal Guard since the time of Pope Julius II in 1506." He continued, "The presence of headquarters for international organizations in Switzerland—especially in Geneva—has facilitated direct communication for diplomats worldwide with the UN system without the need for intermediaries.

"Furthermore, Swiss legal and financial institutions serve as a reference for countries around the world in financial legislation and international arbitration." In combating corruption and money laundering, many complex commercial disputes between international companies are decided by state courts in Geneva or Zurich, or by an independent body such as the Swiss Centre for International Arbitration."

He pointed out that, in addition to all of this, "Switzerland has become one of the most important European trading partners for countries around the world, especially in the fields of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, watches, jewelry, precision instruments, industrial tools, heavy industries, and military equipment. It has also achieved a leading position in Europe in terms of the volume of exports



to some countries, despite not being a member of the European Union.

"Furthermore, Switzerland is a key partner in humanitarian projects, both through the Red Cross, whose presence in Switzerland is not merely an administrative location but rather an embodiment of the country's own philosophy (armed neutrality combined with humanitarianism), and through the United Nations agencies based there and charitable organizations in countries around the world that have coordination offices in Geneva and Bern and other branches throughout the Swiss Confederation, collaborating with Swiss relief organizations.

"Moreover, Switzerland is one of the most important destinations for medical tourism thanks to its prestigious medical institutions and high-tech private hospitals. He explained that, "For us in the Arabian Gulf, Swiss cities have attracted Gulf family tourism, making it a seasonal tradition, which has created informal social and cultural ties and encouraged many Kuwaitis to purchase homes in various cantons of the Swiss Confederation in accordance with its laws on home ownership. This is why Switzerland maintains the image of a balanced country in the international media, which has given it a positive standing in public opinion."

He added, "Switzerland has become the neutral hub in the current international system." Because of its ability to reconcile the competing interests of major powers, and to balance economic and humanitarian concerns, as well as power and ethics, its importance lies not in its material strength, but in its mediating role in wars and crises, in its institutional position within international

organizations, in its internal stability and capacity to embrace diversity, and in its moral legitimacy in a world of conflicting interests. Therefore, the Swiss model inspires decision-makers to build a balanced diplomacy among the major powers, without becoming involved in competing alliances. Furthermore, Switzerland provides a safe platform for discreet communication between international parties on sensitive issues."

He noted that relations between the State of Kuwait and the Swiss Confederation have witnessed remarkable development, reflected in a series of reciprocal official visits between senior officials from both sides, including political leaders, ministers, foreign ministers, parliamentary speakers, as well as special envoys and high-ranking directors. Several rounds of political consultations have also been held between the two countries, reflecting the keenness of both sides to enhance dialogue and coordination on various regional and international issues.

He added that this extensive diplomatic activity, marked by visits over two decades and continuous rounds of consultations, demonstrates the significant progress in the relations between our two friendly countries. Perhaps the most important of these was the high-level meeting between His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khalid



Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the former President of the Swiss Confederation, Viola Amherd, on the sidelines of the high-level week of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York last year.

He further added, "It is a source of great pride for us that the State of Kuwait, thanks to the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect him, has become one of the safest and most stable countries, and is keen to develop cooperative relations with various countries around the world." He pointed out that Switzerland is at the forefront of these countries, as it is not merely an economic partner, but also a political, ethical, and financial model, which is confirmed by its policies. He said, "The State of Kuwait will remain committed to its relations with Switzerland. We do not forget its stance during the brutal Iraqi aggression, when it took a strong and principled position supporting Kuwait, and, in a humanitarian gesture, allowed Kuwaitis stranded on its territory to extend their stays and permitted our students to enroll in its schools." He affirmed that what unites Kuwait and Switzerland is an exceptional relationship based on mutual trust and stable interests, reflecting a deep understanding of what it means to be a small country in a large world, building influence through trust, not force.

For his part, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya expressed his pleasure at participating in the opening of the Swiss Embassy in Kuwait, affirming that the speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah accurately reflected the depth of Kuwaiti-Swiss relations and their

distinguished history. Minister Al-Yahya said: "I am happy to be here at this opening, and I believe His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed's speech perfectly embodied the Kuwaiti-Swiss relationship and its history. Frankly, I cannot add anything further to what Sheikh Nasser said."

In response to a question about whether there were any official discussions with the Swiss Foreign Minister, Al-Yahya clarified: "Not today; there were no discussions. The visit was solely for the occasion of the embassy opening," adding: "However, the Swiss Minister extended an invitation to visit Switzerland, and God willing, there will be bilateral discussions soon in Switzerland."

In his address on the occasion, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation (Swiss Foreign Minister) Ignazio Cassis affirmed that the opening of the new Swiss Embassy in Kuwait embodies the depth of bilateral relations and reflects the spirit of trust, respect, and friendship that has united the two countries for six decades, noting that this occasion represents a rare and unique historical moment.

Cassis said: "It is a great pleasure and joy to welcome you all, His Highness Sheikh Nasser, my dear colleague Foreign Minister Abdullah Yahya, and all the Excellencies and dignitaries present in this room, and all the friends of Switzerland and friends of Kuwait who are here today to celebrate this very special moment with us. As I said, it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this brand new building. I have also visited the other two floors, and I can say that we now have a Swiss home that perfectly reflects the spirit of our bilateral relationship. You can see that it is solid, reliable, people-oriented, and inclusive. By bringing the embassy and the residence under one roof, we are giving new momentum and greater visibility to the excellent work that our colleagues are doing here in Kuwait, and I take this opportunity to thank them all."

He continued: "This friendship began with a vision, the vision of a brilliant young Kuwaiti man in the 1930s who realized early on how much his compatriots would appreciate Swiss expertise and precision. That vision transformed into a success story, and since then, it can almost be said that Kuwait runs on Swiss time.

I told His Excellency the Foreign Minister that this is evident even in His Highness's punctuality, as Sheikh Nasser arrived at the ceremony exactly one minute before the scheduled time, and that's, of course, because it's all about Swiss watches!" Cassis pointed out that "the first partnership between Omega and the Behbehani family paved the way for many other partnerships," explaining that "today, there are more than 12 Swiss companies represented in Kuwait, and approximately 450 Swiss brands are present in the Kuwaiti market."

He added, "Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, our economic relations have never overshadowed our true friendship. The relationship between the people of our two countries is based on trust and has always generated mutual curiosity. Kuwaitis were among the first people in the Gulf to discover Switzerland, thanks to the direct flights launched by our former national airline, Swissair, in 1959. Since then, Switzerland has become a second home for many Kuwaiti families."

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Switzerland H.E. Tiziano Balmelli, affirmed that the opening of the new Swiss Embassy building in Kuwait reflects the depth of the distinguished relations and the beautiful friendship that unites the two countries, praising the high-level presence from both sides during the opening ceremony.

In a statement to reporters, Ambassador Balmelli said: "It was a great honor for us to host the Swiss Foreign Minister and the President of the Swiss Parliament and their accompanying delegation, along with His Highness Sheikh Nasser and His Excellency the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Yahya." He added: "There were a large number of Kuwaiti friends of Switzerland here, and it was very emotional and beautiful. It is a beautiful testament that confirms the depth of friendship between our two countries."

# EMBASSY NEWS

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## The Embassy in the local news: a selection

1. Interview on the 06.08.2025 with the Swiss Ambassador T. Balmelli – Discussion About Kuwait–Swiss Bilateral Relationship [On Good Morning Kuwait show KTV 2](#).
2. [KTV2 on the trilateral cooperation between UNDP, Kuwait and Switzerland](#) to provide humanitarian support and promote development in Sudan.
3. [KTV2 “Good Morning Kuwait”](#) on the opening of the new embassy.

4. [Al Rai Media](#) on the visit of the Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis to H.H. Sheikh Nasser.
5. [Alqabas](#) on the inauguration ceremony of the new embassy.
6. [The Times of Kuwait](#) on the inauguration of the new embassy and the ministerial visit.
7. [Al Jarida with the Swiss Ambassador](#) on cooperation in the field of cybersecurity.

# CONSULAR

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## Regional Consular Center (RCC) in Doha

The RCC within the Embassy of Switzerland in Doha/Qatar handles all consular services (legalisations, passports etc.) also for the Swiss citizens based in Kuwait. Contact information below.

## SwissInTouch, Switzerland in your pocket

This App enables the Swiss abroad to get important information from their official representation, the various federal offices and other institutional partners in a single, state-of-the-art platform

## Travel safely with the Travel Admin App

The app provides ideal support in preparing a trip. It also offers useful information and services for people

travelling, not only in case of a crisis. But if the crisis does occur, the app can become a particularly valuable tool: More information [here](#).

## Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad has represented the overall interest of Swiss nationals abroad in Switzerland since 1916, and is recognised by the authorities as the mouthpiece of the ‘Fifth Switzerland’. The OSA provides online information and personal advice to Swiss nationals living abroad and publishes the ‘Swiss Review’ magazine. The OSA also provides holiday programmes and educational/training courses for young Swiss nationals.

# CONTACT

## Embassy

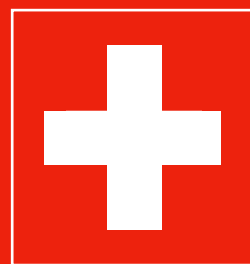
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## Consular Affairs

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