

# Swiss News

of the Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Korea

April 2011

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## *A word from the Ambassador*

Dear Readers

The terrible natural disasters in Japan and the explosions at the Fukushima nuclear power plants have been in our minds during the last few weeks. All our thoughts are with the so dramatically touched Japanese population with our hope that the difficult situation can get normalized as soon as possible. This was felt in particular here in Korea as direct neighboring country to Japan. These events have also launched new debates all over, also in Switzerland, on the future of our energy policies and how we can best assure a safe, efficient and environment friendly use of energy resources.

Fortunately these tragic events in Japan have not directly affected the Korean peninsula and based on the information currently available there is no radiological danger for South Korea. However this Embassy will continue to follow closely the situation and update its respective information for the Swiss citizens on our website or inform them directly if necessary.

I am glad to inform you that all the many regular Embassy activities to further enhance Swiss-Korea relations have developed and are progressing very well during the first few months of 2011. This new edition of our Swiss News gives you a quick overview on our main events and activities

I wish you a pleasant reading and a good start in the beautiful Korean spring.

**Thomas Kupfer**

Ambassador of Switzerland  
April 15 2011

## Switzerland and Korea signed revised Double Taxation Agreement



▶ 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kak-soo Shin and Ambassador Thomas Kupfer exchange the signed Double Taxation Protocol

On December 28, 2010, Switzerland and the Republic of Korea have signed a Protocol amending the Double Taxation Convention of 1980. This Protocol includes an extended information exchange clause in accordance with the OECD standard. It also provides for a reduction of taxes deducted at source concerning dividends, interest and royalties.

The Protocol has now to be ratified by the two contracting parties. The extended information exchange clause will deploy its effects for taxable periods beginning on or after the first day of January 2011.

The revised DTA will contribute to the further positive development of bilateral economic relations.



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## Promotion of World Engineers's Convention (WEC) in Geneva (4-9 September 2011)

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► From left: Ambassador Thomas Kupfer; Mr. Ruedi Noser, member of the Swiss Parliament and President of the Board of Association WEC 2011; Dr. KunMo Chung, Advisor to Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) and member of the International Advisory Board of WEC 2011

More than 2000 engineers, policy-makers and representatives of research and industry from all over the world will meet this fall at the WEC in Geneva, mainly to discuss the globally sustainable use of energy. On February 18th 2011 the Embassy together with the support of former Minister of Science and Technology KumMo Chung organized a promotion event at the Ambassador's residence, during which Mr. Ruedi Noser, President of the Board of Association WEC 2011 (also Member of Swiss Parliament), presented the convention and the main objectives to a audience of about 50 high-level representatives from the government, the universities and the industry.

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## Swiss Business Delegation in Korea

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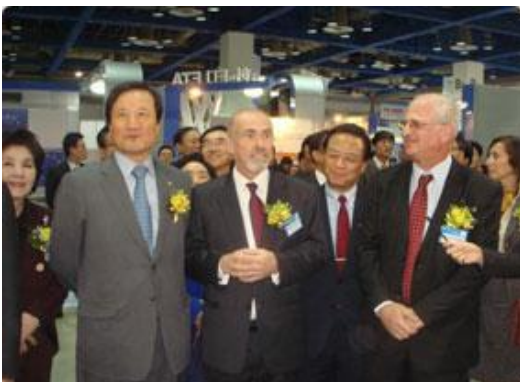
► SBHK Business Seminar

A trip organized in cooperation with the Swiss Asian Chamber of Commerce (SACC) / KOTRA and the Swiss Business Hub Korea (SBHK) brought 13 Swiss companies together to Korea from January 9 - 15, 2011 to explore potential business opportunities. During a seminar organized by SBHK about the Korean economy and cultural aspects on how to master business in Korea participants gained a meaningful insight into possibilities for doing business in the Land of the Morning Calm but also into the daily issues of foreigners managing businesses in Korea. Several Korean, German and Swiss speakers provided an in-depth picture about "Doing Business in Korea".

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## Switzerland participates in FTA Expo Korea

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The Swiss Business Hub Korea (SBHK) participated in a three days Free Trade Association Expo in Seoul from March 2 - 4, 2011 under the EFTA label (European Free Trade Association regrouping Switzerland Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). During the exhibition, the SBHK provided business and investment consultation to some 20 Korean companies willing to trade with Switzerland. Since the EFTA FTA became effective in 2006, the whole EFTA trade volume increased from USD 2.9 billion to USD 9.2 billion in 2010.

► From left to right: Korea Minister for Strategy and Finance, Mr. Jeung-hyun Yoon; Ambassador of Norway, Mr. Didrik Tønseth; Head of Korea FTA Support Association, Mr. Jinkeun Park, Ambassador Thomas Kupfer

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## Road show of Swiss Arbitration Association (ASA) in Korea

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On March 2, 2011, the ASA (Association Suisse de l'Arbitrage) held at the Korea Chamber of Commerce (KCCI) in Seoul a well-attended promotion event to highlight the strong position and the many advantages of legal arbitration in Switzerland or by Swiss arbitrators.

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## KEB International Certification

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Korea Exchange Bank received the SGS International Certification BS25999 which is given to companies with outstanding ability in risk management. The certification was given in presence of Ambassador Thomas Kupfer to the CEO of KEB, Mr. Larry Klane.

▶ Korea Exchange Bank CEO Larry Klane, left, poses with Ambassador Thomas Kupfer. Courtesy of KEB

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## New Swiss Honorary Consul in Busan

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On March 24, 2011 at the Design Center Busan the handover ceremony for the change of the Honorary Consul of Switzerland took place in company of more than 100 guests.

Mr. Jan Bremer, Director of Wartsila Supply Management and a member of the Management board of Wartsilla Korea, replaces Mr. Soo-hun Kang who is retiring after 17 years of dedicated services for the Swiss government. The ceremony took place in presence of Ambassador Thomas Kupfer and the Advisor of International Affairs to the Mayor of Busan, Ambassador Seong Taek Baek.

▶ Retiring Honorary Consul, Mr, Soo-hun Kang hands over the shield of the Swiss Consulate to the newly named Consul Mr. Jan Bremer

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## Swiss Cultural Fund Korea 2011



Two new sponsors have joined the Swiss Cultural Fund for the year 2011. With Nagra Kudelski Group and Quadrant Korea Co. Ltd. The Fund counts with the support of 13 of the most important Swiss companies active in Korea.

As for the past two years the Fund will sponsor the Lindenbaum Festival 2011 this coming June. The "world format: Swiss Poster Design" exhibition recently shown in Busan was also sponsored by the Fund.

## Francophonie 2011 in Korea



▶ John Simenon during one of his conferences

The work of the famous Belgian writer Georges Simenon was presented during this year's celebrations of the French language. Georges Simenon lived the major part of his adult life in Switzerland and is the creator of the famous French Inspector Maigret's detective stories. His son John came to Korea at the invitation of the Swiss Embassy to give conferences in 5 universities in Seoul on the work and legacy of his father.

As opening event of the days of the Francophonie, Ambassador Thomas Kupfer invited the Ambassadors of all member countries of the Francophonie to a luncheon. Switzerland holds the presidency of the Francophonie since last year's Summit in Montreux.

This year main public celebration took place at the Simsan cultural center in Songpa District (French Village) at the invitation of its Mayor. The many guests enjoyed a concert of the franco-guinéen group Ba-Cissoko as well as a buffet with special dishes from member countries of the Francophonie.

## Design Center Busan hosts a Swiss Design Exhibition



From March 24 - April 14 the Design Center Busan hosted the Swiss poster design exhibition "world format: Swiss Poster Design" sponsored by the Swiss Cultural Fund Korea. The opening of the exhibition took place on March 24 in front of a very interested crowd. The exhibition will still be exhibited at the Ehwa Women's University and at the Hanyang Women's University before returning to Switzerland.



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## Switzerland Travel Experience 2011

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On 31 July, the Embassy organized (with the support of the NNSC-team) a garden party for the Swiss community and friends of Switzerland in Switzerland Travel Experience 2011 Opening Ceremony was held on February 21, 2011 at the Ambassador's residence in presence of Ambassador Thomas Kupfer, Switzerland Tourism Representative Jean Kim and 10 members of Swiss Tourism Partners from the different regions and cities of Switzerland, and tour operators, airlines, and industry personnel. Switzerland Tourism gave a presentation on a very innovative application for smart phones of travel information to Switzerland such as maps, guides, text, photos and videos.

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## SIWA Bazaar 2010

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The Swiss Ambassador's spouse, Mrs. Fiorella Kupfer Montefiori received a plaque of appreciation from Seoul International Women's Association (SIWA) President Lily Joenoes van Bunnik on February 16, 2011 at the Grand Hilton Hotel to recognize the Swiss embassy's donation of 10 million won, the biggest embassy sum, during the annual SIWA and Diplomatic Community Bazaar held last November. This excellent result was only possible to the special efforts of all members of Swiss Women's SIWA committee and of the sponsors. Thanks to all!

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## Yongpyong Ski Festival 2011

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Excellent snow and weather conditions prevailed at this year's Yongpyong International Ski Festival. The fierce giant slalom competition was once again favorable to the "Swiss team" bringing home gold, silver and bronze medals in the diverse age categories of the alpine skiing competition.

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## Arirang TV “Diplomatic Lounge” Interview with Swiss Ambassador

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On April 2, 2011, Arirang, the English-language TV channel in Korea, broadcasted a 25 minutes-interview with Ambassador Thomas Kupfer.

Link to the video interview:

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/reprs/asia/vkor/embseo/news/video.html>

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## Messages from the Consulate to Swiss Citizens

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### **Regarding the consequences in South Korea of the earthquake and the explosions at the Fukushima nuclear power plants in Japan, 15.04.2011**

The recent tragic events in Japan have not affected directly the Korean peninsula.

The Swiss Embassy in the Republic of Korea follows the situation closely and is in contact with the Swiss Embassy in Tokyo and the authorities in Switzerland and South Korea.

The competent South Korean authorities are following the situation carefully. A slight increase of the level of radiation as been observed, but remains in the range of the normal seasonal variation. KINS (Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety) informed that based on the currently available information there is no radiological danger for South Korea.

The evolution of the situation will depend on the success of containment efforts of the radioactivity from the Fukushima nuclear plant and on the weather conditions.

The Swiss Embassy will up-date its website and informs the Swiss community if necessary.

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/seoul>

The Swiss government regularly publishes its most recent assessment of the situation on its website:

<http://www.admin.ch/aktuell/00270/index.html?lang=de>

Other useful websites:

<http://internet.kins.re.kr/>

<http://web.kma.go.kr/eng/>

### **Reminder to Swiss citizen registered at the Embassy:**

If you are leaving Korea definitely to go back to Switzerland or other destination please do not forget to contact the Embassy with your new address abroad.

The Embassy recommends to the Swiss community to keep the Embassy informed of any changes in their addresses, mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses to allow the Embassy to contact the Swiss citizens in any moment if necessary. Swiss short time visitors in Korea also are invited to inform the Embassy of their presence and leave their contact information for the length of their stay.

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## Events Calendar

25.-29. 04 2011 02.-14.05.2011	<b>Exhibition “World Format: Swiss Poster Design”</b> at 2 universities in Seoul Ehwa Women’s University, Art Museum Hanyang Women’s University, Haengwon Gallery
27.-28. 04.2011	<b>Study and Research in Europe 2011:</b> 15 European countries promote together European higher education in Korea and will host a VIP luncheon with key decision makers in Korea <u>VIP Luncheon</u> on April 27 (11:30-14:00) at the Grand Hyatt Hotel <u>Main Event</u> on April 28 (13:00-17:30) at the Korea University, Incheon Memorial Hall <a href="http://www.study-in-europe.kr">www.study-in-europe.kr</a>
16.-27.05.2011	<b>Exhibition “New Monte Rosa Hut in Switzerland”</b> - Self-sufficient building in the high Alps at the Yonsei University, Engineering Research Park <u>Opening ceremony</u> on May 16, 2011, 17:00 For more Information: <a href="http://www.ausstellungen.gta.arch.ethz.ch/events/new-monte-rosa-hut-sac-touring-exhibition-2011">http://www.ausstellungen.gta.arch.ethz.ch/events/new-monte-rosa-hut-sac-touring-exhibition-2011</a> Movie on the hut: <a href="http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/multimedia/video/The_High-Tech_Hut_.html?cid=29760682&amp;quality=high">http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/multimedia/video/The_High-Tech_Hut_.html?cid=29760682&amp;quality=high</a>
17.-18.05.2011	<b>Joint Committee Meeting of the bilateral Science and Technology Agreement between Switzerland and Korea</b> in Seoul
19.05.2011	<b>Swiss Korea Business Council</b> Annual General Meeting
22.05.2011 18:00	Swiss Participation at Modern Dance Festival <b>MODAFE 2011</b> <b>“Sideways Rain” performance by Alias and choreography by Guilherme Botelho</b> at Daehakno Art Theatre, Grand Theatre (대학로예술극장) <a href="http://www.modafe.org/">http://www.modafe.org/</a>
21.06.2011 20:00	<b>Lindenbaum Music Festival Orchestra Concert 2011 with Maestro Charles Dutoit</b> at the Goyang Aram Nuri Arts Center

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