

Swiss News

of the Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Korea

July 2011

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A word from the Ambassador

Dear Readers

The official visit to Korea of Swiss Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, Head of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport is certainly a highlight of Swiss-Korean relations in 2011. At the center of his stay in Seoul was the meeting and discussion with his counterpart, Mr. Kim Kwan-jin, Minister of National Defense of Korea. The visit to Swiss NNSC (Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission) Delegation at the DMZ in Panmunjom, where more than 1000 Swiss officers have served during the last 58 years to observe and support the Armistice Agreement, was of particular significance and demonstrated the valuable contribution of neutral Switzerland to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula during the last six decades.



The various official meetings with the Korean Government confirmed the excellent and friendly relations between our two countries. Federal Councillor Maurer, also in charge of Sport, took the occasion to officially congratulate Korea for the victory in hosting the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games.

Switzerland is considering a candidature for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, therefore an exchange of experiences could be possible, as Mr. Maurer confirmed.

Please get also from our Swiss News all the other information on recent activities and events in the economy, trade, science or culture fields which show how close cooperation between Korea and Switzerland has developed.

I wish you all a pleasant summer and vacation time.

Thomas Kupfer
Ambassador of Switzerland



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Visit of Swiss Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer

Swiss Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, Head of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport, paid on July 11th-13th an official visit to Korea on invitation of his counterpart, Mr. Kim Kwan Jin, Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea.



After arrival at Seoul Incheon International Airport the delegation headed to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) in Panmunjom to visit the Swiss NNSC (Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission) Delegation.

After visiting the Joint Security Area (JSA), they received a briefing by the Head of the Swiss NNSC delegation, Major General Jean-Jacques Joss on the NNSC mission to observe the Armistice Agreement as a neutral country. Neutrality is a cornerstone of Swiss foreign and security policy and is perfectly in line with our international solidarity. The NNSC presence of Switzerland and Sweden since 1953 may be small in term of number but it reflects their unconditional commitment to peace and stability in the region.

On July 12th Federal Councillor Maurer met with his counterpart Mr. Kim Kwan Jin, Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea. Their talks underlined the excellent bilateral relationship between Switzerland and South Korea in general, the important longstanding contribution of Switzerland as a Member of the NNSC in Panmunjom and possible fields of cooperation in the future.



Courtesy of Yonhap News Agency



The afternoon started with a visit at Yongsan Base to the Commander of the UNC, US-General Walter Sharp together with his successor, US-General James Thurman and was followed by bilateral talks with Unification Minister Hyun In Taek.

At a reception, hosted by Ambassador Kupfer, Federal Councillor Maurer had the opportunity to meet with a variety of important guests from the Government, Military and Ambassadors as well as from Swiss Business community and Swiss students.



Before his departure on July 13th to China, Federal Councillor Maurer in his quality as Sport Minister had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Chung Byoung-gug, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Mr. Maurer congratulated Minister Chung for PyeongChang winning the bid to host the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. The ministers agreed on future cooperation.

Swiss Economic Mission to Korea

This year, we can look back to 5 years of entry into force of the EFTA/Switzerland-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA). With the provisional entry into force of the FTA between the EU and Korea on July 1st, 2011, the situation changed and we enter a somewhat new phase with new challenges and opportunities. In order to take stock, deal with ongoing issues and prepare for the future, an Economic Mission led by Ambassador Christian Etter, the Federal Council Delegate for Trade Agreements, and comprising specialists from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the Swiss Federal Customs Administration visited Korea on July 11th and 12th. The delegation had meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Korea Customs Service.

The 2nd Korea-Switzerland S&T Joint Committee



▶ In the middle Mr. Yul-Rae Cho, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and Mr. Jürg Burri, Deputy to the State Secretary for Education and Research with the Joint Committee Members

Switzerland and the Republic of Korea concluded a bilateral agreement on Science & Technology (S&T) in 2008. So far, 25 projects have been supported and various additional activities have been undertaken to strengthen the co-operation between the two countries. On May 17th-18th the second Joint Committee Meeting was held in Seoul. The Swiss delegation was headed by Mr. Jürg Burri, Deputy to the State Secretary for Education and Research, the Korean delegation by Assistant Minister Yul-Rae Cho from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). Both sides agreed to open a new phase of bilateral co-operation by supporting with increased funds small research programs and to deepen exchange and co-operation by the two national funding agencies for S&T.

Visit of the Korean First Vice-Minister from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Berne

The First Vice-Minister for Education, Mr. Dong-Geun Seol from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) was received on May 24th in Berne by Mr. Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education and Research. Both sides welcomed the excellent outcome of the second Joint Committee Meeting on Science and Technology held in Seoul. They agreed to look into ways of how to extend the S&T- cooperation to the field of education, whereby the vocational training is of particular interest.

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Swiss - Korean Business Council (SKBC) Annual General Meeting at Ambassador's Residence



▶ From right : Ambassador Thomas Kupfer; Ambassador Tomasz Kozlowski, European Union; José Fässler, President SKBC; Jürgen König, CEO Merck; S.H. Jang, Honorary President SKBC; Christophe Piganiol, CEO Züllig Pharma

The SKBC Annual General Meeting took place on May 19th at the Ambassador's residence with the participation of 50 persons. The yearly report of the activities of SKBC was presented by SKBC-President José Fässler.

Ambassador Tomasz Kozlowski, Head of the Delegation of the European Union gave the key note speech on the topic: "EU-Korean relations on the perspective of the Free Trade Agreement" which found a great interest.

SKBC also announced a personal change: Managing Director Daniel Nyffenegger handed over his task to Mr. Reto Zimmermann. We thank Mr. Daniel Nyffenegger for all his work during the past 7 years to promote Swiss Business in Korea and wish Mr. Reto Zimmermann all success for his new tasks.

Switzerland Nr. 1 on Innovation

Switzerland was ranked Nr 1 on the newest "Global Innovation Index 2011", published in June by INSEAD (Business School for the World) with cooperation of Alcatel-Lucent, Confederation of Indian Industries and WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization). WIPO Director General Francis Gury was at the beginning of July in Seoul for official meetings with the Korea Government and was also referring to the Global Innovation Index. Switzerland ranks first among 125 economies analyzed in detail on a big number of innovation indexes like "human capital", "research" or "infrastructure" "patents" etc.

Korea Country Consulting with Osec / SBH Korea in Zurich and Lausanne

From June 20th to 22nd, Osec and the Swiss Business Hub Korea held several 1:1 business meetings with Swiss companies to support their export activities into Korea. More and more Swiss companies make use of the Osec / SBH Korea services to look at Korea as a new opportunity or strengthen their position in this promising market. The Machine- and Electro Industry and the energy & consumer goods market were some sectors which reflect a growing interest from Swiss companies. A next Country Consulting and Export Dialogue will be held in Zurich and Lugano from October 24th to 28th.

Export Dialogue in Basel

Export Dialogues are organized by Cantonal Chambers of Commerce together with a Swiss Business Hub to promote a specific country in more detail. The SBH Korea, in cooperation with the Basel Chamber of Commerce, participated at such an Export Dialogue in Basel in the morning of June 23rd. Talking about "South Korea - a booming market, quality-conscious customers", Ms Baik, SBH Korea, presented facts and insights into the Korean economy and strategic industry information. Other speakers with hands-on Korean experience contributed to a well rounded event where 8 Swiss companies participated. Individual 1:1 business meetings followed in the afternoon to discuss company specific interests and provide useful advice.

First Pool of Experts Event in Seoul, Korea



On April 20th, the Swiss Business Hub Korea (SBHK) organized the first Pool of Experts (PoE) gathering in Korea at the Plaza Hotel in Seoul. 31 experts with various industry backgrounds joined the luncheon and the following introductory seminar which aimed to brief the participants on this platform and how these highly qualified specialists will be able to support the SBHK to provide an even more professional and competent support for Swiss & Liechtenstein SMEs interested in entering the Korean market. Not only attracted the event more experts than expected, already first participants have registered on the PoE-website(www.poolofexperts.ch) as a member of Osec's worldwide experts-network.

First Korea Overseas Investment Fair (KOIF)



The Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) launched their first Korea Overseas Investment Fair (KOIF) on May 19th-20th in COEX. Switzerland, represented through the Swiss Business Hub Korea (SBHK), was amongst the 29 countries present at this fair to attract internationally oriented Korean companies expanding abroad. The SBHK held numerous one to one consulting sessions with interested Korean companies and gave a presentation about how to set up a European head office in Switzerland.

New merchandise vessel under Swiss Flag



On June 22nd the "Vully" merchandise vessel recently built in the Shinan Heavy Industry / Shico Shipyard in Mokpo was delivered to the Swiss maritime company "Suisse Atlantique" represented by its President, Mr. Eric André. During an official ceremony the "Vully" was taken under Swiss flag by Embassy Councillor Raoul Imbach on behalf of the Swiss Maritime Navigation Office. The "Vully" is the fourth ship built by the Korean ship maker for "Swiss Atlantique" and sailing with the Swiss flag.

▶ From left: Mr. Kyu Hong Park, Vice-President of Shinan Heavy Industries Co., Ltd.; Mr. Raoul Imbach, Councillor Swiss Embassy; and Mr. Eric André, President of Suisse Atlantique

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Exhibition on the New Monte Rosa Hut



▶ The New Monte Rosa Hut in the Swiss Alps

On May 16th, the Swiss Embassy together with Yonsei University invited to the opening ceremony for the exhibition on the New Monte Rosa Hut. The New Monte Rosa Hut is a spectacular sustainable building in the Swiss Alps (2883 m above sea level). The alpine shelter, which can house up to 120 hikers and climbers, produces 90 per cent of its electricity from the sun thanks to an ultra-modern photovoltaic system integrated into its façade. The water is produced from melting glaciers, then collected and stored in a large reservoir 40 metres above the hut.

The opening ceremony was attended by Yonsei University and Swiss officials, researchers and students, architects, representatives of Korean companies interested in the subject of sustainable buildings and representatives of governmental authorities.

Study trip of EPFL students to Korea



From July 8th to 17th, a delegation of 52 students of EPFL in the field of Life Sciences, led by Prof. Hilal Lashuel, visited Korea in order to get a first-hand impression of the student life, research and business developments. The comprehensive program over one week took the students to numerous places in the metropolitan area of Seoul, in the “science city” of Daejeon in the center of Korea and down in the south in Pohang/Gyeongju. The students were also received by the new CEO of Novartis Korea, Mr Eric Van Oppens, who provided them an excellent overview of the impressive presence of Novartis in Korea. The Embassy is very pleased with this type of visit as it is a very special occasion for young people to get to know Korea better, foster relations and thus promote the future co-operation and exchange on the academic/research and the personal levels.

CICI meets Switzerland



On May 17th, Ambassador Thomas Kupfer and his wife Fiorella welcomed the members of the Corea Image Communication Institute (CICI) for an evening of graduation to CQ11 and social gathering at the Swiss residence. The guests were able to discover a different perspective of Switzerland through an unconventional presentation by Culture Counsellor Raoul Imbach and enjoyed Swiss food and yodel performance in a relaxed atmosphere. A karaoke session with many talented singers among the participants ended the joyful evening.



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Getting the Youth to learn about Switzerland



Quite often the Embassy is asked to give presentations on Switzerland for high school and university students. Recently a special request came from the Jongno district, where also the Swiss Embassy is located, to feature Switzerland for inspirational presentations to underprivileged children. In the last months Counsellor Raoul Imbach took the job at hands and gave - in two centers dedicated to underprivileged children - a message of hope and a vision for a better future. Jongno district Mayor Mr. Kim Young Jong was present with representatives of the press during both events.

A Swiss with outstanding Korean language abilities



Isabelle Leemann, a young Swiss citizen making an internship at the Swiss Embassy in Seoul, won first place at the 14th World Korean Language Speech Contest for Foreigners held on May 13th in Seoul. Here some extracts of the JoongAng Daily Newspaper article (May 16th):

"This speech contest was started in 1998. ... The 21 finalists among 1100 participants were required to deliver a speech about either their favorite Korean food or a personal experience regarding Korean culture. Some contestants showed up wearing Hanbok, Korean traditional clothes, while some wore their own traditional dress... Contestants were evaluated by 10 judges from diverse fields, ranging from a Korean language professor to well-known chef Yang Ji-hoon, based on content, expression and attitude. First place went to Isabelle Leemann, 25, from Switzerland, who talked about Koreans' passionate characteristics."

Claudia Müller, a Swiss skating with the stars



"Kim Yuna-Kiss and Cry" SBS TV series started to feature a Competition Show "Korean Stars skating with professionals". Swiss - Korean ice skater Claudia Müller is competing together with Uknow Yunho, a famous singer of the group TVXQ.

Claudia Müller, a "National Reserve Athlete" for the Korean National Women's Figure Skating team, was born in 1997 to a Swiss father (Chef at Hilton Grand Hotel) and Korean mother.

▶ Courtesy TV SBS

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Sport Celebrity Visit at the Embassy



Happy coincidence! On July 7th, the day after PyeongChang was elected for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games, the Embassy received the unexpected visit of 4 times Olympic Gold medallist, archer Soo-Nyung Kim, who was named "Athlete of the 20th Century" in the women's field by the International Archery Federation (FITA). Mrs Soo-Nyung Kim is moving temporarily to Lausanne, Switzerland with her family for an assignment with FITA.

New Swiss specialty food places in town

The Swiss food and chocolates lovers will be thrilled to know that at least 4 new Swiss places have recently opened their doors in Seoul. You now can visit the new Restaurant "Gastro TONG" (25-2, Tongui-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul, tel. 02-730-4162, www.gastro tong.co.kr) of Swiss Chef, Mr. Roland Hinni, with Swiss and European specialties or the restaurant "Leman L." (135-55, Itewon-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, tel. 02-798-4656, www.lemanho.com) for Swiss Cheese specialties. And if you have a sweet tooth for Swiss chocolates you might want to head for Teuscher (Zurich) first shop in Korea (Ferrum Building, 66 Suha-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul, tel.02-755-5004, www.teuscher-seoul.com) or visit the new coffee and chocolate shop of Läderach in Jongno-gu (J&J Bldg. 289 Pilun-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul, tel. 02-722-3245, www.laderach.co.kr)

TBS e-FM Radio Interview with the Swiss Ambassador

In May 2011, TBS e-FM, the English-language radio channel in Korea, broadcasted a 30 minutes-interview with the Ambassador Thomas Kupfer.

Link to the radio interview: <http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/reps/asia/vkor/embseo/news/inter0.html>

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Embassy News

Annual Embassy's Outing



It is a tradition for the Swiss Embassy to enjoy once a year an outing all staff together. This year it took place on May 26th. The first destination was Pochoen in the Gyeonggi Province where the Embassy's members took a walk through the Pyunggang Botanic garden. After a traditional lunch in a Sujungung restaurant a fascinating visit of Sansawon Soju producer was organized giving the participants the opportunity to learn hands-on the art of making Korean liquor. All staff enjoyed the company and the great experience to Korean country side.

Changes in the Embassy's Staffs

- After the departure of Vice-Consul Mr. Marco Seiler in February this year, the chancery lived an interim period with two short time replacements. We are happy to announce that our new Vice-Consul, Ms. Edith Rufer, has taken her position at the chancery of the Embassy. Ms. Rufer was previously working at the Swiss General Consulate in Atlanta.
- Mrs. Nara Yoon, Economic and Science Affairs Officer, will leave end of July the Embassy after 5 years of dedicated services. We thank her for valuable contribution to our Mission and wish Mrs Yoon and her family for the future all the best. She will be replaced by Ms. Hyeon-ju Ahn.

20 Years Anniversary!



On June 1st the Embassy had the pleasure to celebrate 20 years of loyal services of Mr. Byung-woo Lee. Mr. Lee is the indispensable man of all situations at the Embassy. He can recall the 5 last Ambassadors! We congratulate him and wish him many more years with us!

Message of the Federal Tax Administration (FTA) to the Swiss Abroad

Instructions relating to phishing data from the Swiss Abroad

Fraudsters try on various occasions to obtain information concerning accounts and credit cards, as well as copies of taxpayers' passports by sending e-mails. The Federal Tax Administration (FTA) issued a warning:

<http://www.estv.admin.ch/aktuell/01197/index.html?lang=en>

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Events Calendar

30.07.2011	1st of August Party for the Swiss Community
02.09.- 23.10.2011	Swiss Participation in the Gwangju Biennale 2011 Exhibition "design.is. design is. not.design" artist UBERMORGEN.COM ÜBERMORGEN.COM will show the work "DOTOILDOT" responding to the reality of how we use oil in the current world and asking the question 'what is the actual and potential future value of oil?' http://www.gb.or.kr
05.-29.09.2011 and 10.2011	Travel Design Exhibition "Criss-Cross: Design made in Switzerland" in Seoul and Busan Seoul: Museum of Korea University Busan: Design Center Busan http://www.prohelvetia.ch/CRISS-CROSS-Design-made-in-S.177.0.html?&L=4
29.09.2011	Concert of Korean and Japanese Musicians studying in Switzerland Venue: Ceramic Palace Hall, Gangnam Ilwon-dong Free entrance! http://www.jpj.or.kr
01./02.10.2011 07./08.10.2011	BÉJART BALLET Lausanne Asien Tour 2011 Deajeon Culture & Arts Center http://www.djac.or.kr 2011: Sunnam Arts Center http://www.snart.or.kr
06.-14.10.2011	Swiss Participation in the Busan International Film Festival 2011 http://www.biff.kr/
17.-21.10.2011	Week of the Italian Language in the World
10.2011(tbc)	Week of the German Language in Korea with the German and Austrian Embassy, Goethe-Institute, DAAD and German School

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