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Message from Ambassador Philipp Stalder

Dear Swiss citizens and friends of Switzerland,

Welcome to the new edition of our newsletter. This issue would like to inform our readers about some of the previous events and activities of the Swiss Embassy in Baku and gives you a glimpse about relations between Switzerland and the Republic of Azerbaijan, which on a diplomatic level have existed for 25 years and which have positively evolved over the past quarter of a century.

On the occasion of the jubilee, the excellent relations with Azerbaijan were highlighted in two letters of the President of Swiss Confederation, Mrs. Doris Leuthard, and Swiss Foreign Minister, Federal Councilor Didier Burkhalter, addressed to President Ilham Aliyev and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov.

During the first months of this year, contacts between our two countries have further developed with the presidential meeting in Davos, the entry into force of two agreements, the project implementations of our ongoing development partnership with Azerbaijan in the frame of a new four years' strategy for the South Caucasus (2017-2020:https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/laender/Strategie_South-Caucasus_2017_Web.pdf). Beside various developments in the economic, educational and cultural spheres, on the people to people level ties also started to flourish with the establishment of an alumni network and a reception the Embassy organized for young Azerbaijanis who have studied in Switzerland

The strong ties between our both countries are also reflected in the area of finance and investments where Switzerland according to the State Statistics Committee is ranked number 1 among foreign countries investing into the Azerbaijani economy in 2016. Furthermore, close relations exist between Swiss National Bank (SNB) and the Central Bank of Azerbaijan and other authorities of the country in the framework of the Bretton Woods Institutions. These contacts are further boosted by the Chairman of the Governing Board of the SNB, Prof. Dr. Thomas J. Jordan, who pays an official visit to Baku on 13-14 July.

I wish you an excellent summer season.

Philipp Stalder

Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan

Bilateral relations

Presidential meeting in Davos



President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the World Economic Forum in Davos on 17-20 January 2017. Among many other meetings, the Azerbaijani president was also received by the president of the Swiss Confederation Doris Leuthard. Federal Councillor Leuthard extended congratulations on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Azerbaijan's state independence in 1991. The two presidents discussed a wide range of bilateral issues. Mrs. Doris Leuthard particularly emphasized the successful cooperation established in the financial sector. President Aliyev spoke about the reforms carried out in Azerbaijan in

various fields, as well as the works done in the country in eliminating the impacts of the decline of oil prices in the world market. President Aliyev also mentioned the potential of Azerbaijan as an important transport transit hub. During the meeting, the existence of good cooperation between the two countries in the field of railway was also emphasized. They exchanged views on prospects of cooperation in the TAP and TANAP projects, as well as in the fields of investment, finance, credit, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals.

Visa facilitation agreement comes into force



A visa facilitation agreement between Switzerland and Azerbaijan, which was signed by the ministers of foreign affairs in Bern in October 2016, came into force this spring, starting from 1 April 2017.

According to the new agreement, holders of diplomatic and service (biometric) passports of the two countries are exempted from visa requirement when traveling to the respective country for a short stay of not more than 90 days within a 180-day period. Some other categories of persons including journalists, sportsmen participating in international competitions, students

of exchange program, etc. do not pay visa fees. For more detailed information about visa, please consult the website of the Swiss Embassy where you will find information in Azerbaijani and English language.

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/azerbaijan/en/home/visa/entry-residency/visa.html>

Swiss Ambassador visits regions of Azerbaijan



Ambassador Philipp Stalder visited the southern regions of Azerbaijan Lenkaran and Masalli on 1-2 March 2017. During the trip, he met with the governor of Lenkaran, visited tea-growing field and citrus plantation and held a presentation at Lenkaran State University about Switzerland. Governor Mr. Taleh Garashov expressed his interest in hosting Swiss cheesemakers to the region to share their experience and helping to develop and diversify cheese production. Lenkaran is famous for its variety of tea and during a meeting with local entrepreneurs the question of tea exports to Switzerland was discussed. The Swiss Ambassador also visited ABAD center in Masalli city, which is a promising new project under the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations. ABAD's abbreviation means Easy

Support to Family Business. The project is designed to support family businesses in the south regions of the country. The project ABAD selects families which already have experience in the production of foods, sausages, canned goods, cheese, etc. Then it provides legal, logistic, branding, marketing, sailing and other services free of charge. Particularly, the family is provided with a container which consists of all necessary equipment for production.

On 28 April, Ambassador Stalder made an official trip to the city of Sumgayit which is located some 30 km north of Baku. Potential areas of cooperation between Switzerland and Azerbaijan were discussed at a meeting with the governor of Sumgayit, Mr. Zakir Farajov as well as with representatives of Sumgayit Chemical Industrial Park (SCIP). Swiss companies – which already today are among the top foreign investors in the non-oil business in Azerbaijan – are most welcomed to invest in SCIP. Sumgayit was the chemical industrial center during Soviet times and later became an important industrial hub of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Several Swiss companies and entities have established contacts with the local authorities regarding potential investments and partnerships.

<http://asan.az/en/content/view/249/3045>

<http://scip.az/index.php?lang=en>

Swiss journalist conducts workshop in Baku



Swiss journalist and media specialist Alexandra Stark conducted a two-day workshop in Baku on 10-11 April 2017 for journalists and students of the Faculty of Journalism of Baku State University. The workshop took place within the frame of a project initiated by the Embassy in close partnership with the Press Council of Azerbaijan. The topic of the workshop with journalists was “Media in digitalization age and professionalism”. 25 journalists from various fields (print, online, radio, TV) participated in the workshop which ended with lively discussions and questions. The topic of the workshop at Baku State University’s School of Journalism was “Convergence: – or how developments in Technology, Audience and Economy are radically changing Journalism”.

The visit of Mrs. Stark to the Baku State University’s Journalism School caused great interest among faculty members, students and lecturers. Alexandra also had exchange of views with the dean of the School of Journalism on the media model of Switzerland and new trends in the media landscape. In addition to the workshop, our media expert also met with some foreign missions in Baku with the aim to brief them about the

project and share experience in the field of media projects. All interlocutors highly appreciated and welcomed the initiative of the Swiss Embassy and emphasized the project as a meaningful support to media in Azerbaijan. Mrs. Stark also visited the editorial office of the *Yeni Musavat* newspaper, monitored the activity of the staff and shared views on the use of social networks for the benefit of newspaper.

Ambassador Philipp Stalder hosted a dinner at the Swiss residence, which was attended by some of the leading media experts and editors in chief.

See Alexandra Stark’s homepage and some articles about the workshop:

www.alexandrastark.ch

<http://eurasiadiary.com/en/news/interview/127868-journalists-from-azerbaijan-and-switzerland-could-work-on-common-subjects>

<http://modern.az/az/news/129707/#gsc.tab=0>

http://musavat.com/news/isvecreli-jurnalist-azerbaycanli-hemkarlarina-seminar-kecdi-fotolar_429345.html

http://azertag.az/xeber/Metbuat_Surasinda_taninmis_isvechreli_jurnalist_istiraki_ile_seminar_kechirilecek-1049597



Swiss Development Cooperation

Switzerland launches Financial Sector Modernization Program in Azerbaijan



Switzerland and the World Bank, together with the relevant government authorities, launched a Financial Sector Modernization Program on 24 February 2017 in Baku.

The technical assistance program (2017-20) will be implemented by the World Bank and is financed by a grant worth of 3 million US\$ from SECO. This project is of utmost importance for Azerbaijan in order to tackle the complex challenges faced by its financial sector. The primary partner in this project is the Financial Markets Supervision Authority (FIMSA) established in February 2016. The project is going to support the government's efforts to stabilize and

further develop the Azerbaijani financial sector. Necessary legal and regulatory reforms in the area of financial market supervision, bank resolution, non-performing loans resolution, consumer protection and deposit insurance will be delivered under this project. Several changes to relevant laws were already achieved since the launch of this program.

Switzerland supports the government in its moveable assets reform of Azerbaijan



A crucial reform to make lending more flexible is currently being implemented in Azerbaijan under the so-called Financial Infrastructure project financed by the Swiss government (SECO) and implemented by the International Financial Corporation (IFC). The project closely cooperated with the Azerbaijan Bank Associations (ABA) and relevant authorities.

The parliament approved the new legislation developed under the project in May 2017. This means that it will be legal for financial institutions to accept collaterals such as motor-vehicles, equipment, the inventory of an SME, forward contracts or even intellectual property and debtor

liabilities. It is hoped that this will make lending more flexible and ultimately also cheaper. Globally speaking, such reforms have made it much easier for SME to access finance, which is an urgent need for Azerbaijan today.

Swiss-funded project encourages women for small business in rural Azerbaijan



The Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) for the South Caucasus has provided seed money to selected women entrepreneurs to develop or establish their businesses in three deprived regions of central Azerbaijan. Six of the 18 recipients live in Fuzuli district. These women were selected on the basis of their performance and the quality of their business plans.

The women who received financial support for starting or growing their businesses invested in poultry, retail and beauty services. The 18 women were selected from about 160 people who received training on financial literacy and business

management. The women entrepreneurs highly appreciated the training they received. They say that while the financial literacy training helped them increase their savings, the training on starting up a business increased their confidence to invest in their own business. They thanked the Swiss delegation for the provided funds and said that they had a long-term vision for developing their businesses.

Presentation of book “101 Rules for Business Women”



On 18 May, a presentation of the book “101 Rules for Business Women” was organized with the participation of Ambassador Philipp Stalder, Deputy Head of Mission & Deputy Regional Director of Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) for the South Caucasus, Ms. Simone Haerberli, the editorial team and representatives of businesses, international organizations and civil society of Azerbaijan.

The book in Azerbaijani language was produced and published by Women’s Association for Rational Development (WARD) through funds provided by Switzerland. It is intended for a wide range of readers – from women who start businesses, who already have established businesses and all those who work at public offices, local and international organizations. This is the first book published in the country to help business women learn different aspects of business etiquette and balance work and private life.

For more visit the link:

<https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/countries/azerbaijan/en/home/news/news.html/content/countries/azerbaijan/en/meta/news/2017/may/presentation-of-book-for-business-women>

Swiss Ambassdor awards participants of Swiss-funded training



An 8-day regional training course entitled “Transforming Natural Resource Wealth into Sustainable Prosperity” was completed at the Khazar University on 6 July 2017. Representatives of Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Mongolia attended this training, which was held as part of the Swiss-funded Eurasia Extractive Industry Knowledge Hub project. The aim of the project is to support representatives of civil society, government and parliament from the region to contribute to a transparent and accountable management of the extractive industries in their respective countries.

Swiss Ambassador Mr. Philipp Stalder attended the completion of the training course and delivered a speech to congratulate the trainees. In his speech, he talked about the importance of Switzerland as a global trading venue for natural resources, where roughly 500 international commodity companies are based. He emphasized that in order to ensure transparency and accountability, Switzerland is committed to develop and implement international initiatives and standards.

At the end of the closing ceremony of the training course, the Swiss Ambassador and the rector of the Khazar University, Professor Hamlet Isakhanli, handed over certificates to the trainees.

<http://www.khazar.org/en/news/article/2326>

Economy, Trade & Tourism

Swiss Business Luncheons



25 YEARS OF
PARTNERSHIP
AZERBAIJAN-
SWITZERLAND

The Embassy was active in organizing three Swiss Business Luncheon events at the Swiss residence in the first half of this year. The first event was held in January and dedicated to an in-house display of Mrs. Simone Haerberli, Deputy Regional Director

of Swiss Cooperation Office for South Caucasus, about the priority fields of the Swiss Cooperation for the next four years (2017-2020). For the strategy for South Caucasus see: https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/laender/Strategie_South-Caucasus_2017_Web.pdf)

In April, the Deputy CEO of the State Oil Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Israfil Mammadov, enlightened the participants with interesting remarks about the investment orientations of SOFAZ. Mr. Mammadov also spoke about the role of SOFAZ in the economy of Azerbaijan and in reforms taken by government to cope with challenges.

The guest speaker of the third Swiss Business Luncheon in June was the acting CEO of the Baku Stock Exchange, Mr. Vugar Namazov, who provided some detailed information about the investment vehicles and tools of BSE to the representatives of Swiss companies in Azerbaijan.

Swiss Ambassador and SCO Deputy Regional Director at Stock Exchange

In April, Ambassador Philipp Stalder and Dr. Simone Haerberli, Deputy Head of Mission & Deputy Regional Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office, visited the Baku Stock Exchange. They were received by the management team who gave them a briefing about the history, mandate and recent developments of the Baku Stock Exchange, which was established in 2000. The Baku Stock Exchange is the agent for placement of bonds, T-bills and notes. Currently, bonds are still more popular in Azerbaijan than equity. BSE is currently working on attracting investment funds to Azerbaijan, which would be a



welcome addition to the existing financial mechanisms in this country. Technically speaking, BSE has all the necessary technology and capacity to trade securities and the legislation to do so is both modern and adequate – this was achieved in 2016 under the World Bank implemented project “Capital Market Modernization”, which was partially co-financed by Switzerland.

After a fruitful exchange, the two visitors and the management team of BSE rang the historic bell to open the trading day – a dear ritual by many Stock Exchanges all over the world.

<http://bfb.az/eng/>

Swiss company Argor-Heraeus SA in Azerbaijan

The management of the Swiss company “Argor-Heraeus SA”, one of the biggest refining companies of the world based in Mendrisio (Ticino), visited Azerbaijan at the end of May in connection with their close cooperation with “AzerGold”. The purpose of the visit was to get more acquainted with the Azerbaijani company’s operations. The visitors from Switzerland visited Chovdar Ore Processing Area located in Dashkasan region. The sides



also held discussions on the extension of cooperation. "AzerGold" CJSC intends to dispatch 67 pieces of auri-argentiferous bullions produced in Chovdar Ore Processing Area for refining to the Swiss company in June. Gold and silver to be obtained thereafter will be brought out for sale in international stock market. "AzerGold" CJSC managed to refine and sell 66 pieces of auri-argentiferous bullions last month through "Argor-Heraeus SA" and contributed to Azerbaijan economy resources valued approximately at 35 million manats. By the end of the year, "AzerGold" CJSC is planning to gain profit valued approximately at 145 million manats from gold and silver sales of 2017.

Ambassador Philipp Stalder also visited the company on 24 May 2017 and had a meeting with the management of the company. The sides discussed the possibilities of cooperation between the two countries.

"Tourism Switzerland" visits Baku



Approximately 50 guests from the tourism and hospitality sector, major Swiss companies as well as Alumni of Swiss Universities gathered on the beautiful rooftop of the Swiss residence on 3 July 2017 in the old city to the informal dinner reception hosted by Ambassador Philipp Stalder. The outgoing Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Switzerland, H.E. Akram Zeynalli and his wife, also attended the event.

The host warmly welcomed all attendants followed by an enthusiastic speech by Federico Sommaruga, Director of Emerging Markets & Special Projects of Tourism Switzerland. It was the third successive visit to Baku for Tourism Switzerland and its partners to promote the whole range of the rich and diversified Swiss tourism industry including luxury hotels, shopping and health tourism in Azerbaijan. As it was noted in the speeches and discussions at the event, Azerbaijan started to develop its tourism potential, wants to diversify its economy and is interested in learning from best practices and international experiences.

Ambassador holds presentation at Tourism University

On 28 February 2017, Ambassador Stalder visited the Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University and held a presentation about higher education and tourism in Switzerland. Switzerland is home to world-famous research universities and to some of the best hospitality schools. This makes the country very attractive to foreign students, who make up to 30% of the student population.

Switzerland is also a famous tourism destination, counting over 35 Million overnight stays every year. The Ambassador named the beautiful nature, the developed infrastructure and the high quality of service as reasons for this success. The students then had a discussion about the Tourism Industry in Azerbaijan, which clearly has a lot of potential for future development.

Culture & Education

Parkour & freerun sport events for the francophonie weeks



The Embassy of Switzerland organized two sport events in April as a part of the week of francophonie. Kevin Crupi and Yoann Roig, sportsmen from the Swiss sport association "X-Trem Move" from Lausanne, demonstrated in Baku the sport called parkour & free run. This sport uses urban elements such as walls, barriers, trees or stairs as obstacles, which the athletes must traverse in the fastest and most efficient way possible using different forms of movement like running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, jumping, etc.

On 7 April, they gave a Swiss Master Class of parkour & freerun at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Culture and Sports. The Academy students learned basic techniques for jumping on and acrobatically traversing through obstacles in an athletic and elegant way. On 8 April, a perfect sunny day, Yoann and Kevin accompanied by a few members of the Gilavar Extreme Sports Club of Azerbaijan performed a spectacular parkour open air show in an amazing location, the UNESCO protected historical site of Icheri Sheher (old city). It was a great success with hundreds of spectators cheering enthusiastically for the courageous and talented athletes. The harmony between the Swiss and the Azeri sportsmen was perfection.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWaLg-EexAw&feature=youtu.be>
<http://caspiannews.com/news-detail/parkour-show-attracts-hundreds-in-baku-1491823411416/>
<http://eurasiadiary.com/en/news/sport/127055-parkour-and-freerun-open-air-show-held-in-baku>

First Swiss Alumni event in Baku



More than 50 Alumni of Swiss universities attended the Swiss Alumni Event organized on June 1st at the Ambassador's residence. The alumni enjoyed Swiss wine, traditional raclette and interesting conversations on the residence's rooftop terrace. They could also test the knowledge about Switzerland in a quiz and win prizes. A large number of universities and subjects were represented, the most popular subject being hospitality management, followed by economics, law and international relations. Due to its enormous success, the embassy plans to make the Alumni Event a regular feature and hopes to see many new faces at the

next edition.

Swiss alumni who would like to be added to our alumni list are encouraged to write a short email to the embassy under: bku.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

Gatehring of the art's scene at the Swiss Residence



The Swiss Ambassador, Philipp Stalder, hosted a reception for the winners of the Art&Culture project by the Swiss Cooperation Office. This project funded 19 different small actions and social projects in different genres, including visual and performing art, poetry, carpet weaving, pottery, etc. both in Baku and the regions of Azerbaijan.

All participants of the project highly valued the contribution of the Swiss government to support their art and culture initiatives.

Swiss Educational Institutions visit Azerbaijan

ST. GEORGE'S
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, SWITZERLAND



Switzerland can be proud of its educational system. Students at Swiss universities gain not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills that help them succeed in the working world. The success of the Swiss system can also be seen by the fact that Switzerland boasts the highest number of Nobel Prize winners per capita.

Every year thousands of international students attend Swiss schools and universities. Earlier this year, Ambassador Stalder was guest speaker at an event hosted by Sommet Education, which runs some of Switzerland's most famous hospitality management schools. Mr. Stalder talked to prospective students about the education system and hospitality schools in Switzerland.

Glion Hospitality School enjoys great success among students from Azerbaijan, and many of its graduates now work in Azerbaijan in the rapidly developing tourism sectors.

On June 3rd, representatives of another Swiss school visited Baku to meet with future students. St. Georges International Boarding School is a private school located at the shores of the beautiful lake Geneva, which offers summer camp programs, too. Young people between three and 19 years old from many different countries are able to enjoy a high standard education while discovering Switzerland and its beauties. The Deputy Head of Mission, Mrs. Liliana Pescini, was the guest speaker. She highlighted the benefits of studying in Switzerland, such as high quality of education, safe environment, multiculturalism, intact nature, etc. She highlighted the common multilingualism and high family values that Azerbaijan and Switzerland share.



Odlar Yurdu University signs cooperation agreement with Montreux Business School

Odlar Yurdu University and Montreux Business School signed a cooperation agreement on June 6th. This will allow Azerbaijani students to profit from online courses offered by Montreux Business School and to gain a double degree. Negotiation has been ongoing for a while and the first double degree recipients graduated this year. Representatives of the Embassy attended the signing ceremony and took a tour of the universities premises.



Odlar Yurdu University: <http://www.oyu.edu.az/>
Montreux Business School: <http://mbu.university/>

Swiss top 3 higher education institutions

A recent report from the "U.S. News & World Report's Best Global Universities" that analyzed 1,000 higher education institutions from 65 countries according to 12 defined indicators – regional versus global research reputation, numbers publications, etc. – ranked the University of Zurich at the 70th place. The University of Zurich hence comes at the third place of the best Swiss higher education institutions after ETH Zurich ranked 35th and EPFL ranked 40th, as well as the number 1 best comprehensive university in Switzerland before University of Geneva ranked 91st.



The scientific achievements of the University of Zurich in the disciplines of "Immunology", "Biology and Biochemistry" as well as "Neuroscience and Behavior" allowed ranking the University of Zurich world's 26th, 32nd and 31st best university in those respective disciplines.

Consular & Visa Affairs

Amendment to the Swiss Citizenship Act in 2018



The Swiss Citizenship Act will be amended as of 1 January 2018. The amendment also concerns Swiss living abroad. The main changes are:

- 1) A child of Swiss decent who was born abroad and whose birth has not been announced to Swiss authorities will lapse its right for automatic Swiss citizenship at the age of 25.

2) Citizenship applicants who are above the age of 12 have to provide evidence of close ties with Switzerland. This new rule also applies to foreign spouses applying for Swiss citizenship after 6 years of marriage.

Hence, as of 1 January 2018, minimal requirements for their naturalization are:

- At least three visits to Switzerland (each visit must be for a minimum stay of five days) within the last six years before the application date;
- Good command of a Swiss national language;
- Knowledge of Switzerland's history, geography, politics and social affairs;
- Contacts within the Swiss community abroad and in Switzerland (recommendation letters will be required).

For more information you may contact the Swiss Embassy in Baku.

Varia

Eindrücke unserer Hochschulpraktikantin



Auf Wiedersehen Baku! Zehn Monate lang hatte ich die Möglichkeit, bei einem Praktikum auf der Botschaft in Baku den Arbeitsalltag einer Schweizer Vertretung hautnah mitzuerleben. Ich habe gesehen wie herausfordernd und gleichzeitig interessant und abwechslungsreich das Leben eines Schweizer Diplomaten sein kann. Ein Diplomat muss nicht nur gut mit Menschen umgehen können und über feine Analysefähigkeiten verfügen, sondern auch immer wieder gekonnt neue und unerwartete Situationen meistern. Ich hatte oft die Möglichkeit von meinen Kollegen zu lernen und mir Fähigkeiten anzueignen, die mir auch im späteren Berufsleben nützlich sein werden. Dabei habe ich es immer genossen, selbst bei Projekten, Berichten und Veranstaltungen mitzuarbeiten und neue Kontakte zu interessanten Menschen zu knüpfen.

Ich habe Aserbaidschan als ein unglaublich spannendes Land kennengelernt, das aufgrund seiner Geschichte und geographischen Lage unzählige Einflüsse in sich vereint. Nicht nur die Arbeit auf der Botschaft bleibt mir noch lange in Erinnerung, sondern auch die zahlreichen Ausflüge in die Regionen, die Abende mit Freunden bei lokalem Wein und die Gastfreundschaft der Bewohner von Baku. Es ist nicht einfach, dieses wunderschöne Land zu verlassen. Ich weiss aber, dass ich hier Freunde habe, bei denen ich jederzeit wieder willkommen bin.

Ich möchte mich an dieser Stelle ganz herzlich bei allen Botschaftsmitarbeitern für die Unterstützung bedanken, welche sie mir ab dem ersten Tag in Baku geleistet haben. Ohne sie wäre das Praktikum für mich niemals so lehrreich geworden.

Impression of our academic intern

Good-bye Baku! Over the course of my ten-month internship at the embassy, I got to experience firsthand the daily work of a Swiss representation abroad. I saw how difficult, but also how interesting and diverse diplomatic work can be. A diplomat does not only need to possess excellent people skills and analytical capabilities, he also needs to be able to deal with new and unexpected situations whenever they arise. During my internship I had many opportunities to learn from my colleagues and to acquire new skills that will be useful to me in the future. I really enjoyed working on projects, reports and embassy events and getting to know new and interesting people from all over the world.

I got to know Azerbaijan as a fascinating country, which unites many different influences in its history and culture. I will miss not only the work at the embassy, but also the many trips to the regions, the evenings spend with friends drinking local wine and the hospitality of the Azerbaijani people. It's not easy to leave this beautiful country, but I now know that I have friends here, who are always ready to welcome me back.

Before I leave, I would like to say thank you to the embassy team that supported me from the very first day of

my stay in Baku. Without them my internship would have never been so rewarding.

New Swiss Bank Notes

Since 2016, the ninth series of Swiss banknotes are being rolled out by the Swiss National Bank. The new 50-franc banknote was issued on 12 April 2016 and the 20-franc banknote followed on 17 May 2017. For the first time, the banknotes do not depict well-known personalities, but typical characteristics of Switzerland, such as Time, Light, Wind, Water, Matter and Language, which is then illustrated graphically using a key motif. Each characteristic is communicated via an action, a Swiss location and various graphic elements. Designer of the new series is the Swiss graphic artist Manuela Pfrunder.



Swiss Postal Services using Drones



The Swiss Postal Service has – in an innovative move – introduced drones for the transport of lab samples between hospitals in Lugano, Ticino. As a country steeped in a tradition of precision mechanics, it is maybe not surprising that Switzerland has become a hotbed for new developments in robotics and drone technology.

The Swiss national mail service partnered with California-based drone company Matternet to supply the drones and flight system and has been flying them since the middle of March. In the past two weeks, the drones have completed around 70 successful autonomous flights. Matternet's quadcopters are small, measuring only 31 inches in diameter. They can carry a payload weighing up to about four pounds and travel at a speed of about 22 miles per hour. By 2018, the plan is to make drones a regular way of ferrying supplies between the two hospitals.

This program puts Switzerland ahead of the U.S. in the race of drone delivery, where flying a drone beyond the line of sight of an operator requires getting a special waiver from the the Federal Aviation Authority.

Switzerland's smart cities, a valuable export

Energy, mobility, architecture and business: thanks to technological innovations, the city of the future will be less polluted and more pleasant. In Switzerland, as in other parts of the world, the urban ecosystem is reinventing itself to improve the quality of life in the cities.



Switzerland is pursuing an innovative policy in this field. In 2012, the Swiss Federal Office of Energy launched a pilot project called Smart City Switzerland, which has brought together Swiss universities of applied sciences, universities, public administrations and companies to rethink our urban environment. Over 60 projects are currently under way under the umbrella of Smart City Switzerland. Minergie-certified buildings have so far proven less energy efficient than originally expected. The reason for this is simple: in actual practice, Minergie buildings are not used as their designers intended. The Smart Living Lab in Fribourg is therefore designing a building that adapts to the behaviour of its occupants rather than the other way round. Researchers also aim to achieve a better integration of renewable energy resources in buildings. This is already a reality at the convention centre of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, whose west façade is composed of solar panels that shield the building from direct sunlight and produce electricity at the same time.

For more information visit: <http://www.houseofswitzerland.org/swisstories/science-education/switzerland-s-smart-cities-valuable-export>

Media

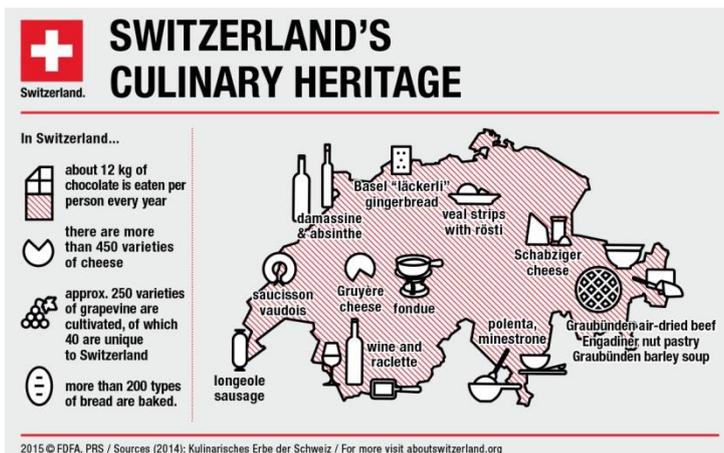
Information related to the Embassy:

<http://istipress.com/siyaset/01-03-2017/isvecre-sefiri-lenkeranda>
http://apa.az/xarici_siyaset/isvecre-sefiri-lenkerana-sefer-edib.html
<http://azertag.az/en/xeber/1027506>
<http://azertag.az/xeber/1027462>
https://www.lsu.edu.az/yenilik_isvechre.html
<http://cesd.az/new/?p=10945>
<http://caspiannews.com/news-detail/parkour-show-attracts-hundreds-in-baku-1491823411416/>
<http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2741850.html>
<http://az.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2740634.html>
<http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2741846.html>
<http://eurasiadiary.com/en/news/sport/127055-parkour-and-freerun-open-air-show-held-in-baku>
<http://eurasiadiary.com/ru/news/sport/127067->
<http://eurasiadiary.com/az/news/sport/126893-isvecreli-ve-azerbaycanli-idmancilarin-istiraki-ile-bakida-parkur-sousu-kecirilib>
http://azertag.az/xeber/Qiz_Qalasinin_qarsisinda_parkur_sousu_kecirilib-1049469
<http://news.milli.az/society/527384.html>
<http://news.day.az/azerinews/885095.html>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWaLg-EexAw&feature=youtu.be>

News related to Switzerland in Azerbaijani media:

http://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_met_with_Swiss_President_Doris_Leuthard-1027456
<http://eurasiadiary.com/en/news/interview/127868-journalists-from-azerbaijan-and-switzerland-could-work-on-common-subjects>
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Facts & Figures



Switzerland is famous for its cheese and chocolate.

They do not only produce but also eat cheese and chocolate. About 12 kg of chocolate is eaten per person annually.

There are more than 450 varieties of cheese in Switzerland.

40 out of 250 types of grapevine are unique to Switzerland.

There are also more than 200 types of bread in Switzerland.

Events calendar

- ❖ **Swiss Government Scholarship.** From the **1st of August** will be available **on the website** of the Embassy: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/azerbaijan/en/home/services/scholarships.html>
- ❖ **5th Arena Polo World Cup, 6-10 September, Baku, Azerbaijan.** <http://www.worldpolo.com/>
- ❖ **A Swiss jazz band will perform at the Baku Jazz Festival 2017.** The festival will be held on **20-28 October in Baku.** Matthias Spillmann group from Switzerland will perform on 26 October. The Swiss band will be supported by Pro Helvetia and the Swiss Embassy.
- ❖ **Doku Baku Festival, 12-19 October 2017.** Within the frame of the "International Documentary Film Festival" under the main theme "Testing reality" a special themed documentary section organized from EU with participation of Switzerland, Norway and some Latin American countries dedicated to "*Tolerance & diversity*" will take place.
- ❖ **European Film Festival, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2-12 November 2017.** Swiss Embassy will participate with a Swiss movie.

Swiss links



Information about Swiss Administration: www.ch.ch



Discover Switzerland: www.swissworld.org



Switzerland Tourism: www.MySwitzerland.com



Auslandschweizer-Organisation
Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
Organizzazione degli Svizzeri all'estero
Organisaziun dals Svizzers a l'ester

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad: www.aso.ch

Please regularly check our webpage for news and events:
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/baku>

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