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Dear Fellow Citizens,
Dear Friends of Switzerland,

I would like to start this first SwissNews edition of the Embassy with the ascertainment that Switzerland and the Republic of Azerbaijan enjoy very good, broad and successful bilateral relations, which are continuously intensifying to the benefit of both our countries.

Among the many positive developments since my arrival to beautiful Baku in autumn 2015, I am delighted to recount and share with our readers some of the most significant events, visits, and projects. The past months featured quite a rich variety of high-level meetings like the visit of President Ilham Aliyev to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, bilateral meetings and dialogues in the political, economic and cultural fields. After a Swiss delegation led by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) came to Baku for the Joint Economic & Trade Commission, the Vice-Speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament, Mrs. Bahar Muradova, paid an official visit to Berne a few weeks later.

We are confident that the remainder of the year 2016 will bring more political encounters and results, not to forget also the celebration of the Swiss National Day in August and some cultural events being prepared for autumn. For this purpose, we cordially invite you to regularly check the Embassy's website for news and events. In this newsletter, you find most of the articles in English while some of them are published in one of Switzerland's three official languages (German, French or Italian).

As regards the team of the Embassy, there will be a change of personnel this summer and we would like to thank our Vice-Consul, Mrs. Beatrice Spahr, at the end of her regular assignment for her great contribution to our daily work.

Together with the entire staff of the Embassy to which also belongs the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) Baku, I wish you an excellent summer.

Philipp Stalder

Ambassador of Switzerland

Politics

Official visit of the Deputy Speaker of Azerbaijani Parliament

After her last talks with Swiss officials in March 2015 in Berne, Deputy Speaker of Azerbaijani Parliament, Mrs. Bahar Muradova, paid another official visit to Switzerland this year and met with the President of the Council of States (Ständerat), Mr. Raphael Comte, and other members of Swiss Parliament including members of the Swiss Azerbaijani parliamentary friendship group. On the Azerbaijani side, the friendship group, which comprises more than twenty members, was headed by Mrs. Muradova. On the Swiss side, the presidency of the friendship group was handed over from State Councilor Christine Egerszegi to State Councilor Filippo Lombardi last year.



Mrs. Bahar Muradova with President of the Council of States, Mr. Raphael Comte

During her recent visit in Berne, Mrs. Muradova also met with Secretary of State, Mr. Yves Rossier. The Swiss Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs praised the good cooperation between our two countries and the developing inter-parliamentary relations. He underlined Switzerland's position regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which should be settled timely and in a peaceful way.

<http://bern.mfa.gov.az/de/content/29>

<http://www.blick.ch/news/politik/berg-karabach-konflikt-spitzt-sich-zu-es-kann-wieder-zu-krieg-kommen-id5044258.html>

Head of Swiss Border Guard visits Baku

The Head of the Swiss Border Guard (Grenzwachtkorps GWK), Brigade General Jürg Noth, and his Deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Domenica Oswald, visited Baku on 14-15 June 2016. The Swiss delegation was received by the Azerbaijani Border Guard Service and discussed possibilities of bilateral cooperation. Border security, activity of border check points, joint trainings as well as military-technical cooperation were the main topics of discussions. Besides a meeting at the Embassy, Brigade General Jürg Noth also visited the Academy of Border Service and the Border Guard Olympic Center.



Brigade General Jürg Noth at the Alley of Martyrs in Baku

<http://www.dsx.gov.az/xeber/412>

<http://voicepress.haz/siyaset/2162-svechre-serhed-muhafize-korpusunun-reisi-azerbaycana-gelib.html>

Swiss Embassy visits Nakhchivan



Chairman Vasif Talibov with Ambassador Philipp Stalder and Simone Häberli

Swiss Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Mr. Philipp Stalder, paid an official visit to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (NAR) on 9-11 May 2016, jointly with Mrs. Simone Häberli, the Deputy Regional Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office for the South Caucasus. NAR is a landlocked exclave of Azerbaijan. The region covers 5,500 km² with a population of 410,000, bordering Iran, Armenia and Turkey.

The Swiss officials were warmly received by the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of NAR, Mr. Vasif Talibov, who is the head of the autonomous republic. The Swiss delegation also met the head of the Nakhchivan department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Asgar Ismayilov, the Minister of Economy, Famil Seyidov, and the Head of the Customs Committee, Mr. Asaf Mammadov. During the meetings, Nakhchivani officials elaborated on the economic, social and security situation. They acknowledged the sustainable benefit of the long-standing Swiss-funded water provision project in NAR from 2002-2011, which gave access to drinking

and irrigation water to around 40'000 people.

The Swiss delegation visited the Ordubad district to see the current status of rehabilitated water systems. The visitors could convince themselves that the water systems are well maintained and additional ones were rehabilitated by the authorities of NAR.

http://azertag.az/xeber/Isvechrenin_Azerbaycandaki_sefirinin_Naxchivan_Muxtar_Respublikasi_ile_tanisligi-950839
http://azertag.az/xeber/Isvechrenin_Azerbaycandaki_sefiri_Naxchivanin_genis_ve_zengin_turizm_potensial_i_var-951084

Global Environment Facility (GEF) Constituency meeting held in Berne



On May 11-12, the 16th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Constituency Meeting was held in Berne. Azerbaijan was represented alongside with Central Asian countries.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in 1992 and unites 183 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives. Today, the GEF is the largest public funder of projects to improve the global environment. Since then, the GEF has provided \$14.5 billion in grants and mobilized \$75.4 billion in additional financing for almost 4,000 projects worldwide.

Within the GEF, Azerbaijan is a member of the voting constituency chaired by Switzerland. Moreover, Switzerland supports several GEF-initiated projects in the region, which are implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

<https://www.thegef.org/gef/home>

Swiss Defence Attaché visits Baku



Swiss Defence Attaché
Hans Eberhart

From 11 to 15 April 2016 Colonel (GS) Hans Eberhart arrived from Ankara to Baku for business. Being accredited to and resident in Turkey since July 2015, the Defense Attaché usually makes two or three routine visits to each of the side-accreditations - Azerbaijan and Georgia - in order to address the relevant bilateral military development and for networking purposes. Colonel Eberhart met, among others, Major General Huseyn Mahmudov, Head of International Military Co-operation Department (MoD) and Colonel Ilqar Agayev, Chief of Military Attaché Officers Branch, with whom he discussed the attendance of Azeri officers in Swiss military and academic courses. They addressed also the forthcoming Azerbaijan International Defence Exhibition being held from 27 to the 30 September 2016 at the Baku Expo Center in Baku. Colonel Eberhart also met with Gazanfar R. Ahmadov, Director of The Republic of Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), addressing possible assistance by the Swiss MoD. In order to foster the business contacts between the Swiss Defence Attaché and the military community in Baku, Ambassador Philipp Stalder hosted a well-attended reception for 30 military colleagues and other representatives at the Swiss Residence.

Economy, Trade & Tourism

Meeting of the Joint Economic & Trade Commission

The 7th session of the Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Switzerland successfully took place in Baku on 10 March 2016. The delegations were headed by Minister of Economy, Mr. Shahin Mustafayev, and the Delegate of the Federal Council for Trade Agreements, Ambassador Livia Leu. Both countries discussed the possibilities of expanding bilateral economic and trade cooperation and future investment opportunities, particularly in the field of transportation, agriculture, pharma and tourism. Minister Mustafayev invited Swiss companies to actively invest in Azerbaijan's production industry.

Within the frame of their two-day stay in Baku, the delegation from Berne also met with the CEOs of the Swiss companies in Azerbaijan. Besides a visit to the factory of Swiss cement company Holcim in Qaradağ (suburb of Baku), they also visited ASAN Service Center No. 3, which provided Swiss guests with a good insight on how this state agency delivers public service and social innovations to the benefit of individuals and entrepreneurs.

A few days after the meeting of the Joint Economic & Trade Commission, the Swiss company SIKA publicly announced plans to construct new production facilities at Sumgayit Chemical Industrial Park. Being established in 1910, SIKA is engaged in the production of raw materials for construction mixtures and finished products and the new investment from a Swiss company will contribute to the development of Azerbaijan's non-oil sector.



Minister of Economy Shahin Mustafayev and Ambassador Livia Leu signing the protocol after the meeting.

<http://en.trend.az/business/economy/2508570.html>

For the State Service Center ASAN, see the link <http://www.asan.gov.az/en>.

Swiss trade promotion agency S-GE seeks business opportunities in Azerbaijan

Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) is the export and import promotion agency based in Zurich and mandated by the Swiss government to provide support to Swiss SMEs business activities around the world.



S-GE Senior Advisor for the Caspian region, Mr. Michael Kühn, visited Baku on 25-26 April. The Swiss Embassy organized various meetings – amongst others with AMCHAM, the German Chamber of Commerce and local market research companies – in order to provide S-GE a better understanding and overview of the current business climate and the opportunities for Swiss companies doing business and investments in and with Azerbaijan.

Before continuing his business trip to Turkmenistan, Mr. Kühn was also given the opportunity to present S-GE's activities to the CEOs of Swiss companies in Azerbaijan in the framework of a Swiss Business Lunch organized at the Swiss residence in Icheri Sheher.

<http://www.s-ge.com/en>

Baku ospita Turismo Svizzera (Swiss Tourism)



ST-Director Federico Sommaruga with the Swiss Ambassador

In Aprile Baku ha ospitato Turismo Svizzera. Federico Sommaruga, Direttore dei mercati emergenti e dei progetti speciali, ha presentato con molto entusiasmo interessanti opportunità turistiche in Svizzera. Con lui una delegazione di 18 persone rappresentanti il settore del turismo (alberghi di lusso, servizio di limousine), della salute e dell'educazione elvetica. Insieme hanno reso visita ad Almaty, Astana e Baku. La delegazione Svizzera ha tra l'altro partecipato ad un ricevimento presso la residenza dell'ambasciatore di Svizzera, dove diverse personalità importanti azerbaigiane, incl. il Vice-Ministro della Cultura e del Turismo, Dr. Nazim Samadov, erano state invitate. La visita di Turismo Svizzera è stata molto apprezzata e coronata di successo.

La Svizzera con i suoi magnifici paesaggi, monumenti architettonici e storici, con le sue quattro lingue e rispettive culture culinarie, con le sue stazioni sciistiche ed i suoi centri di benessere & spa ha il potenziale di attirare il turismo caucasico. Sommaruga ha presentato un tour specialmente progettato per presentare le diverse regioni elvetiche lungo un tragitto di 1'000 Km.

Secondo Turismo Svizzera nel 2015 ben diecimila turisti provenienti dall'Azerbaijan hanno visitato la Svizzera e c'è il potenziale per aumentare ulteriormente quest'affluenza. In occasione del suo incontro Ministro della Cultura e del Turismo ha fatto notare che la reintroduzione di un volo diretto verso Zurigo o Ginevra agevolerebbe tale sviluppo. Un numero crescente di cittadini azerbaigiani visita la Svizzera anche per approfittare delle ottime prestazioni mediche e delle cure termali, così come della formazione scolastica (liceo e università). Le regioni attualmente più visitate dai turisti azerbaigiani e sono Zurigo, Ginevra, St. Moritz, Zermatt e Bad Ragaz, ecc.

<http://www.myswitzerland.com/en-ch/home.html>

Embassy of Switzerland in Baku, <http://www.eda.admin.ch/baku>; bku.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

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Switzerland-Azerbaijan Business Forum

On 26 May 2016, Joint Chamber of Commerce Switzerland-CIS (JCC) organized a Roundtable “Azerbaijan-Switzerland Business Forum: Trade & Investment Opportunities in a Diversifying Economy” in Winterthur. About 40 companies from Switzerland and Azerbaijan participated in the forum, seeking business opportunities in Azerbaijan. Ambassador of Switzerland to Azerbaijan, Mr. Philipp Stalder, made a presentation on current economic situation and business environment in Azerbaijan, as well as on bilateral relations between the two countries.



Deputy Minister of Economy Niyazi Sayadov with Azerbaijani Ambassador Zeynalli, Swiss Ambassador Philipp Stalder and board members of JCC

Deputy Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan, Mr. Niyazi Safarov, spoke about the Swiss companies’ role in diversification of Azerbaijan’s economy and informed that Swiss companies have invested \$550 million in the country from 2006 until 2016. He called on Swiss companies to actively invest in Azerbaijan and emphasized that the government decided on simplification of procedures for investors and importers. Finally, the event, which was successfully organized by JCC Director, Mrs. Dorit Sallis, has been concluded with testimonials from Holcim Azerbaijan, General Director Rossen Papazov, and Trüb Trading International AG and the company’s CEO, Mr. Chris Franzen.

<http://www.jointchambers.ch/>
<http://www.azadinform.az/news/a-114264.html>

Gotthard - opening of the longest railway tunnel in the world

Azerbaijan works hard to establish the country as a logistic hub for transporting cargo from Asia to Europe and vice versa (Iron Silk Way). At the same time, Switzerland was proud to officially open the world’s longest railway tunnel – the Gotthard Base Tunnel – on 1 June 2016. With a total length of 57.1km, the tunnel is the cornerstone of the European Rhine-Alpine Corridor for freight transport and a part of Switzerland’s “New Rail Link through the Alps” (NRLA, Neue Eisenbahn-Alpentransversale).



This once-in-a-century construction project represents a substantial contribution to the benefits of the European transport infrastructure and symbolises Swiss values, such as innovation, precision and reliability. The opening of this monumental work received a wide coverage by the international media. Regarding the technical challenges that the project had to overcome, the reactions from abroad were characterized by admiration and appreciation.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36416506>
<http://time.com/4353311/gotthard-base-tunnel-swiss-alps/>

Gathering of World Tourism Forum Lucerne in Baku

The World Tourism Forum Lucerne (WTFL) held its annual think tank event with global experts this March for the first time in Baku. WTFL is a Swiss non-profit foundation aiming at fostering the global cooperation in travel, tourism and hospitality industry by drawing attention to key issues and bringing together political leadership, private sector, financial experts as well as emerging key role players. In April 2015, Azerbaijan was invited as guest of honor to the WTFL conference in Lucerne and was represented at this event by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr. Nazim Samadov.



During the two-day discussions on March 5-6, 2016, the WTFL experts from around the globe stressed the need to step up collaboration and establish coordinated effort to address the unprecedented challenges faced by the sector. Prior to the meetings, the participants including WTFL General Manager, Prof Martin Barth, and his team from Lucerne were invited to the Swiss Residence where they were warmly greeted by Ambassador Philipp Stalder.

<http://wtflucerne.org/>
<http://www.primcom.com/en/newsroom/2016/03/11/30-worldwide-experts-shape-future-tourism/>

Swiss Development Cooperation

Switzerland's Development Cooperation in Azerbaijan

The Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) in Baku is a branch of the Tbilisi-based regional Swiss Cooperation Office in the South Caucasus. It was established in 1998 with the mandate to transform the humanitarian assistance into technical cooperation. The legal base for the Swiss cooperation partnership with Azerbaijan is the bilateral Agreement on Technical, Financial and Humanitarian Cooperation signed in 2006.

Until now, Switzerland has implemented more than 100 projects for the last 17 years in the country. The total volume of the projects funded by Swiss tax payers' money is about USD 90 million. At the beginning of our cooperation, Switzerland mainly focused its activities on the support of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and included also smaller grants for various types of projects varying from small economic initiatives to education and culture. Since 2008, Switzerland's support is provided in a more systematic way, focusing mainly on macroeconomic support, private sector support and income generation as well as infrastructure.

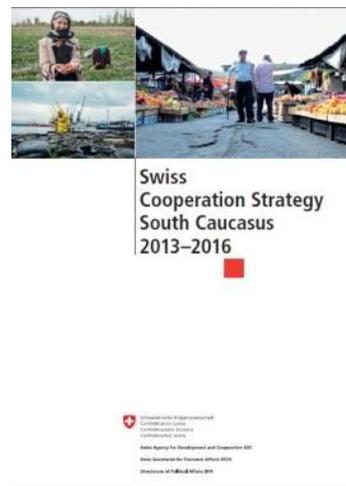
Switzerland's development cooperation office in Baku, which is an integral part of the Embassy, consists of five persons: The head of office, Mrs. Simone Haerberli, two national programme officers and two administrative staff. Currently, the new cooperation strategy for the South Caucasus (2017-2020) is being elaborated, focusing on supporting economic development and more efficient institutions in the region. It is part of and fully aligned with Switzerland's overall message on International Cooperation 2017-2020 worth CHF 11,1 billion, which is currently being discussed in the Swiss Parliament.

General information about SCO and in particular regarding the water system rehabilitation project successfully implemented in Nakhchivan is available under the following links:

<https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/countries/azerbaijan/en/home/switzerland-and/bilateral-relations.html>
<https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/countries/azerbaijan/en/home/news/news.html/content/countries/azerbaijan/en/meta/news/2016/june/ancient-water-supply-system-continues-to-serve-the-people-of/>

Here is a link to the message of the Federal Council to Parliament:

https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/deza/strategie/rechtsgrundlagen-gesetzeverordnungenundbotschaften/botschaft_zur_internationalenzusammenarbeitderschweiz.html



Culture, Education & Sports

La semaine de la francophonie



À l'occasion de la *semaine internationale de la langue française et de la francophonie*, l'Ambassade de Suisse à Bakou a présenté une série d'événements, appelés «*10 mots au goût*», dédiés à la tradition culinaire et culturelle de la Romandie. Un accent spécial a été mis sur une cuisine savoureuse et saine, qui utilise surtout des ingrédients locaux (concept km zéro). Pour cela l'ambassade a invité tout spécialement de Suisse le Chef jurassien Pascal Aubert, qui nous a rejoints de Le Noirmont/JU.

La semaine suisse a commencé le 13 avril 2016 par l'émission télévisée culinaire «Nus Olsun», transmise en directe sur Khazar TV. Chef Aubert et l'ambassadeur de suisse étaient les invités d'honneur. Chef Aubert a préparé et commenté des recettes helvétiques succulentes, tandis que l'ambassadeur de Suisse était interviewé sur la Suisse et ses traditions. Le jour suivant a eu lieu la "Swiss Master Class" auprès de l'hôtel Boulevard (White city, Baku). Un superbe trio de chefs - Pascal Aubert (CH), Thibault Béra (FR) et Orkhan Mukhtarov (AZ) - ont donné une démonstration pratique de cuisine avec spécialités de trois Pays à un public d'étudiants des différentes

écoles (membres de l'Association culinaire National de l'Azerbaïdjan). Pour terminer un dîner Suisse ouvert au grand public a été organisé le 15 avril 2016 auprès de l'hôtel Boulevard. Le Chef Suisse Pascal Aubert a créé trois menus présentant des plats de différentes régions suisses. Le point culminant a été la mousse au chocolat Toblerone, servie dans une petite tasse faite en chocolat. Le publique en était extasié et nous aussi!

Toutes les recettes présentées pendant cette semaine sont disponibles sur le site Internet de l'Ambassade de Suisse:
www.eda.admin.ch/baku/news/agenda.
Association culinaire National de l'Azerbaïdjan: www.kulina.az

Presentation on Swiss Higher Education

A *Swiss Day* was organized on 4 May 2016 by the Embassy at the prestigious ADA University in Baku. Following the introduction by Vice-Rector, Mr. Fariz Ismayilzade, the Swiss Ambassador welcomed the students from different universities and made some introductory remarks regarding the bilateral relations between Switzerland and Azerbaijan.



Students of ADA after the presentation

The main emphasis of the *Swiss Day*, however, was to inform the audience about higher education opportunities in Switzerland. The lively presentation of the Embassy's academic intern, Mr. Enur Imeri, was followed by the audience with much interest which was not only fueled by the topic itself but by a quiz about facts and figures of Switzerland. The students had the chance to win some presents provided by the Embassy and the Swiss company Nestlé. Following the presentation, the students could also meet and discuss with the Embassy team and taste some delicious Swiss cheese 'Tête de Moine'.

For further information related to Higher Education in Switzerland:
<http://www.studyingswitzerland.ch/>
<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en>
<http://www.sbf.admin.ch>

Swiss water polo team in Baku

One of the pleasant surprises for living as expats in Baku is that from time to time we get the chance to cheer sport teams from Switzerland. In 2014, the Swiss tennis player, Stefanie Vögele, played in the Baku WTA Half Final while the team of the Young Boys Football Club played a European League game against Qarabağ in August 2015. In February 2016, the Women's volleyball team Volero Zürich played a Champions League game against Locomotive Baku. Each of these Swiss teams had the support of a small Swiss contingent of fans who could be seen waving our distinctive square flag in support. Even though Switzerland is approximately 3,400 kilometers from Baku by air, you feel a little bit closer to home when you can cheer with "Hopp Schwiiz."

A small Swiss fan group also gathered for the matches of the Swiss national U19 water polo team which competed in the European Championship Qualification-Tournament in Baku in May. Thanks to our visibility we were approached before the game by the group leader of the Swiss team and parents. This gave us the opportunity to learn more about the rules of the game. The Swiss Team was impressed by the world-class swimming center in Baku which was built last year for the European Games. Back home they only dream of such facilities.



Swiss colony in Baku supporting the Swiss team

The Swiss team was not too optimistic about winning against Azerbaijan as they knew that the host team had top players. Even though they played well and were ahead after the second quarter, the match turned in the third quarter and ended with the victory of the Azerbaijani team. We can only imagine how difficult it is to play in the water, catching a ball, jumping and throwing it without touching ground. Plus, we see only a part of the action because there is a lot of contact under the water.

<http://az.trend.az/azerbaijan/society/2530668.html>
Weblink to the Swiss water polo federation: <http://www.swisswaterpolo.com/>

Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Scholars and Artists

Did you know that through the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS), the Swiss Confederation awards various post-graduate scholarships to foreign scholars of all disciplines and to some foreign artists? Regularly, candidates from Azerbaijan get awarded with scholarships as it was the case for the academic year 2015/2016 when one Azerbaijani student in the field of urbanism, governance and environment has been granted a scholarship at the university of Geneva. This scholarship has been extended for an additional year and for the coming academic year a further grantee from Azerbaijan has been chosen for a PhD program in Biomedical Ethics at the university of Zurich.

Eligibility criteria and additional country-specific information for the academic year 2017-2018 (starting date: September 2017) will be published in August 2016 on the website of the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS): www.sbf.admin.ch/scholarships_ENG.

Please, also consult the webpage of the Embassy where starting from August you will find more information regarding Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships. www.eda.admin.ch/baku.

International Day at the Baku International School (BIS)

Fern ab der Heimat legt man plötzlich wieder mehr Wert auf nationale Sitten und Gebräuche. So kam es dann, dass ich in der amerikanischen Schule in Baku unsere Heimat, die Schweiz am International Day repräsentieren konnte. Mit Stolz haben wir Käse, Schokolade, selbstgebackenen "Rüebli-Kuchen" und Birchermüesli zum Verzehr angeboten, die Nachfrage war entsprechend gross und bald war alles aufgegessen. Meine Tochter und ich haben in alten Nationaltrachten heftig serviert und über die Schweiz philosophiert. Das Interesse war gross und zeigt einmal mehr, dass der Nymbus Schweiz im Ausland immer noch auf reges Interesse und Bewunderung stösst. Deshalb würde es uns Schweizern oft gut stehen, uns im internationalen Kontext etwas selbstbewusster zu geben, traditionelle Schweizer



Swiss booth at the BIS

Bescheidenheit hin oder her. Mein Fazit dieses umtriebigen Tages, es hat Spass gemacht unsere schöne Heimat im fernen Ausland zu vertreten. Ein grosses Dankeschön der Schweizerischen Botschaft, welche uns mit Werbematerial und vaterländischer Bekleidung tatkräftig unterstützt hat.

Natalia Wicki

Consular & Visa Affairs

Personal changes at the Embassy



Mid-August, the Consular section of the Embassy of Switzerland will register some personal changes, as our Vice-Consul, Mrs. Beatrice Spahr, together with her partner, Mr. Matt Kollasch, is going to leave us for her next assignment. We are very sorry to lose such a competent and lovely colleague. We wish her all the best in her future carrier and thank her for all the excellent work during the last three years.

At the same time, we would like to introduce Mr. Alain Maniciati as the new Swiss Vice-Consul to our readers and wish him an excellent start. Mr. Maniciati is originating from the French speaking part of Switzerland (canton of Vaud) and has worked for the last few years at our Embassy in Tokyo. We are confident that he will provide you with an excellent service.

Information for Swiss citizens living abroad

Swiss Abroad Act entered into force

As of 1 November 2015, the new Swiss Abroad Act entered into force.

The most important points of the new law are related to *registration* (mandatory for Swiss citizens to register with the competent representation/Embassy), to *political rights* (only entitled to exercise your political rights in the commune where you were last domiciled in Switzerland) and to the *personal responsibility* (expectation of the government to Swiss citizens to exercise personal responsibility in preparing their stay or conducting business or travelling abroad).

For more information in German, French and Italian:

<https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20133127/index.html>

Information for visa applications



The Embassy in Baku is responsible for the issuance of entry visas for Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein to persons with residence in the Republic of Azerbaijan (visa C and D) and Turkmenistan (visas D).

The visa application and documents must be submitted personally by the applicant from Monday to Thursday, 09.00 to 12.00 by appointment. Note that the visa application shall be accepted only as

a completed file with all necessary documentation. All the documents must be provided at least 15 days prior to the planned trip. Processing time after receiving the complete application is at least 5 working days.

Visa related questions are answered by telephone from Monday to Thursday from 13:45 to 17:30 and on Friday from 09:00 to 13.00 and from 13.45 to 16:00. The phone number is: +994 12 437 38 50

It is mandatory to fix an online appointment for Schengen visas C and national visas D via the web site: swiss-visa. Interview appointments are accepted only via this web site. It is also possible to register the application (for Schengen visa C only) online via the same website: swiss-visa.

Varia

Team building event to Shamakhi



On the 31 of May, the whole team of Embassy including colleagues from the Swiss Cooperation Office chose Shamakhi region for their annual excursion and team building event. As the capital of Azerbaijan's Shirvanshah kingdom from the 8th to 15th centuries, Shamakhi takes an important place in the history of the country. The team visited several historical sites such as the mysterious spiritual place Diri Baba Mausoleum located in Maraza city near Shamakhi.

Our group also enjoyed a visit to Juma Mosque of Shamakhi, which dates back to 743-744, and took the opportunity to see the impressive Astrophysical Observatory launched in 1958 and considered still as of today as an important site for research and scientific purposes. With fastly changing weather and enjoying nice view at Sakit Gol (Silent Lake) as well as exercising some sportif and recreational activities at fashionable Shamakhi Palace Hotel we concluded this memorable outing day.

Eindrücke unseres Hochschulpraktikanten (impressions of our academic intern)

Nach fünf intensiven Monaten geht mein Hochschulpraktikum bei der Schweizerischen Botschaft in Baku per Mitte Juli zu Ende. Diese erste berufliche Erfahrung beim EDA gab mir sehr wertvolle Einblicke in zahlreiche Aspekte der Arbeit am Puls der Schweizer Aussenpolitik. Meine Kenntnisse der Funktionsweise einer Botschaft sowie mein Verständnis der Schwerpunkte der Schweizer Aussenpolitik aber auch der Politik von Aserbaidschan und Turkmenistan wurden durch die Betreuung durch ein ausgezeichnet qualifiziertes und aufgeschlossenes Team von Vorgesetzten immens gefördert. Während des Praktikums konnte ich nicht nur das politische, wirtschaftliche und soziale Geschehen des Landes verfolgen, sondern auch an diversen Kulturprojekten und Anlässen zur Promotion der Schweiz mitwirken und in die Visasektion reinschnuppern.



Die Diversität und Harmonie vieler Traditionen macht Aserbaidschan zu einem einzigartigen Land. In der Hauptstadt Baku konnte ich die Resultate des wirtschaftlichen Booms vom letzten Jahrzehnt selber sehen und fühlen, obwohl mein Praktikum während einer Phase des wirtschaftlichen Engpasses stattfand. Aserbaidschan beruft sich zu Recht auf seine multikulturelle Diversität und präsentiert sich auf internationaler Ebene von seiner westlichen und säkularen Seite, die auf eine für Aserbaidschan charakteristische Weise mit leicht orientalischem Touch angehaucht ist. Für die Betreuung und die Möglichkeit zu diesem Einblick und temporären Einstieg in die Welt der Diplomatie möchte ich mich bei meinen Vorgesetzten und dem ganzen Team herzlich bedanken.

Enur Imeri

International Motor Insurance Card “Green card”



As per 1st January 2016 the Insurance Bureau of Azerbaijan was admitted as 47th member of the Green Card System. Vehicles registered in Azerbaijan may therefore circulate with a valid green insurance card, which is valid within the whole Green Card System, incl. Switzerland and Liechtenstein. These vehicles do not require frontier insurance cover any more when entering the territories of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, provided that their green card can be considered valid according to the applicable rules.

Since this year too, the member companies of the Swiss National Bureau of Insurance (NBI) are authorized to issue green cards containing the country code AZ for Azerbaijan.

<http://www.azernews.az/business/88694.html>

<http://www.nbi-ngf.ch/en/nvb/dokumente/gruene-karte>

Enjoy summer holidays in Switzerland

Also this summer, the Organization of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) gives the opportunity to young Swiss living abroad to get to know their home country and to enjoy Switzerland. In the offers for young Swiss Abroad, the participants are sure to get an exciting experience at reasonable prices. They get to know the country, the people and make friends with other young Swiss of their own age from all over the world.

Use your holidays to learn more and discover your roots and find all youth offers under www.swisscommunity.org (youth).

Media

Information related to the Embassy:

<http://caspienergy.net/ru/ambassador/33903-2016-05-17-07-56-14> (interview with the Swiss Ambassador in Russian)
<http://caspienergy.net/en/ambassador-en/33904-2016-05-17-07-56-14> (interview with the Swiss Ambassador in English)
http://azertag.az/xeber/Turizmin_muasir_veziyyeti_ve_inkisaf_istiqametleri_muzakire_olunub-960400
<http://www.azernews.az/business/97138.html>
<http://sputnik.az/photo/20160415/404683899.html>

News related to Switzerland in Azerbaijani media:

<http://eastnews.org/news/2736>
<http://todaynews.az/dunya/7197-svechre-a-ye-uzvluk-erizesini-geri-goturur.html>
<http://www.azadinform.az/news/a-114264.html> (se
<http://az.trend.az/business/economy/2508494.html>
<https://www.zaman.az/NewsContent/ZNewsContent/4156>
<http://todaynews.az/idman/7151-ruminiya-svechre-matchinda-hech-heche.html>
<http://www.xezerxeber.com/maraqli/135715/smart-saatlarin-satisi-isvecre-saatlarini-geride-qoydu>
<http://sonxeber.info/2016/02/iqtisadiyyat-naziri-isvecr%C9%99-s%C9%99firin%C9%99-irad-bildirdi-yolverilm%C9%99zdir/>
<http://www.azadliq.info/118615.html>
<http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/business/2490088.html>
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/05/24/more-reforms-needed-to-improve-financial-capability-and-inclusion-in-azerbaijan>

Fact & Figures

Three political levels share power in Switzerland: the Confederation, the 26 cantons and over 2,300 communes.

The Swiss federal government, (the Federal Council), is made up of seven members, who are elected by parliament.

The Swiss parliament, or (Federal Assembly), has a total of 246 members, who are directly elected by the people. Switzerland has a bicameral parliament: the National Council (200 members) and the Council of States (46 members).

Switzerland. A WELL-BALANCED MECHANISM

1+26+2300=1

Power is shared by the federal government, the 26 cantons and more than 2300 communes.

SUBSIDIARITY

The cantons and communes have authority over a wide range of matters (e.g. schools, hospitals, tax and policing) and a great deal of autonomy. The federal government only takes on tasks that the cantons and communes cannot manage alone.

Federalism is what allows the different aspects of Switzerland, with its four national languages and large geographical differences, to coexist. Federalism is one of the founding principles of the Swiss Confederation in 1848.

Every canton has its own constitution, parliament, government and courts. About a fifth of communes have their own parliament, in particular cities.

2015 © FDA, PRS / Sources (2014): The Swiss Confederation – a brief guide 2014 and 2015, ch.ch, parliament.ch, The portal of the Swiss government, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs / For more visit aboutswitzerland.org

Agenda

- ❖ **Swiss participation at the World Chess Olympiad in Baku from 1 – 14 September**
- ❖ **4th ARENA POLO WORLD CUP BAKU AZERBAIJAN, 9 – 11 September 2016:** The Swiss Polo Team from St. Moritz will join the world cup in Baku.
- ❖ **“La settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo” in October:** As in previous years, the Embassy intends to participate again with a cultural event.
- ❖ **Swiss Movie festival in November:** please check the website of the Embassy (<https://www.eda.admin.ch/baku>) in October for further information

Swiss links

The logo for ch.ch, consisting of the text 'ch.ch' in white on a red square background.

Information about Swiss Administration: www.ch.ch



Switzerland.

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

This newsletter is available on the website of the Swiss Embassy: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/baku>

Please, also regularly check our webpage for news and events.

Any feedback is most welcomed. If you would like us to send this newsletter to other people or if you do not wish to receive it, please let us know by sending an E-Mail to: bku.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

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