



NEWSLETTER 2022



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FORWARD MESSAGE



Dear fellow citizens, dear partners and friends,

I am happy to welcome you to the Newsletter 2022 as the new Ambassador of Switzerland in Armenia. On the bilateral side, the year 2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Armenia. We celebrated this anniversary in spring, proud of the joint success of our bilateral cooperation. Furthermore, as the new Swiss Cooperation Programme 2022-2025 for the South Caucasus started getting traction, a number of new projects were either launched or approved (see pages 6-7).

In terms of “hard security”, 2022 has been (another) difficult year for Armenia, with the military escalation at its border with Azerbaijan in September, but also in the context of the war that started in Ukraine in February and which has far-reaching geopolitical implications for Armenia. Switzerland has reacted to this situation by contributing roughly one million CHF in order to foster resilience and economic recovery in Armenian border communities that were affected by September’s events. Swiss parliamentarians from the Swiss-Armenian friendship group visited Armenia in October 2022 to express their solidarity. We strongly hope that 2023 will turn out to be a calmer year security-wise for Armenia and its citizens.

Bilaterally, we expect our political and economic ties to grow closer in 2023, with the visit of the Advisory Committee of the Federal Council on International Development Cooperation to take place in spring. We are also excited about new cooperation projects which will be initiated this year, among them one project concerning good governance and another aimed at helping Armenia to tackle negative effects of climate change. Of course, we will continue to support activities in the cultural, as well as in the economic spheres, together with our partners from the Swiss-Armenian Chamber of Commerce. Stay in touch with the Embassy by visiting our [website](#), as well as by following us on the following social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#).

Finally, let me thank you, dear Swiss citizens in Armenia and Armenian friends of Switzerland, for your very substantial contributions: It is this people-to-people connection, of course also including the Armenian diaspora in Switzerland, that essentially enriches the relationship between our two nations.

On behalf of the entire team, let me wish you and your families all the best for your personal health and for a peaceful and prosperous New Year 2023.

Sincerely,

Lukas Rosenkranz
Ambassador of Switzerland in Armenia

30 Year Anniversary of the Swiss-Armenian Diplomatic Relations

The year 2022 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Swiss-Armenian Diplomatic Relations. The Embassy has organized a series of political, cultural and economic events throughout the year to celebrate this occasion. Read more about the dedicated events through the Newsletter.

SWITZERLAND & ARMENIA

30 YEARS TOGETHER
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DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

- 1991:** Recognition of Armenia's independence by Switzerland
- 2001:** Opening of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Yerevan
- 2011:** Opening of the Swiss Embassy in Yerevan

30 YEARS OF COOPERATION

Together, Armenia and Switzerland cooperate to improve the well-being of the population in Armenia.

Switzerland's new Cooperation Programme 2022-2025 strengthens democracy and public institutions, addresses climate change and promotes civic education and engagement as well as inclusive economic development.

© FDFA Presence Switzerland 2022 / Source: Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

To summarize the main milestones and achievements of the Swiss Mission since the establishment of the bilateral ties between the two countries, we prepared a video which you watch [here](#) or by clicking on the photos below.



OFFICIAL MEETINGS AND VISITS

Ambassador Rosenkranz Presented his Credentials to the RA President



Photo © RA President's Office

On July 21, the Ambassador of Switzerland in Armenia, H. E. Lukas Rosenkranz, presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Armenia, Vahagn Khachaturyan.

President Khachaturyan congratulated Ambassador Rosenkranz, expressing his belief that the Ambassador will further strengthen and develop the relations between the two countries.

He also noted that during the past three decades, the Swiss-Armenian relations have been distinguished by high-level political dialogue and close cooperation in many fields.

Ambassador Rosenkranz noted that it is a great honor for him to represent the Swiss Confederation in the Republic of Armenia. "There is a new, stronger dynamic in this country, after a difficult period. I very much hope that this new dynamism can also inspire our future bilateral relations," the Ambassador asserted.

Swiss Parliamentarians visit Armenia with a three-day mission

A delegation of Swiss Parliamentarians comprised of National Councilors Stefan Müller-Altermatt and Michel Matter, accompanied by Ambassador Rosenkranz, conducted a mission in Armenia, on October 14-16, in order to familiarize themselves with the current security situation.

The delegation met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Paruyr Hovhannisyanyan, the Secretary of the National Security Council Mr. Armen Grigoryan, the Speaker of the National Assembly Mr. Alen Simonyan and the Catholicos of All Armenians, HH. Karekin II. Meetings with Parliamentarians of the ruling party and the opposition were held, as well as with the Ombudswoman of Armenia, Mrs. Kristine Grigoryan, as well as the Swiss Community in Armenia.



SDC Deputy Director General visited Armenia for RA INSARAG requalification



In early September 2022, the Armenian Urban Search and Rescue Team performed its first requalification exercise according to the standards of the Armenian UN International Urban Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). Back in 2016, Armenia received an INSARAG qualification as a result of a Swiss Humanitarian Aid project. This year's 36-hour exercise was attended by Deputy Director General of the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Ambassador Rosenkranz, Minister of Emergency Situations of RA Armen Pambukhchyan, Deputy Minister Davit Hambaryan, Head of the SDC Rapid Response for Humanitarian Aid David Sochor, and members of the international community in Armenia.

Deputy Head of Mission Werner Thut met RA Minister of Labor and Social Affairs

On June 10, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy, Werner Thut, met the RA Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Narek Mkrtchyan upon the Ministry's invitation.

During the working meeting, the two parties discussed issues related to cooperation in the fields of labor migration, women economic empowerment, improvement of the Unified Social Service, development of the Social Worker Institute, creation of digital social service platforms.



Photo © RA MLSA

Mr. Thut presented details on the ongoing and planned Swiss-funded activities in Armenia. Referring to the priorities set by the SCO, he stressed Switzerland's focus on increasing inclusive economic growth as the SCO's key strategy to address poverty reduction and the needs of the most vulnerable people in Armenia, notably in rural and mountainous areas. Furthermore, as the second main strategy of the SCO to reach the target groups of the MLSA, he mentioned the important role of well-functioning municipal structures in support of those most in need.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

“Business Promotion and Innovation Day 2022”

On October 11 and 12, with the Embassy’s support, the "Business Promotion and Innovation Day 2022" was organized by the Switzerland-Armenia Chamber of Commerce and the National Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship of Armenia.

The two-day event allowed 24 rising businessmen from the Shirak region to pitch their ideas and secure funding for their early-stage businesses living in.



Interview: Ambassador Rosenkranz

In his recent interview with the Boon TV, Ambassador Rosenkranz talked about Switzerland’s mission in Armenia, as well as gave insights to his day-to-day life in the country.



To watch the full interview, click [here](#) or on the photo above.

Interview: Werner Thut on the new SIGMA project

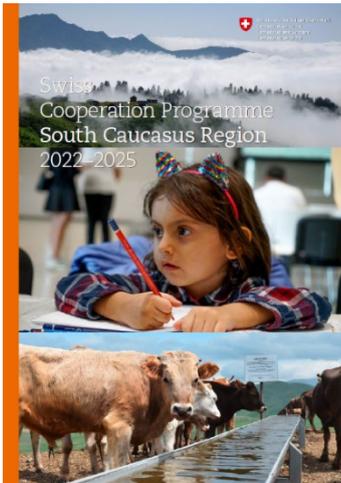
During an interview with the News Program of the First Public TV Channel of Armenia H1, Werner Thut talked about the newly approved program Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Mountainous Armenia SIGMA.



To watch the full interview, click [here](#) or on the photo above.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Swiss Cooperation Programme for the South Caucasus Region 2022-2025



In 2022, Switzerland kicked off its new Cooperation Programme for the South Caucasus to be implemented in 2022-2025. The Programme describes the objectives, which Switzerland's International Cooperation aims to achieve in the South Caucasus. In Armenia, the tentative budget of the new Programme will be over CHF 20 mio over the course of four years.

The Swiss Cooperation Programme for the South Caucasus Region 2022-2025 will focus on four key areas: 1) promoting civic engagement and cooperation in the region, 2) strengthening democracy and public institutions, 3) improving economic development and creation of decent jobs, and 4) strengthening climate resilience and sustainable resource management. Poverty reduction will be considered as a key requirement in all Swiss financed projects in the South Caucasus region. The programme gives particular attention to regional cooperation.

Click [here](#) to see Programme's the Infographic.

The Programme and its Leaflet can be found [here](#) in English and Armenian languages

The Programme's slideshow can be found on the [Embassy's Facebook page](#)

Switzerland teams up with EU for Syunik!



On November 4, the European Union in Armenia announced the #TeamEurope initiative "Together For Syunik" in support of the conflict-affected Syunik region in the South of Armenia.

The objective of the #TeamEurope initiative is to contribute to the sustainable socioeconomic and institutional development of the Syunik region, taking coordinated action in line with the development priorities of the regional and local authorities.

Switzerland is an external partner of #TeamEuropeInitiative, which is meant to be a coordination framework. With estimated expenditures of around CHF 5 mio for project activities in Syunik over the next 4 years, it is one of the most engaged Team Europe members.

"It was a natural step for the Swiss Cooperation to join the Team Europe and its Resilient Syunik Initiative. This format allows us to achieve the best possible results in a logic of joint efforts," said Ambassador Rosenkranz in his opening remarks at the launch ceremony of the initiative.



Read more on [Embassy's Facebook page](#) and the [EU Facebook page](#).

New Projects in Preparation

Throughout the year, the Swiss Cooperation Office SCO in Armenia launched a number of Feasibility Studies in preparation for new development projects. The areas of future envisaged interventions include:

- **Climate Change Adaptation**
- **Democratic Institutions and Innovative Policy-making**
- **Hospitality**

Additionally, an evaluation of the ongoing "Improvement of the Local Self-Governance System in Armenia" project is in preparation, which will set out the SCO's engagement in LSG for the upcoming 3 years.

New Projects Launched

Switzerland approves CHF 960'000 in aid for resilience and economic recovery of border communities in Armenia



The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC has approved CHF 960'000 in aid for Armenia to improve border communities' resilience towards crisis situations. Partnering with the World Food Programme (WFP) for implementation, Switzerland provides immediate humanitarian and long-term economic support to Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik with the “Resilience and Economic Recovery of Border Communities in Armenia – REBCA” project.

Read more about the project [here](#).

Switzerland joins forces with Austria and Germany: CHF 8.3 mln. for professional education in agriculture in Armenia

With the Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Agriculture in Armenia 2022-2025 - MAVETA" launched on September 27, Switzerland, together with Austria and Germany, will assist the Government of Armenia to reform the vocational education system in Armenia in agriculture. The intervention aims to improve the knowledge and skills of professionals and graduates in agriculture and related fields. Thus, the project will contribute to sustainable, climate friendly, inclusive growth, increased incomes and enhanced (self)-employment in rural Armenia.



Read more about the project [here](#).

Combining economic growth and nature protection in Armenia: Switzerland launched multi-annual project with CHF 4.5 mln.



The launch event of the “Living Landscapes for Market Development in Armenia” took place on May 6. “Together with our co-funding and implementing partners, we have achieved a truly innovative project with a lot of potential.

Since 2020, the SDC, the KfW Development Bank, the World Wide Fund WWF-Armenia and the Strategic Development Agency SDA have been working hard to develop a new approach. Simply speaking, we tried to combine nature protection with economic growth in a practically relevant manner,” said Werner Thut, in his opening remarks.

Read more about the project [here](#).

Project SIGMA to reach most remote farmers in Armenia

On May 27, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC approved an additional long-term economic development intervention with a tentative planned financial framework of CHF 12'000'000 for which an international tender was launched to identify an implementing partner. Titled “Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Mountainous Armenia” SIGMA, this new SDC project will reduce poverty in mountainous areas of Armenia in an inclusive, innovative and climate-aware manner. With a duration of 10 years, SIGMA's geographic focus will be on the poorest regions in Northern Armenia, reaching areas at an altitude of more than 1500m.



Read more [here](#).

Photo © Austrian Development Agency. All rights reserved. Licensed to the European Union under conditions. Produced within the scope of the Organic Agriculture Support Initiative project.

CULTURE AND ART

Concert Dedicated to the 30 Year Anniversary of the Swiss-Armenian Diplomatic Relations



On the occasion of the Anniversary, the Embassy organized an exclusive cultural event, a unique collaboration of Swiss and Armenian musicians. Swiss multi-instrumentalist Albin Brun played for the first time with the Armenian Tigrane Kazazian Ensemble, interpreting each other's compositions in an experimental manner.

The opening speeches delivered by the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Switzerland in Armenia Stefan Kloetzli and by the Guest of Honor, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Paruyr Hovhannisyan looked back and reflected on the ever-growing friendly relations between the two countries. "An Armenian proverb says 'Friendship is not born of words alone'. Nothing could be truer regarding the friendly and trustful relations between our two countries," said Mr. Kloetzli.



The Embassy was excited to welcome more than 200 "Friends of Switzerland" representing State, International and Civil Society organizations, as well as the Swiss community, Swiss business representatives in Armenia, and various partners of the Embassy. The event was made possible by its two main sponsor companies Polixis and Azad Pharma, as well as by contributions from company Ketro, Boghosyan Foundation and the Swiss Arts Council ProHelvetia.

Click on [here](#) to watch the full performance.

Francophonie 2022



"Is Switzerland Francophone? Yes - Switzerland is a French-speaking country. Nearly two million Swiss residents speak French – almost one fourth of the population. And we speak French since 1480, when the country further consolidated itself as a Confederation. But above all, Switzerland is multilingual, with four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh. It is an interesting experience in living cultural diversity, and it contributes to the diversity of the Francophone world," said Werner Thut at the opening of the fifth Francophone film festival in Yerevan.

Consequently, on March 23, two recent Swiss movies "A contresens" and "La Mif" were screened on March 23 in Moscow Cinema during the Soirée Suisse. The Swiss Embassy was excited to welcome more than 150 viewers, rounding up the evening with speeches and discussions. The screenings were organized in cooperation with the Embassies of France and Canada in Armenia, in the frames of the Francophone Film Festival Yerevan 2022.



Bilateral Cultural Cooperation: Premiere of David Haladjian's Mater Dolorosa



The Embassy-supported premiere of the Armenian-Swiss composer David Haladjian's work Mater Dolorosa took place on October 13, at the Komitas Chamber Music Hall. A work written for orchestra, choir, soprano and saxophone - a combination that made everyone curious!

Mr. Haladjian shared that he sees the premiere of his work also as a cultural contribution to this year's celebration of 30 years of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Switzerland.

Click on the photo to watch the full performance.

SCO Campaign: Culture Against the Crisis

In April 2022, the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) in Armenia launched its “Arts and Culture Against the Crisis” campaign, in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic and the 2020 War. In the firm belief that artists play a valuable role in helping people to process their experiences through creativity and encounters with others, the SCO AM called for creative and innovative project proposals, which would contribute to the development of contemporary arts in Armenia.

More than 60 proposals were received, out of which five projects were selected for funding. The selected projects addressed the current socio-cultural and socio-economic issues faced by the Armenian population in the midst of regional instability, as artistic contributions to a public debate on Armenia’s immediate future.

Exhibitions and presentations of the below presented projects took place throughout the year in Armenia and its regions. Click on the project titles for more information.

"Resilience Hubs Vayots Dzor"

On 26 December, 70 children from border villages of the Vayots Dzor region came together for "A Swiss Christmas Concert".



Practicing for the past 6 months in the framework of the Swiss-funded cultural project "Resilience Hubs Vayots Dzor", children aged 7 to 15 from border settlements Yegheknadzor, Malishka, Areni, Yelpin, Chiva, Khachik, Aghnjadzor, and Karaklukh got the opportunity to learn songs in French, German, Armenian and English. Preparing for the grand Christmas Concert, the children were working in small groups with Mrs. Maro Simonyan, a wonderful local musician who led the project on the ground as its musical director. The concert received a wide coverage on the local media. Watch the broadcast of the Syunik TV covering the event with this [link](#).

"Reality Brought on by War"

"When Do You Think to Return?" This question led the three documentary photographers of the 4 Plus Documentary Photography Center on their path of unveiling the inspiring stories of refugees and migrants from different countries who found shelter in Armenia over the past year; and to examine how this migration streams have affected the Armenian social landscape.

The photo and video essays by the three documentary photographers will soon be available on the website of the 4 Plus Documentary Photography Center in Armenian, English and Russian languages. Stay tuned by following the Embassy’s FB page and the organization’s website.



"Strangers in the Room"



The opening ceremony of Gohar Sargsyan’s exhibition "Strangers in the Room" took place on 19 October, at the National Library of Armenia.

"Gohar’s art deals with us as human beings. What drives her is compassion. She is not interested in countries, politics but in humanity as such. She does not distinguish between friends and foes, country fellows and enemies. Her art therefore crosses borders, contact lines, front lines. This message is obviously highly topical and needed more than ever in the South Caucasus," said Werner Thut.

Through her art, using drawing, sculpture, and animation, Gohar emphasizes the emotions of people who have experienced the difficulties of pandemics and wars.

PechaKucha Night Yerevan



The theme of PechaKucha Yerevan's recent Swiss-funded event was art. Art as a response. A response to the villager beyond the mountains, to the burning house and constrained movement. Art as a response and confrontation to the crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent wars.

About 200 participants listened to the stories of artists, creators and curators in the fields of photography, music, dance, letters, painting and innovative technologies.

"Theatrical Posters"



The opening ceremony of the "Theatrical Posters" international festival-competition and exhibition took place on 28 September 2022, at the Gabriel Sundukyan National Academic Theatre of Armenia in the framework of its 100th anniversary, co-organized by the Theatre and ACT Cultural NGO.

"The goal of the "Theatrical Posters" international festival-competition was to acquaint the Armenian art-loving public with the current international trends of theater posters. The festival's goal was to contribute to the increase of interest in posters, to become a bridge of dialogue between Armenian and foreign artists.

177 authors from 29 countries submitted applications for participation in the festival with 406 works. As a result of the preliminary selection, 95 works of 70 authors from 21 countries including Switzerland, Armenia, Poland, Iran, and more entered the competition stage.

A PLUS FOR SWITZERLAND: UN Security Council Membership



On 9 June, the UN General Assembly elected Switzerland as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two-year period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2024. During its term Switzerland will use its strengths to promote peace and security and position itself as a neutral bridge-builder, and promote its interests through direct contact with the major players on the international stage. Switzerland will be able to use its seat on the Security Council to promote its stance more strongly and thus exert influence on international developments as a credible partner.

In line with its Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23, Switzerland strives for credible engagement in the Security Council across the full range of its agenda in which means above all its day-to-day business on individual country situations.

Switzerland's thematic priorities in detail:

- Building sustainable peace
- Protecting civilians
- Addressing climate security
- Enhancing effectiveness

Read more [here](#).



SWISS NATIONAL DAY



For celebrating the 731st birthday of Switzerland, the Embassy has invited the Swiss community, the Armenian authorities, the diplomatic community, international and national development cooperation partners and others to by far our biggest gathering since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The occasion also gave us a chance to further celebrate the anniversary of 30 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Switzerland and Armenia.

During the gathering, opening remarks were delivered by the Ambassador Rosenkranz and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Paruyr Hovhannisyanyan. Both parties commended the long-standing bilateral relations and friendship between the two countries, as expressed, notably in Switzerland's development cooperation with Armenia.

A center-piece of the celebration was the Ambassador's presentation on the Swiss Cooperation Program in Armenia and the results achieved by the Swiss development projects in Armenia over the past decades.



Swiss Cheese and Wine tasting at Haybuys Festival 2022

On June 25, the Embassy participated to the Haybuys Festival 2022. Organized since 2015, this year's edition of the HayBuis Festival took place at the "Apaga" resort located in Yenokavan, Tavush region.

The festival is dedicated to the great variety of Armenian herbs, different methods of use, as well as their useful and healing properties. An open-air market of various herbs, souvenirs, and ecologically clean products was organized as well.

Joining the festival upon invitation, the Embassy set-up a stand, offering Swiss wines from Valais including Pinot Gris Hurlevent and Rhoneblut de Salquenen and variety of Swiss cheeses including Tête de Moine, Gruyère, L'Etivaz, Alpaese for degustation.



NEW TEAM MEMBERS



HAMAZASP DANIELYAN

Senior National Programme Officer
for Governance and Climate Change



ARTUR POKRIKYAN

Senior National Programme Officer
for Inclusive Economic Development

CONSULAR MATTERS

Introduction of the new [Swiss passport family](#)



The introduction of the new Swiss passport family took place on 31 October 2022. While the design is completely renewed, the functionality and the issuing procedure will remain unchanged. All previously issued passports will remain valid until the registered date.

[Marriage for all](#) – Law reform on July 1 2022

Switzerland recognises and permits same-sex marriage since 1 July 2022. As of the same date, registered partnerships are no longer concluded in Switzerland.

If your marriage or partnership was registered abroad, it must be entered into the Swiss civil register by the proper authority in Switzerland. In order to do so, you need to submit certain documents to your Swiss representation.

VOTEinfo application provides live voting results



The [VoteInfo](#) application developed by the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Office of the Canton of Zurich allows users to follow the results of the vote in near real time on voting Sundays. From midday onwards, VoteInfo users have access to the results for their municipality, their canton and the whole of Switzerland. The FSO continuously updates the results of the votes automatically delivered by the cantons.

CONTACT

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