



## Embassy Newsletter December 2016

### A word from Ambassador Hans-Peter Lenz

Dear Swiss citizens and friends of Switzerland,

It has now been more than a year that I took up my position as Ambassador of Switzerland accredited to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to the Republic of Iraq. Time has gone so quickly that I still feel in the process of discovering and learning. This time has been hugely enriching for me, discovering ancient and rich cultures, wonderful people and magnificent sceneries but also observing massive human tragedies and the horrors of war and violence.

Since the outbreak of the regional crisis, Switzerland has been contributing to alleviate human suffering through its humanitarian aid. In 2016 alone, the Swiss Confederation has devoted more than 35 million Swiss Francs to both Jordan and Iraq. The team of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has done a tremendous work to provide aid and relief to the most vulnerable in this region. At this time of the year when we traditionally gather with our families, I would like to direct my thoughts and the ones of my team to the people in need in the Middle East.

Beyond helping those in immediate need, Switzerland has devoted this year more efforts to try to tackle the root causes of the violence we see, by engaging with governments, political actors, armed groups, religious leaders and civil societies both in Jordan and in Iraq to promote human rights, good governance, international humanitarian law and a culture of tolerance and dialogue. We have been doing this by supporting small and larger projects carried by civil society organizations, by engaging in dialogue with political and military leaders, by showcasing Switzerland's experience in multicultural democracy. I am aware that our contributions are still modest in view of the huge and pressing needs, but I am proud to say that our country is not remaining idle in this region. I am afraid that these issues will continue to accompany us in 2017 and beyond

To all those I had the privilege to meet personally and to all the others I am looking forward to meet in the coming years, I wish wonderful Christmas celebrations and a very happy new year !

Hans-Peter Lenz



## 725<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Swiss Confederation

In 1291, the three Cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwald swore to each other mutual support against external threats. This alliance, known as the Federal Pact, is considered today as the fundament of the Swiss Confederation. This year, the Embassy of Switzerland in Amman decided to celebrate its 725<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Embassy's friends and partners.

On this occasion, a reception was organized on 10<sup>th</sup> October at the Bisharat Golf Club in Amman. The nice white stones terrace, located outside the city center, offered a beautiful setting for this reception, and probably contributed greatly to the relaxed atmosphere of the evening. The wooden tables, the four fire places and the red and white lanterns brought a touch of warmth and "Swissness" to this autumnal Jordanian night. Some 200 persons gathered at the Golf Club, among them, many Ambassadors but also representatives of the Jordanian authorities, members of the civil society as well as business, cultural and media partners.



In his speech, the Ambassador recalled Switzerland's historical path to stability and prosperity, and its determination to stand firm by Jordan's side while the country is facing many challenges. The same morning, the Ambassador had attended the handover ceremony of the 1<sup>st</sup> batch of more than 140 state-of-the-art ambulances offered by the Swiss government to the Jordan Civil Defense to boost its capacities and allow it to continue providing quality medical services to its population.

After the speech, the guests could enjoy both Jordanian and Swiss culinary arts. The Grand Hyatt Hotel organized a buffet of traditional Jordanian food while the Marché Gourmet presented a selection of five different Swiss cheeses.

Guests were also invited to participate to a small quiz to test their knowledge about Switzerland. Among others, they were asked to locate Switzerland on a world map. Answers ranged from Africa to Finland and from Spain to Russia, the opinions were quite diverse on that matter. The prizes of the quiz were a Balmain watch, Dulce Gusto coffee machine and four vouchers for a two-night's stay for two persons in various Mövenpick hotels, and were generously offered by some of the reception's sponsors.



## Chocolates, cheeses, knives and even *Bündnerfleisch* at the Annual Diplomatic Bazaar

Decorated with the Swiss flag and photos showing the abundant and diverse nature of Switzerland, the Embassy participated in the annual Diplomatic Bazaar that took place on 29<sup>th</sup> October. The Bazaar was organized by the Mabarrat Um Hussein at Al Hussein Youth City in Amman and was under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal. A total of 52 embassies in Jordan participated and exposed the finest products from their countries, including food.

With multicultural atmosphere, attendees enjoyed music coming from the booths of the participants. They had the chance to travel almost around the world while remaining in Jordan. The bazaar was not only to showcase specialties of the participating countries, but was organized for a good cause : the profits of the one-day diplomatic market were donated to Mabarrat Um Al Hussein, a home for orphans and underprivileged boys established in 1958.

The Embassy of Switzerland participated with a unique variety of chocolates, cheeses, knives and even *Bündnerfleisch*, all imported from Switzerland to Jordan. Many people purchased the Swiss products and the Embassy could successfully at the end of the day contribute with 4'000 Jordanian Dinars (JOD) to the Mabarrat Um Al Hussein Home.







## Switzerland contributes to the rehabilitation of the Azraq Wetland Reserve

Azraq Wetland is a major station for migratory birds on the African-Eurasian flyway. A variety of birds flock to the reserve each year, stopping for a short rest along their migration routes, staying for the winter, or breeding within the wetland.

In addition to birds, the wetland provides a natural habitat for numerous aquatic and terrestrial species including the Azraq Killifish *Aphanius sirhani*. Over the course of last 50 years, the wetland has steadily dropped down causing an environmental disaster due to the overuse and excessive pumping of water from the oasis to large urban areas and the illegal drilling of wells for agricultural purposes.



*Pumping water to the wetland*

With a recent support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) has constructed a new marsh pool in the Azraq Wetland Reserve. The newly inaugurated pool contributed to doubling the surface area of the wetland and significantly rehabilitated it.

The Azraq wetland is the only oasis in the Arabian desert with a self-replenishing system that has allowed it to sustain itself throughout the years. For more information on the on the Azraq Wetland Reserve, visit: <http://www.rscn.org.jo/content/azraq-wetland-reserve-0>

Switzerland is supporting Jordan through its international cooperation with an overall contribution of over 20 million JOD in 2016. One of the key domains of intervention concerns the water sector where SDC aims to link sustainable water resource management with equitable access to water and sanitation services.



*The Regional Head of Cooperation and the RSCN representative release Killifish Fish into the newly inaugurated pool*



## Closing ceremony of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) project

It is widely known that disaster risks are significantly reduced through sustainable enhancement of the capacity of societies and governments to mitigate the impact of potential hazards, through effective response when disaster occurs and through efficient recovery from a disaster once it has occurred. These are the key principles and the common faith and understanding that form the basis of the long lasting cooperation between the Jordan Civil Defense (JCD) and the Swiss government.



*Ambassador Hans-Peter Lenz with representatives from JCD listening to the achievements of USAR project*

Switzerland support to JCD's capacity building in the field of natural and man-made hazard response dates back to 2003. In 2007 Jordan decided to upgrade its Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capacities to the "heavy level" international standard. With the support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Jordanian USAR team was successfully classified as the first Arab team in the "heavy level" category in 2013. Three years after this event, Switzerland continues to ensure the sustainability and ownership of this project by JCD.

In October 2016, JCD and Swiss Ambassador Hans Peter-Lenz celebrated the successful completion of thirteen years of cooperation in the domain of Urban Search and Rescue. The ultimate objective of this cooperation is to save lives in case of disasters.



*Ambassador Hans-Peter Lenz with representatives from JCD during the field tour*



## Switzerland responds to humanitarian needs in Mosul

Over 80'000 individuals have been displaced since the launching of the military operations to retake Mosul on 17<sup>th</sup> October, while the number of reported civilian casualties in conflict areas is increasing with severe humanitarian consequences.

Switzerland responded to the humanitarian needs and supports international humanitarian efforts by the funding of two projects launched by the Danish Refugee Council and *Action Contre La Faim* (ACF) to protect and respectively provide safe drinking water to conflict-affected populations nearby Mosul.

In November, equipment was sent from Switzerland to Iraq which will enable ACF to provide more than 10'000 people with safe drinking water. In order to ensure that this in-kind donation was well received and to train partners, two members of the Swiss humanitarian Aid (SHA) unit flew to Erbil and instructed beneficiaries on how to make use of this equipment.

The second project is an additional support worth 1 million Swiss Francs to the International Committee of the Red Cross operations in Iraq. Finally, a third intervention was through deploying a member of the SHA unit to UNICEF in Iraq to coordinate the response in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. Taking these recent measures into account, Switzerland's support in response to the Iraq crisis amounts to more than 11 million Swiss Francs in 2016.



*Displaced persons from Mosul in the newly-established Hasansham camp ©OCHA*



*A member of the SHA unit provides training on the delivered equipment, Erbil, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016*





## Geneva and the Embassy of Switzerland promote peace and stability in the Middle East

In cooperation with the Embassy of Switzerland, the Geneva-based Center for Security Policy (GCSP) organized its 10<sup>th</sup> training course in diplomacy and security Policy in Amman during the first week of November. The training course was directed to military officers and civil servants involved in international relations.

A wide range of participants from all over the world were involved in the training, including Jordanian diplomats and officers of the Jordanian Armed Forces. The course offered a forum for discussion and networking.

The opening of the course was honored by the presence of H.E. Ambassador Shah, Ambassador of Pakistan in Jordan and Ambassador Hans-Peter Lenz, Ambassador of Switzerland in Jordan. In their presentations, the Ambassadors touched upon the role of a Defense Attaché expressing their expectations and points of view.



*Participants at the 10<sup>th</sup> training course in diplomacy and security policy*

Other panelists analyzed the global security environment and future challenges that might arise. Dr. Musa Shteivi, Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan, highlighted the most imminent social and political transformations in the Middle East region and demonstrated their interconnectedness.

H. E. Mrs. Arafat from the Institute of Diplomacy presented a geostrategic assessment on the Middle East. Another lecturer shed light on the ongoing refugee crisis and the implications and challenges for Jordan, its actions and outlooks. The Swiss Defense Attaché to Jordan, Colonel Sulser, offered insights into the current challenges for a Defense Attaché while his Polish colleague explained the very foundation of modern international diplomacy, the Vienna Convention. At the end of the course, H.E. Ambassador Christian Dussey, GCSP Director, handed certificates to all participants and thanked them for their valuable participation.



## Cultural nights: Swiss films and music in Amman

Late November and beginning of December, some Jordanians could enjoy the screening of three films by the Swiss filmmaker Eileen Hofer and swayed on the tunes of the jazz fusion Swiss–Egyptian group “ab3ad”.

The films were screened in cooperation with the Royal Film Commission. The first screening was the documentary “He was a giant with brown eyes” which is the first self-produced, creative documentary by the director. Its world premiere was held in Rotterdam in 2012. It paints the portrait of the coming of age of two Azerbaijani teenagers torn between their divorced parents and their quest for answers. The other two films were screened on the next day. The first one was short documentary, 15 minutes of affectionate gazes, profound dialogue and hopes for a bright future despite a gloomy present in “*Nuestro Mar*” (Our Sea).

The second film “*Horizontes*” tells the story of two ballerinas who dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the demanding routine that discipline requires of them. Their every step and aspiration echoes the great achievements of their predecessor, Alicia Alonso, the *prima ballerina assoluta*, who still invincible even at the grand age of 90.

As for “ab3ad”, with his smooth agile voice, Wael Elkholy took the audience to a beautiful old love story. The Swiss- Egyptian Jazz fusion group rooted in classical Arab music performed in different locations in Amman. The three musicians Wael Elkholy, Emre Aydin and Titus Bellwald elegantly interweaved music towards jazz, pop, contemporary classical music.

“ab3ad” creates an intense and deeply spiritual music. With their recent work titled:” Ancient love – Alte Liebe – “قديم حب”, they honor love from the past, but not so much looking back on lost romance, but revisiting people and places with their sounds and perfumes and atmosphere. It reflects on how the memories of these crucial old and sometimes even ancient – love shapes our personalities. <http://www.ab3ad.ch/de>



*Filmmaker Eileen Hofer speaking about her films at the Royal Film Commission*



*“ab3ad” group playing at the Maestro restaurant*





## Screening of “Iraqi Odyssey” of Swiss film director Samir in Baghdad

After a screening in April in Amman, Swiss director of Iraqi origins Samir Jamal Aldin (usually better known as “Samir”) could screen his documentary film “Iraqi Odyssey” (<http://www.iraqiodysey.com/en/>) in Baghdad on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016 with the support of the Iraqi Ministry of culture, the Ruya Foundation and the Embassy of Switzerland. The *première* of “Iraqi Odyssey” in Iraq took place on 1<sup>st</sup> December at the Mansour Theater in the International Zone in Baghdad and was primarily targeted to Iraqi officials and the diplomatic community.



« Iraqi Odyssey » from Samir

The second screening took place at the National Theater and was open to the general Iraqi public. Circa 400 people attended this event that was followed by a podium discussion. On both occasion but especially during the second screening with the Iraqi public, lots of memories and emotions were expressed. As Ambassador Lenz said during his opening remarks, “Films are like living organisms, they are made to be discussed and reflected upon. They can be seeds of change when carefully planted.

This is particularly true of this film which, through the history of a particular Iraqi family, shows and replays the tragic history of Iraq in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and up to today. It is unfortunately a rather violent history. It is therefore of the utmost importance for young generations to know this history because as the saying goes: ‘those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it’ “.

In this sense, the screening of the film in Iraq, in front of the public it has been made for, was the fulfillment of Samir’s initial idea and a contribution to Iraq’s journey in coming to terms with its own recent past.



Podium discussion after the 2<sup>nd</sup> December screening, with Samir (4<sup>th</sup> from the left) and Swiss Ambassador Hans-Peter Lenz (2<sup>nd</sup> from the right)



## Consular section New online desk for Swiss citizens living abroad

Beginning of October, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has launched its new online desk for Swiss citizens residing abroad. This online desk allows fellow citizen living abroad to register with a Swiss representation, and report changes such as civil status or address. You will also be able to order documents such as confirmation of registration.

The platform is available on the FDFA website [www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch) and on the Embassy's website [www.eda.admin.ch/amman](http://www.eda.admin.ch/amman).

The consular section remains at your disposal in case you need further information on this matter and all the team wishes you pleasant winter holidays!



*Consular section team*



## EMBASSY CONTACTS & MAP

<b>Address</b>	Embassy of Switzerland 19, Ibrahim Ayoub Street Jabal Amman, 4 <sup>th</sup> Circle near Salah Eldin Mosque
<b>Postal Address</b>	Embassy of Switzerland P.O.B. 5341 11183 Amman, Jordan
<b>Phone</b>	+962 6 593 14 16
<b>Fax</b>	+962 6 593 06 85
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:amm.vertretung@eda.admin.ch">amm.vertretung@eda.admin.ch</a>
<b>Link webpage</b>	<a href="http://www.eda.admin.ch/amman">http://www.eda.admin.ch/amman</a>

