



Embassy Newsletter December 2017

Letter of Ambassador Hans-Peter Lenz

Dear Swiss citizens and friends of Switzerland,

Another year has passed and the time to wish you and your beloved ones a merry Christmas and a happy new year has come again. With this edition of our Newsletter, I would like to share with you some important events of the second half of 2017 that have kept me and my team busy:

In October, I had the privilege to sign with the Minister of planning and international cooperation and the Minister of water and irrigation a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of water, sanitation, hygiene, water governance, water diplomacy and transboundary water management. With this MoU, Switzerland has initiated a 10-year programme to invest 11.6 million Jordanian Dinars to implement sanitation solutions for underprivileged communities in North and Central Jordan¹.

In November, the first round of bilateral political consultations between Switzerland and Jordan has taken place in Amman at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (see article below page 3).

In November as well, the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) organized training courses for military officers and civil servants involved in international relations. Participants from all over the region including Jordanian diplomats and officers of the Jordanian Armed Forces have been trained at the Royal Jordanian National Defense College and at the Institute of Diplomacy (see article below pages 3-4).

In December, Switzerland supported the “Karama Human Rights Film Festival” inspired by the ongoing turmoil in the Middle East and screened two films of high relevance to the present context: a short fiction called “Bon voyage” and the documentary “Ghost hunting” (see article below page 9).

Finally, the headlines of the last few weeks have been occupied by the issue of Jerusalem. Let me seize this opportunity to reiterate Switzerland’s stance in this regard: 1) Switzerland’s position regarding the Middle East peace process has not changed in relation to the recent announcement by US President Donald Trump, 2) Switzerland has taken note that the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem has not been questioned, 3) as long as there is no negotiated international settlement on Jerusalem, Switzerland will maintain its Embassy in Israel in Tel Aviv, and 4) Switzerland calls all parties to refrain from the use of violence.

¹ For more information on Switzerland’s projects around water in Jordan :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmuBX9hnh4>



On a more practical level, my team has been working hard on the integration process aiming at merging the Swiss Cooperation Office with the Embassy of Switzerland. If the construction work at our future Embassy building proceeds smoothly, both teams should start working under the same roof by April 2018. Unfortunately, Mr. Manuel Etter, our Regional Head of cooperation, will leave Jordan too soon to be able to see this merger take place. His successor Mr. Andreas Huber will take up his position by summer 2018.

In my own name and on behalf of my colleagues, I wish you and your families all the best for 2018 !

With my best regards
Hans-Peter Lenz

The Embassy of Switzerland is about to move ... (and integrate)

As already hinted in our Newsletter of July 2016, the Embassy of Switzerland in Amman will soon relocate to a brand new building in South Abdoun area and take there under its umbrella the Swiss Cooperation Office presently located in Swefieh. The actual relocation is planned for spring 2018. Based on the motto that Switzerland has only one foreign policy, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has decided in 2013 to streamline its network of official representations abroad with the so-called "integration process" in order to improve policy coordination and reduce duplications in infrastructure and support services.

This relocation will be the final stage of a long integration process that is now almost completed. Although still for a few months in two different locations, the Embassy of Switzerland is since 2017 managed by a unified team.



The future Embassy building (photo taken early 2017)

All working procedures have been streamlined and the organizational charts merged. All resources have been put together. The Embassy is presently composed of five units under the authority of the Ambassador: the Diplomatic Affairs Section; the Swiss Cooperation Office; the Defense Attaché Office; the Chancery (or Consular Section) and the Administrative Section. Lastly, the visual appearance will be unified upon actual physical integration.

We are looking forward to receiving you in the new Embassy building in 2018 !



1st round of political consultations between Switzerland and Jordan

Switzerland and Jordan held the first round of their bilateral political consultations on 8th November 2017 in Amman at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates. In order to intensify their bilateral contacts and cooperation, Switzerland and Jordan have concluded in May 2017 a Memorandum of Understand (MoU) establishing regular political consultations.

The MoU was signed on 19th May 2017 by Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, former Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. It established a mechanism of yearly meetings at senior official level to exchange views on topics of common interest, foster bilateral relations and intensify cooperation. Switzerland typically concludes such MoUs with important partner countries in order to cement friendly relations and bring them to an even higher level.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in Amman

For this first round of consultations, the Swiss delegation was led by Ambassador W. Brühlhart, Head of the Middle East North Africa Division, and the Jordanian delegation by H.E. Mr. Samer Nader, Director General of the European Affairs Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among the topics discussed were political relations, economy and trade, humanitarian issues, migration, science and innovation, human rights, security policy, multilateral affairs as well as regional developments in the Middle East. At the end, Ambassador Brühlhart invited the Jordanian side to the 2nd round of these political consultations to be held in Switzerland in 2018.

GCSP Courses for Defense Attachés and diplomats in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) Region

For the 11th consecutive year, the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) organized the Defense Attaché Orientation Module for a group of Defense Attachés and senior officials involved in diplomacy, defense, and international relations. The five-day course kicked off on 5th November 2017 at the Royal Jordanian National Defense College (RJNDC) south of Amman.

A wide range of high-profile participants were present. The former Chief of Defense of the Swiss Armed Forces, Major General André Blattmann, has graced the course with his presence. He shared his experience in strategic planning of national security and delivered several key note lectures. Besides, a group of Jordanian diplomats and officers of the Jordanian Armed Forces were among the group.



The course aimed at bringing together diplomats and military officers to provide a forum for discussion and networking. The course further touched upon the Vienna Convention and the rapidly changing environment, especially with regards to the ‘present threats’ in the region. Additionally, the GCSP launched a second training course on 12th November



Participants in the GCSP event

titled “Building Capacity on Arms Control in the MENA Region”, in cooperation with the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy.

A wide range of diplomats from the MENA region were among the participants. Throughout the course sessions, different topics were tackled such as building the capacity of a new generation of arms control practitioners who will be involved in the implementation of international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments in the MENA region.

By the end of the course, the participants visited the SESAME Project which is an international research center that was inaugurated by his Majesty King Abdullah II on May 2017.

Small Grants Program 2017

With the month of December, the “Small Grants Program” of the Swiss Embassy for the year 2017 has come to an end. Within the framework of this program, five Jordanian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as one Iraqi organization have been financially supported by Switzerland. They have been active in several human rights fields, focusing in particular on the protection and empowerment of children and women, the promotion of the rule of law, the fight against death penalty as well as good governance.

The Embassy decided to support two projects that promote responsible usage of the internet as well as the prevention of e-crimes. Although the internet brings many benefits, the potential for exploitation is very high. Among them figure online financial fraud, cyberbullying, threat and extortion. It is therefore of utmost importance to raise awareness about a responsible usage, in particular among children and young women. The “Young Women Christian Association” (YWCA) of Madaba tackled exactly this problem during the past months. Its project focused on the prevention of e-crimes through a community based approach.



Participants during one of the workshops about e-crimes



Twenty young community leaders were trained in the responsible usage of new technologies. They became educators in the field and held sixty outreach sessions to 1'200 youngsters in order to raise awareness about the topic.

Another organization that focused on potential online threats was “Happy Touches”. “Happy Touches” laid emphasis on children between the ages of 12 to 17 years in the governorate of Zarqa and its main topic was cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can include online humiliation, ridicule, verbal and moral abuse as well as threats. It does not only affect a child’s social relations to its surrounding, but can cause psychological problems reaching as far as suicide. “Happy Touches” conducted three workshops, in which children were informed in a playful manner about the topic. The participants prepared their own awareness video to revise what they have learned so as to be able to show it to friends. “Happy Touches” further identified the need to inform parents and teachers about online threats and subsequently organized also workshops with those target groups (for more information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/happytouches15/>).

Other projects that the Swiss Embassy has supported financially in Jordan in 2017 included the following: a project on gender mainstreaming in the decentralization elections of August 2017 which was conducted by the “Al-Quds Center”, a project on monitoring the implementation of Jordan’s National Human Rights Plan 2016-2025 by the “Al-Hayat Center” (“Rased”), a project on the empowerment of defense lawyers pleading in cases carrying death penalty conducted by the “Justice Clinic” as well as a project in Iraq on women’s rights by the “Democratic House Organization”.

Protecting the legal rights of Syrian refugees and vulnerable members of Jordanian host communities

Thanks to the support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, the “Norwegian Refugee Council” (NRC) helps to protect the legal rights of thousands of Syrian refugees and vulnerable members of the Jordanian host community in Amman.

The situation for Syrian refugees in Jordan, in both formal camps and in host communities, is worsening. Refugees have exhausted their savings and resources and the presence of refugees in host communities is putting pressure on services and the labour market, leading to increased tensions between Syrians and Jordanians. Protection problems faced by Syrian refugees in Jordan include difficulties in registering with the government, challenges in obtaining their legal and civil documentation (e.g. birth of marriage certificates), multiple internal displacements due to insecure tenure, and limited enjoyment of work rights.



Information session on civil documentation, Amman
© Norwegian Refugee Council



The Swiss State Secretariat for Migration decided in November 2016 to support the project “Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance” carried out by the NRC. The aim of this initiative is to protect the rights of refugees from Syria and vulnerable members of Jordanian host communities living in some of the most deprived areas in Amman. This project is based on the rationale that refugees whose rights are protected are better able to maintain their legal status in Jordan, claim their entitlements as refugees and reduce recourse to negative coping strategies.

One year after the launch of this project, more than 4’500 individuals have received information on rights, registration-related issues and entitlements while more than 1’500 people received individual counseling services. In most cases, these counseling sessions focused on registration procedures in order to legalize the status of Syrian refugees living in Amman. Finally, 500 individuals received legal assistance services on their legal and civil documentation and on refugee registration processes. As a result of this project, participants are in a better position to enjoy and exercise their rights in Jordan.

Switzerland provides critical support to conflict-affected people in Iraq

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) recently launched a new partnership with the “Terre des hommes Foundation” to help conflict-affected people access water, education and child protection services in the district of Tal Afar, Iraq.

On 31st August 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over the so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL) in the northern city of Tal Afar and the entire governorate of Ninawa. Since then, more than 100’000 people have already returned



to Tal Afar city while tens of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) are expected to return in the coming months.

Local authorities are facing mounting pressure to meet the basic needs of the host communities and returnee population as the public services have been severely affected by years of neglect and by military operations in Tel Afar.

*Almost 20% of buildings in Tal Afar city have been damaged during the recent conflict
© Terre des hommes Foundation*



Key public infrastructure and services have been severely affected and remain dysfunctional three months after the city was reclaimed from ISIL.

Against this backdrop, SDC launched a new partnership with the “Terre des hommes Foundation” on 1st of December 2017. Thanks to this new project, inhabitants from 29 neighbourhoods will have improved access to the Tal Afar city water network, more than 1’300 children will benefit from psychosocial support and more than 3’000 children will see their learning conditions improved as three schools will be partially rehabilitated.

Diplomatic bazar

This year’s diplomatic bazar took place on 7th October and once again Switzerland participated with a variety of chocolates, cheeses, cookies, and the famous *Bündnerfleisch*, all directly imported from Switzerland. Even some small wooden cows made it all the way from the famous wood cutting factory in Brienz and were a big success. The booth was decorated with Swiss flags and photos showing the diverse nature of Switzerland.



HRH Princess Basma bint Talal visited the Swiss booth

The Bazar was organized by the “Mabarrat Um Al-Hussein” at Al-Hussein Youth City in Amman and was under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma bint Talal. More than fifty Embassies and international organizations participated and offered a big variety of fine products from their countries, including food.

Like every year, the profits of the diplomatic bazar were donated to “Mabarrat Um Al-Hussein”, a home for orphans and underprivileged boys established in 1958. Some of the boys attended the bazar as well and gave a helping hand wherever they were needed.

European Film Festival (EUFF)

The EUFF celebrated its 29th edition this year to become the longest- running foreign film festival in Jordan. Between 23rd November and 2nd December 2017, the Haya Cultural Center welcomed the best European productions to an ever-growing audience. The Embassy of Switzerland participated for the first time in this well-known annual event by screening the Swiss film “Calabria”. Throughout the 10 days of film screenings under the motto “Bigger and Bolder”, a total of 20 European countries participated with the screening of a record number of award winning films subtitled in Arabic.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in Jordan

The event attracted nearly 3'000 people. Not being a member of the European Union, Switzerland was announced as a guest country.

The film "Calabria" is a road trip movie directed by Swiss film director Pierre-François Sauter. The film tells the story of three emigrants who lived in Switzerland and, after the death of the Calabrian emigrant, how his two friends, Jovan and José, travel from the North to the South of Italy to repatriate the deceased to his home village. Their voyage at once pays tribute to the dead person and celebrates life.



Swiss Ambassador Hans- Peter Lenz with the EU Ambassador Andrea Fontana before the film screening



Audience before the Swiss film screening

European Languages Day (ELD)

Part of the EUFF, the ELD was organized a week after the opening of the film festival event, particularly on 2nd December. The Embassy participated in that event by organizing joint activities with the "Goethe Institute" and the Austrian Embassy.

Children and youngsters visited the decorated booth of the Embassy and happily joined for hours coloring Swiss children book. Additionally, they shared their thoughts and



Children doing different activities at the Swiss booth



knowledge about Switzerland, which revealed that chocolate and watches were among the top well known features of Switzerland. Less obviously, some participants placed Switzerland in Africa !



During the day, participants has the opportunity to learn some words in Swiss German and were surprised to learn that Switzerland has four national languages. They could also join cooking classes and learn how to make the Swiss famous recipe “Röstli”. At the end, they participated in contests organized by the participating countries. Winners received various gifts reflecting the various countries’ traditions.

Karama Human Rights Film Festival

The Karama Human Rights Film Festival is an annual event that takes place in Amman early December. The festival tackles issues ranging from democracy, freedom of expression, women and children’s rights, immigration, worker’s rights as well as political, economic and social freedoms.

The Swiss Embassy participated by screening two films; the first one was a short fiction movie titled “Bon Voyage” which story was inspired by the past events in the Mediterranean Sea in relation with the influx of refugees to Europe. The second film “Ghost hunting” was co-produced by Switzerland and directed by Palestinian director Raed Andoni. It was screened during the closing ceremony of the Karama Human Rights Film Festival on December 10th and received full attendance. Usually, the festival starts on the 5th December and ends on the 10th to mark the International human rights day. Over 75 films from 31 countries were screened with the theme “Give life a chance”. Along with the film screenings, workshops and competitions took place.



Audience during the screening of Swiss production Film “Ghost hunting”

Swiss Christmas market

In cooperation with the Swiss Business Council of Abu Dhabi and under the patronage of the Embassy, a festive Swiss Christmas market was held at the Amman Rotana Hotel from 14th until 16th December.



Inauguration by Ambassador Lenz

From 13 Swiss chalets replica, visitors could purchase Lindt Chocolates, Nespresso and Dolce Gusto Coffee machines, hot wine, hot chocolate, Swiss cheeses, small Swiss cow bells as well as locally produced handicraft. The traditional Swiss music band “Alders” came all the way from Appenzel to perform at the market, together with local school choirs.



Chancery Affairs

Dear fellow citizens,

On 20th June 2014, the Swiss parliament adopted the new Swiss Citizenship Act (SCA), which will be implemented as of 1st January 2018. Please find below the necessary related information:

Article in the “Swiss Review” (2017/1)

<http://www.revue.ch/en/editions/2017/01/detail/news/detail/News/obtaining-swiss-citizenship-abroad/>

Information on the website of the State Secretariat for Migration SEM

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/aktuell/gesetzgebung/totalrev_bueg.html
https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/themen/buergerrecht/faq_neues_recht.html

General information on the website of the State Secretariat for Migration SEM

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/buergerrecht.html>

Information flyer of the State Secretariat for Migration SEM

Information for representations abroad and applicants living abroad

On 20 June 2014, Parliament adopted the new Swiss Citizenship Act (SCA). The Federal Council subsequently approved the Ordinance.

What will change for people resident abroad under the new SCA?

Reinstatement of citizenship

Anyone who has lost their Swiss citizenship may apply for reinstatement as a Swiss citizen provided the application is filed within ten years of the loss of citizenship.

After the ten-year period, the applicant must have been resident in Switzerland for three years to be eligible to apply for reinstatement.

Example

Mr M's citizenship lapsed on 30 October 2017. He can apply from abroad to have it reinstated until 30 October 2027.

Mr M plans to apply for reinstatement of his citizenship on 10 July 2028. He will only be able to do this if he has been resident in Switzerland since 10 July 2025.

Simplified naturalisation

A person born after their father lost his Swiss citizenship will no longer benefit from simplified naturalisation. Their sole option will be to live in Switzerland for 10 years and to be a holder of a permanent residence permit (ordinary naturalisation).

The children (but no longer the grandchildren) of the marriage between a Swiss woman and a foreign national are eligible to apply for simplified naturalisation provided the mother held Swiss citizenship before the children were born.

Example

The Ms K's father moved to Germany for work and lost his Swiss citizenship before her birth in 1985. Ms K is no longer able to apply for simplified naturalisation as she lives in Germany.

Example

Ms R was born in Switzerland and married Mr G, an Italian citizen in 1935. The couple had a daughter, S, born in 1937, who has never held Swiss citizenship because her mother lost her Swiss citizenship on getting married. S can apply for simplified naturalisation, but not her son, born in 1960, because his mother was not born a Swiss citizen.



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Embassy of Switzerland in Jordan

**Season's greetings and happy New Year to
all of you from the Embassy team !**

