

Ukraine Recovery Conference URC2022

Lugano, Switzerland 4–5 July 2022

Programme

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Dear participants,

When preparatory work for the 5th Ukraine Reform Conference started a year ago, I was very much looking forward to hosting you all on this occasion in my hometown of Lugano in the canton of Ticino. This event was supposed to be an optimistic one, taking stock of Ukraine's reform achievements, discussing current challenges in its transformation process, and coordinating support from the international community to consolidate Ukraine's vibrant democracy.

On 24 February 2022, the world changed. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and with the war still raging, inflicting horrendous suffering on the civilian population, the question of whether to maintain the Ukraine Reform Conference in Lugano had to be raised. After discussing with the Ukrainian government as co-organiser of the Ukraine Reform Conference process and consulting with stakeholders, we have decided to maintain the conference but adapt its focus so as to better serve the urgent needs of Ukraine.

The 5th Ukraine Reform Conference has therefore been replaced by the Ukraine Recovery Conference. In this framework, we will not only address reforms that have made Ukraine so resilient and discuss the way forward to ensure the country's future in Europe, but also discuss Ukraine's more urgent needs, exchange ideas on reconstruction priorities, and coordinate international support with a view to making Ukraine's recovery a just, lasting and sustainable one.

I will therefore be honoured to welcome you all to my hometown of Lugano for the Ukraine Recovery Conference, a conference which I would like to dedicate to all Ukrainians!

President of the Swiss Confederation Ignazio Cassis Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)



Dear participants!

On 24 February, Ukrainians woke up to a new reality. Since the first Russian missiles rained down on Ukrainian cities, our main priority has been to defend Ukraine's right to exist as a free, independent and democratic state.

Over the past several months, Ukraine has demonstrated an extraordinary level of resilience and determination to win the fight against the Russian invasion. The people of Ukraine stand more united than ever in defending their country and their right to define their own future.

This fight is not merely the fight for Ukraine, our land and our citizens' lives. Today, the future of Europe and the future of a free democratic world is being decided in Ukraine. We are grateful to our friends and partners who have mobilised their efforts to support Ukraine. This support is of critical importance to our efforts to defend our country and our people.

At the same time, the fight is still ongoing. The war has inflicted huge damage and massive losses; it has had a devastating impact on our economy and forced millions of Ukrainians to leave their homes. To achieve a decisive victory, we have to ensure that Ukraine can rise from the ashes. We have already developed a vision for post-war reconstruction in the shape of the Recovery and Development Plan 'United 24'.

We sincerely hope that the Ukraine Recovery Conference to be held in Lugano on 4-5 July will serve as an international platform for discussing Ukraine's post-war recovery and strengthening our partnership based on security and democracy.

The event in Lugano is the logical continuation of the four previous Ukraine Reform Conferences. Comprehensive efforts to assist Ukraine's recovery will include further transformation of the country, which is crucial to achieving our aspirations to become a fully fledged member of the European Union.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

Programme

Monday, 4 July 2022

10:00 – 13:00	URC2022 parliamentary side-event URC2022 side-event on civil society and recovery (see page 26)
11:00 – 11:30	Arrivals of Heads of official delegations
11:30 – 12:00	Official welcome ceremony by President Cassis and Prime Minister Shmyhal at Villa Ciani for heads of official delegations
12:00	Family photo
13:30 – 14:00	URC2022 official opening plenary For information, see page 6
14:00 – 15:30	URC2022 presentation plenary For information, see pages 7-8
16:00 – 17:00	Break-out session 1 on economic recovery For information, see pages 9-10 Break-out session 2 on social recovery For information, see pages 11-12 Break-out session 3 on digitalization and recovery For information, see page 13
17:30 – 18:30	Break-out session 4 on infrastructure recovery For information, see pages 14-15 Break-out session 5 on environmental recovery For information, see page 16
Starting 20:30	Free evening or cultural programme. For information, see events section pages 27-28

Tuesday, 5 July 2022

08:30 – 10:20	National and institutional statements session For information, see page 17
10:40 – 11:20	URC2022 official closing plenary For information, see page 18
11:20 – 12:00	Family photo for heads of official delegations
12:00 – 12:45	Final press conference by President Cassis and Prime Minister Shmyhal
13:30 – 14:00	Beginning of the Economic Forum
14:00 – 14:30	Official opening of the Economic Forum For information, see pages 19-20
14:30 – 15:00	Economic Forum session on Manufacturing For information, see page 21
15:00 – 15:30	Economic Forum session on Logistics For information, see page 22
15:30 – 16:00	Economic Forum session on Energy For information, see page 23
16:00 – 16:30	Economic Forum session on Digitalisation For information, see page 24
16:30 – 16:45	End of the URC2022

URC2022 Official Opening Plenary Session Auditorium A, Monday, 4 July, 13:30 – 14:00

Content

This plenary session will mark the official start of the Ukraine Recovery Conference. President Cassis will welcome participants to his hometown of Lugano and formally open the URC2022. He will set the stage and recall the objectives of this event. President Zelenskyy will address participants via a live video link from Kyiv, present the current situation in Ukraine, state his ambitions for this event and express his appreciation for the international community's support. The opening plenary session will conclude with a short musical piece from a Ukrainian composer.

Moderation



Ms Giada Marsadri

Ms Marsadri works at the Swiss Federal Office of Culture in Bern and regularly acts as moderator for the Locarno Film Festival.

Speakers



H.E. Mr Ignazio Cassis

President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal

Department of Foreign Affairs.



H.E. Mr Volodymyr Zelenskyy President of Ukraine

(Live via video link)

URC2022 Presentation Plenary Session "Framework for a smart and sustainable recovery process in Ukraine"

Auditorium A, Monday, 4 July, 14:00 – 15:30

Content

During this plenary session, and after opening remarks by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and by Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal will present the draft plan for Ukraine's Recovery and Development "United24". High-level speakers will present their visions about the principles, institutions and methods for Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery process.

Opening remarks



H.E. Ms Ursula von der LeyenPresident of the European Commission



H.E Mr Petr FialaPrime Minister of the Czech Republic



H.E. Mr Denys Shmyhal Prime Minister of Ukraine

Moderation



Mr Yves Daccord

Co-founder and Executive Chairman of the Edgelands Institute, Harvard, and Fellow at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, Cambridge

Speakers



H.E. Ms Elizabeth Truss

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Minister for Women and Equalities



H.E. Mr Valdis DombrovskisExecutive Vice-President of the European Commission



H.E. Ms Odile Renaud-BassoPresident of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development EBRD



H.E. Mr Mathias CormannSecretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD



H.E. Ms Anna BjerdeWorld Bank Vice-President for Europe and Central Asia



H.E. Ms Teresa CzerwinskaEuropean Investment Bank Vice-President

Break-out Session 1 on Economic Recovery "Economic recovery: from resilience to transformation" Room B 1, Monday, 4 July, 16:00 – 17:00

Content

This break-out session will focus on Ukraine's future economic recovery. How can Ukraine restart its economy once the war is over? Can this tragedy be an opportunity to accelerate the modernisation of Ukraine's economy and favour a transformation of the country allowing smoother integration into the European market? Past reforms in the economic field will also be reviewed in order to identify possible next steps in reforming Ukraine's economic structures. Framework conditions to intensify relations with international economic operators will also be discussed.

Moderation



Mr Tymofiy Mylovanov

President of the Kyiv School of Economics and Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Pittsburgh

Speakers



H.E. Mr Danylo Getmantsev

Head of the Ukrainian Parliament's Committee on Finance, Taxation and Customs Policy Secretary of the National Recovery Council, Ukraine



H.E. Mr Denys Kudin

First Deputy Minister for Economy, Ukraine



H.E. Mr Alfonso Garcia Mora

Regional Vice President for Europe, International Finance Corporation IFC



H.E. Mr Matteo Patrone

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development EBRD Managing Director for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus



Ms Franziska Tschudi SauberDelegate of the Board of Directors and CEO, Weidmann Holding AG

Break-out Session 2 on Social Recovery "Social recovery: investing in people" Room B 2, Monday, 4 July, 16:00 – 17:00

Content

This break-out session will focus on the impact of the war on society and how the international community can support the Ukrainian population in the recovery process. Recovery can only be successful and sustainable if it invests in people. Past reforms have strengthened the country's social resilience and Ukraine's civil society will play a key role in the country's democratic future. Various topics will be discussed, including education, health, reintegration of refugees and human rights.

Moderation



Ms Alexa Chopivsky
Executive Director of Ukraine House Davos and Director of the
World Economy Program at the Aspen Institute

Special guest (online)



H.E. Ms Olena Zelenska First Lady of Ukraine



H.E. Ms Yuliia SokolovskaDeputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine



H.E. Mr Achim SteinerUnited Nations Development Program UNDP Administrator



H.E. Mr Hans Henri Kluge
World Health Organization Regional Director for Europe



H.E. Mr Arup Banerji Regional Country Director for Eastern Europe, World Bank



Ms Tetiana Pechonchyk ZMINA Human Rights Center, Head of the Board

Break-out Session 3 on Digitalisation and Recovery Auditorium A, Monday, 4 July, 16:00 – 17:00

Content

This break-out session will investigate the role of digitalisation in Ukraine's recovery process. The country's past achievements in digital transformation are an important element of its current resilience. During this session, Deputy Prime Minister Fedorov will present a detailed plan for Ukraine's digital recovery. The aim is to develop partnerships with the tech business community in order to achieve consolidated support for Ukraine's digital recovery.

Moderation



H.E. Mr George DubynskyiDeputy Minister of Digital Transformation, Ukraine



H.E. Mr Mykhailo FedorovDeputy Prime Minister and Minister for Digitalisation, Ukraine

Break-out Session 4 on Infrastructure Recovery "Infrastructure recovery: Building back better" Room B1, Monday 4 July, 17:30 – 18:30

Content

This break-out session will concentrate on the extent of infrastructure destruction due to the war and how to build back better. In order to rapidly restore the infrastructure to allow for social and economic recovery, a coordinated and efficient approach among all partners is needed. Can destruction caused by the war be an opportunity to bring Ukraine's partially aging infrastructure up to the latest standards? Can this occasion be seized to also reduce CO₂ emissions to combat the climate crisis?

Moderation



Ms Lenna Koszarny
Founding Partner and Chief Executive Officer, Horizon
Capital, Executive Vice-President of Western NIS Enterprise
Fund
Ukrainian World Congress Board Member



H.E. Mr Oleksandr Kubrakov Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine



H.E. Mr Oleksiy Chernyshov Minister for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine



H.E. Ms Simonetta SommarugaFederal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department for Energy, Transports, Environment and Telecommunications, Switzerland



Mr Markus BerndtActing Managing Director of the European Investment Bank



Mr Vadym Boychenko (TBC) Mayor of Mariupol, Ukraine

Break-out Session 5 on Environmental Recovery "Environmental recovery: Going green and achieving energy security"

Room B2, Monday, 4 July, 17:30 – 18:30

Content

This break-out session will assess the extent of environmental damage caused by the war and its impact on the Ukrainian population in the short and long term. Panellists will discuss how a new model of environmental protection can accompany the economic, social and infrastructure recovery of Ukraine. In this context, switching to renewable sources of energy while ensuring energy security can be an interesting avenue to explore.

Moderation



Mr Bertrand PiccardChairman, SolarImpulse Foundation

Speakers



H.E. Mr German Galushchenko Minister of Energy of Ukraine



H.E. Mr Ruslan StriletsMinister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine



H.E. Ms Katarína MathernováDeputy Director General, Head of Support Group for Ukraine,
European Commission



Ms Olena PavlenkoUkrainian Head of the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform

National and Institutional Statements' Session Room B, Tuesday, 5 July, 08:30 – 10:20

Content

This session will offer the opportunity to all States (at <u>vice-ministerial</u> level) and international organizations (head of organization level) to take the floor and present their views on the topics discuss the previous day relating to Ukraine's recovery plans and process

Moderation



H.E. Mr Dmytro Kuleba Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine



H.E. Mr Simon Pidoux
Ambassador at large for the Ukraine Recovery Conference

Speakers

All concerned heads of delegation will be called by the moderators in order of protocol to deliver their national statements.

Please note that out of fairness to all heads of delegation, moderators will strictly enforce the time limit of 2 minutes per statement.

In order to ensure adequate simultaneous translation and allow for a timely publication of all official addresses made in the framework of URC2022, official participants are kindly requested to send the texts of their official addresses to sts.urc2022@eda.admin.ch as soon as possible in Word format, with the mention "Check against delivery".

URC2022 Official Closing Plenary Session Auditorium A, Tuesday, 5 July, 10:40 – 11:20

Content

The final outcome document of URC2022, the "Lugano Declaration", will be presented at the closing session. The Lugano Declaration includes the guiding principles for the recovery process, such as sustainability and partnerships, which are based on a broad international support for Ukraine's recovery.

Moderation



Ms Giada Marsadri

Ms Marsadri works at the Swiss Federal Office of Culture in Bern and regularly acts as moderator for the Locarno Film Festival.

Speakers



H.E. Mr Ignazio Cassis
President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal



H.E. Mr Denys Shmyhal Prime Minister of Ukraine

Department of Foreign Affairs.

URC2022 Economic Forum Official Opening Auditorium A, Tuesday, 5 July, 14:00 – 14:30

Content

The Forum's aim is to launch the renewal of Ukraine's economy by highlighting priorities for reconstruction and identifying ways that the international private sector can contribute to this process. Representatives from the Ukrainian government will present the current business and infrastructure situation in Ukraine. They will showcase their vision for renewal and highlight sectors prioritised for reconstruction. Swiss and international representatives will propose ideas and offer business-related solutions overall and in specific sectors. Companies will discover how to get involved in reconstruction projects and identify potential partners by networking with Ukrainian representatives from government and the private sector.

Moderation



Mr Jörg FriedenChair of the Board, Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets (SIFEM)



Mr Sergiy Tsivkach CEO, UkraineInvest



H.E. Mr Ignazio CassisPresident of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.



H.E. Mr Denys Shmyhal Prime Minister of Ukraine



H.E. Ms Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch State Secretary for Economic Affairs, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Switzerland



Mr David ArakhamiaChair of the Servants of the People group, Parliament of Ukraine Member of the National Investment Council, Ukraine

URC2022 Economic Forum Session on Manufacturing

"Moving higher up the value chain in the agriculture and food sector"

Auditorium A, Tuesday, 5 July, 14:30 – 15:00

Content

With 33% of the world's black soil (*chornozem*) concentrated in Ukraine, a favourable climate and proximity to key markets, Ukraine was an agricultural export powerhouse long before war broke out. With additional investment in value-added production, Ukraine could double its food exports and strengthen global food security in the future. Panellists will discuss investment opportunities in value-added manufacturing and where Swiss and international expertise can contribute to innovation in the country's agro-processing sector.

Moderation



Mr Sergiy Tsivkach CEO, UkraineInvest



H.E. Mr Mykola Solsky Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine



Mr Stefan BrupbacherDirector, Swissmem, Member of "Team Switzerland"

URC2022 Economic Forum
Session on Logistics
"Road, rail and river – non-maritime transportation alternatives"
Auditorium A, Tuesday, 5 July, 15:00 – 15:30

Content

The current blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports highlights the importance of expanding other cargo transportation routes, including transhipment on the Danube, rail and road. Panellists will examine the current status of these modes of transport, planned infrastructure projects for domestic and cross-border logistics, and ways to leverage Swiss and international know-how and investment in developing multimodal transportation infrastructure.

Moderation



Mr Jörg FriedenChair of the Board, Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets (SIFEM)



H.E. Mr Oleksandr Kubrakov Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine



Mr Andreas HaasManaging Director, Swissrail, Member of "Team Switzerland"

URC2022 Economic Forum Session on Energy

"Energy: Harnessing traditional and green energy sources for efficiency, security and independence" Auditorium A, Tuesday, 5 July, 15:30 – 16:00

Content

Ukraine's energy sector encompasses gas, electricity, hydropower, coal and nuclear sources. It has enough traditional and renewable energy sources to achieve energy independence, the goal of the *Energy Strategy of Ukraine 2035*. Panellists will examine the current status of Ukraine's energy resources and reform programme, launched before the war. They will analyse ways to improve energy efficiency, for example, through sustainable construction, and the required measures to ensure the country's energy security and independence in the future.

Moderation



Mr Jörg Frieden Chair of the Board, Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets (SIFEM)

Speakers



H.E. Mr German Galushchenko Minister of Energy of Ukraine



Mr Gianni Operto
President, Swiss Federation of Renewable Energy and
Energy Efficiency Industries (aee suisse)



Mr Bertrand PiccardChairman, SolarImpulse Foundation

URC2022 Economic Forum Session on Digitalisation "Digitalisation: Ukraine's thriving IT industry" Auditorium A, Tuesday, 5 July, 16:00 – 16:30

Content

Ukraine was on its way to becoming one of the world's major tech powerhouses when war broke out. With a sustained growth rate of 20-25%, the development of the Ukrainian IT industry was far ahead of the average growth rate of the global IT sector. Its IT industry consists of over 4'000 local IT service companies and over 110 leading global companies have subsidiaries in the country. Speakers will tell the inspirational story of Ukraine's IT Industry and what the world can learn from its remarkable path of digital transformation.

Speakers



Ms Lenna Koszarny
Founding Partner and Chief Executive Officer, Horizon Capital,
Executive Vice-President of Western NIS Enterprise Fund
Ukrainian World Congress Board Member



H.E. Mr. Oleksandr BorniakovDeputy Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine



Ms Yaroslava GresPresidential Envoy and Coordinator, United24



Mr Jörg FriedenChair of the Board, Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging Markets (SIFEM)

End of the Ukraine Recovery Conference. The Congress Center will close its doors at 16:45.

Official delegations and individual participants

Official delegations are delegations of states and international organisations that have received a formal invitation letter signed by the co-presidents of the URC2022, H.E. Mr Ignazio Cassis, President of the Swiss Confederation, and H.E. Mr Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.

The following countries have been officially invited: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America.

In addition, the following international organisations have been officially invited: Council of Europe, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development EBRD, European Commission, European Council, European Investment Bank EIB, European Parliament, International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC, International Finance Corporation IFC, International Monetary Fund IMF, North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights OHCHR, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe OSCE, United Nations Development Program UNDP, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund UNICEF, World Bank, World Health Organization WHO and United Nations UN.

All other participants to the URC2022 are considered individual participants, regardless of which organisation they may represent (non-invited state or public institution, non-governmental organisation, academia, private company).

For information about confirmed attendances check the online media corner.

Side-event on civil society and recovery

Paving the way to a successful and inclusive recovery process

The objective of this side-event is to highlight the Ukrainian civil society's role in the joint mission of non-profits, private sector, public authorities, and the international community to rebuild and modernise Ukraine. During the event, participants will discuss the ways of Ukraine's recovery, highlight the driving role of civil society in the recovery process, and advocate for an increase in international support for Ukraine.

The event will gather the Ukrainian civil society representatives, public authorities, local community leaders, the private sector, high-level international representatives, and Ukrainian officials to discuss the process of recovery, reconstruction, and modernisation of Ukraine and the need to ensure that this process respects transparency, accountability and integrity. Civil society and the private sector are among the most flexible and capable actors to conduct quick modern changes and contribute to Ukraine's development. Recovery and modernisation of Ukraine shall be the joint goal of all sectors, despite possible differences in their approaches.

The event is co-hosted by the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI), Reanimation Package of Reforms Coalition and the Initiative Center to Support Social Action (Ednannia) under the EU-funded Emergency Support 4 Civil Society Project and USAID Ukraine Civil Society Sectoral Support Activity. The EUACI is an anti-corruption support programme in Ukraine funded by the EU, co-funded and implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. USAID Ukraine Civil Society Sectoral Support Activity is implemented by ISAR Ednannia in consortium with the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (UCIPR) and Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM) and in partnership with the Reanimation Package of Reforms Coalition.

This event is supported by the URC2022 co-organizers Switzerland and Ukraine.

* * *

The event will be held on Monday, 4 July, 10:00 –13:00 on the premises of SUPSI (University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland), Via Soldino 9, Lugano, Switzerland.

To participate in the event please register here: https://forms.gle/vicegS6dNDGL5UmVA

Due to limited space at the venue, organisers reserve the right to close registration.

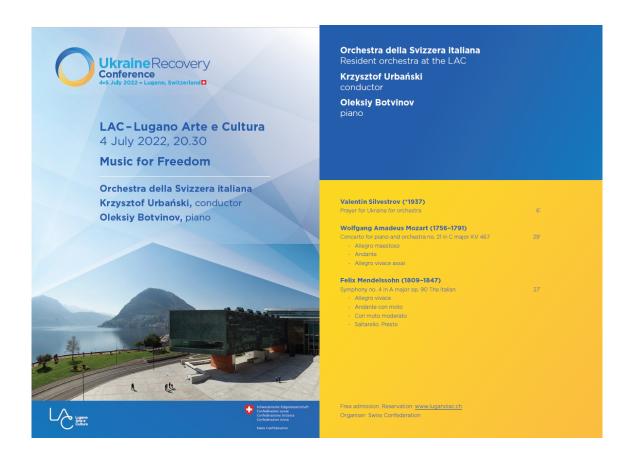
Events

Music for freedom – Oleksiy Botvinov concert with the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana*

Renowned Ukrainian pianist Oleksiy Botvinov will give a concert entitled "Music for freedom" with the *Orchestra della Svizzera italiana* at the *Lugano Arte e Cultura* center. Conductor will be Krzysztof Urbanski.

The concert programme includes pieces by Valentin Silvestrov "Prayer for Ukraine", Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 21 in C Major K. 467 and Felix Mendelssohn's Bartholdy Symphony no. 4 in A Major op. 90 "Italian". The concert is scheduled to start at 20:30 on Monday, 4 July. The *Lugano Arte e Cultura* center is a 15-minute walk from the Congress Center. A shuttle bus leaving the Congress Center around 19:45 will make an additional stop at LAC to allow interested participants to arrive on time for the concert. 15 minutes after the end of the concert at around 22:00, the shuttle bus will return URC2022 participants to their hotels.

For URC2022 participants who have made a reservation, tickets will be available at a special booth in the LAC lobby (one ticket per URC2022 participant).



Dakhabrakha

A world-music quartet from Kyiv, Dakhabrakha was created in 2004 and offers an experience of Ukrainian folk music combined with Indian, Arabic, African and Australian traditional instrumentation. The quartet's astonishingly powerful and uncompromising vocal range creates a trans-national sound rooted in Ukrainian culture. Dakhabrakha will give a free open-air concert starting at around 21:00 at Piazza Alessandro Manzoni, close to the Congress Center.



Ukrainian DJ night

Following Dakhabrakha's performance starting around 22:30, Ukrainian DJ Rustam Babaev will take the audience on a musical trip into Ukraine's techno scene.



General information about Switzerland, Ticino and Lugano

Switzerland

Switzerland lies at the heart of Europe. It has three distinct geographical regions: the Alps, the Central Plateau and the Jura. The country boasts an extraordinary variety of landscapes and habitats, which makes it a highly attractive place to live in and do business. The Alps cover two thirds of the country, but only one tenth of the population lives there. Switzerland shares its borders with five countries: Italy, France, Germany, Austria and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

8.5 million people live in Switzerland – twice as many as at the beginning of the 20th century. One reason for this is the country's high level of immigration. Switzerland's four national languages – German, French, Italian and Romansh – are an integral part of the national identity. Swiss multilingualism developed from cultural links with neighbouring Germany, Austria, France and Italy.

Switzerland is made up of 26 cantons, which are themselves divided into more than 2,300 communes. The federal government, the cantons and communes share political and legislative powers. Although its official name is the Swiss Confederation for historical reasons, Switzerland has, in fact, been a federal state since 1848. Power is shared between the Confederation (the federal government based in the capital city of Bern), the cantons (constituent states) and the communes. All three political levels have legislative and executive (government) branches.

In a country with different religious and linguistic groups, the federalism model makes it possible to accommodate both national unity and cultural diversity. Together with direct democracy, which offers the people the option of launching popular initiatives and referendums, federalism is one of the cornerstones of the Swiss political system.

Ticino

Geographically and culturally close to Italy, Ticino is the only canton located entirely south of the Alps. Lying on the strategic Milan–Zurich–Frankfurt axis, it is the southern gateway to Switzerland. Ticino is also the only entirely Italian-speaking canton in the country. It has a population of more than 350,000, with most inhabitants living in the four main agglomerations of Lugano, Locarno, Bellinzona and Mendrisio.

The beauty and variety of the landscape range from the Alpine peaks and lakes to the vineyards of the Mendrisiotto and the exotic charm of the Brissago Islands, famous for their remarkable diversity and for being the only island-based botanical garden in Switzerland. Furthermore, the particularly mild climate and wide range of cultural and leisure opportunities make Ticino a diverse, sought-after and increasingly attractive tourist destination. Ticino is home to three of Switzerland's 13 UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the medieval castles of Bellinzona; Monte San Giorgio with its extraordinary fossil deposits from the Middle Triassic period; and the ancient beech forests of the Lodano, Busai and Soladino valleys. To all this can be added the rich range of food and wine and a full programme of international events throughout the year.

The canton is also a prestigious research, university and conference hub; not only does it host a young and dynamic university, but also several excellent research institutes – the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB) and the Institute of Oncology Research (IOR) in Bellinzona, and the Swiss National Supercomputing Center (CSCS) in Lugano. The canton does much to promote artificial intelligence, life sciences, mechanical and electronic engineering, information and communication technology, and favourable economic conditions are provided for innovative start-ups.

In recent years, Ticino has experienced some important transport developments, especially in the rail sector. Heralded as the project of the century, the Gotthard Base Tunnel opened in 2016, further increasing the canton's attractiveness. At 57 kilometres, it is the longest rail tunnel in the world. The Ceneri Base Tunnel, which opened in September 2020, has halved journey times within the canton's borders. The completion of these projects has brought Ticino closer to the rest of Switzerland and Europe.

Lugano

Lugano developed from a medieval hamlet and fishing village into a popular tourist destination as early as the 19th century. From the 1960s onwards, the city experienced rapid growth in its banking sector and became Switzerland's third largest financial centre, after Zurich and Geneva. The founding of the University of Lugano in 1996, and later of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland, led to the establishment of numerous research institutes specialising in innovative disciplines, from artificial intelligence to medicine and computational science. The region thus offers broad educational opportunities and draws in skills and resources that are essential to the urban development. Today, Lugano attracts many high-end professions thanks to its cosmopolitan and multilingual character and strategic location as the hub of a major transport route. The opening in 2016 of the Gotthard Base Tunnel, the longest railway tunnel in the world, provided a unique opportunity for the city to become part of the new metropolitan area between Milan and Zurich.

The city lies in a natural amphitheatre of hills and mountains overlooking Lake Lugano, dominated by Monte Brè and Monte San Salvatore, which provide panoramic viewpoints of rare beauty. The region is a favourite destination not only thanks to its varied landscape – ideal for holidays and excursions, events, meetings, congresses and fairs – but also for the quality of its services and infrastructure, its rich cultural scene and tradition of welcome, hospitality, food and wine. The Mediterranean climate, lake, hills, parks and forests create an evocative natural setting that benefits the quality of life of guests and the local people.