



CONTENT

25 Years of diplomatic relations (p. 2-3):

Visit of the Swiss President to Georgia

Swiss National Day

DIPLOMAT magazine on Switzerland

Education (p. 3)

Visit of the Georgian Minister of Education and Science to Switzerland

Benefits of studying in Switzerland

Economy (p. 4)

EFTA-Georgia Free Trade Agreement

Development (p. 4)

Culture (p. 5)

Other (p.5)

Road Safety Conference

25 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Visit of the Swiss President to Georgia



President Leuthard and President Margvelashvili at the Residence in Tbilisi ©Swiss Embassy in Georgia

The year 2017 was a memorable year for Georgia and Switzerland, as the two countries celebrated the 25th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. The visit of the President of the Swiss Confederation, Ms. Doris Leuthard, to Georgia on 3-4 December crowned the celebrations of this solid partnership.

The Swiss President arrived in Tbilisi on 3 December. Official meetings with the President, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Parliament were held on 4 December. During these meetings, Georgia

and Switzerland highlighted their excellent bilateral relations, marked by a fruitful bilateral cooperation in a large scope of matters, and by the good offices provided by Switzerland concerning the relations between Georgia and Russia.

The two sides also laid stress upon economic relations, which are expected to further grow thanks to the EFTA-Georgia Free Trade Agreement, which will most probably enter into force in spring 2018. New opportunities of cooperation were explored, notably in the mountain areas.

You can read more on this on our [website](#).



President Margvelashvili shakes hands with the Swiss Ambassador to Georgia, Mr. Lukas Beglinger ©Swiss Embassy in Georgia



President Leuthard meets with the Parliamentary Chairperson, Mr. Kobakhidze ©Swiss Embassy in Georgia

Swiss National Day



Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and Ambassador Lukas Beglinger with a spouse Barbara Kohler-Beglinger at the Reception ©Swiss Embassy in Georgia

The Swiss National Day, celebrated on 1st August, was another opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Georgia. H.E. Lukas Beglinger, Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia, and H.E. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, addressed the guests expressing mutual gratitude and underpinning long-standing partnership between the two countries and Switzerland's support across various fields.

You can read more on this on our [website](#).
[Photo Gallery](#).

DIPLOMAT magazine on Switzerland

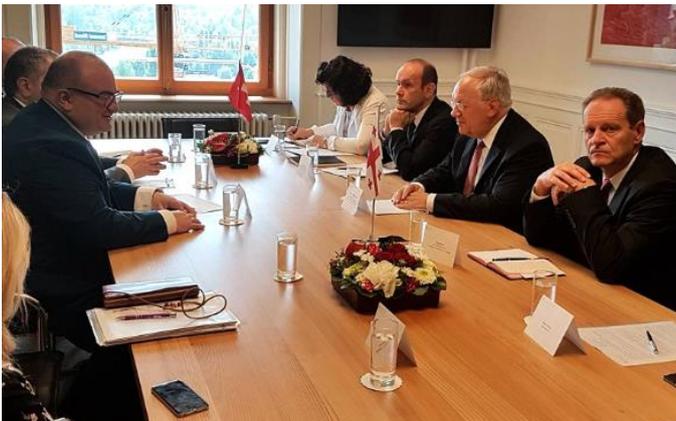


Switzerland and Swiss-Georgian relations are in focus of the special edition of DIPLOMAT magazine.

You can access the magazine [here](#).

EDUCATION

Visit of the Georgian Minister of Education and Science to Switzerland



Minister Jejelava meets with the Federal Councilor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann ©Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia

Since 2013, Switzerland supports the Georgian Government in reviving and modernizing the vocational education and training (VET) system, thus contributing to the creation of new job opportunities for youth. On 28-29 August, a Georgian delegation chaired by then Vice Premier and Minister of Education and Science Alexandre Jejelava paid a working visit to Switzerland with the aim of better understanding the key of the Swiss success in this field.

The visit included official meetings with Federal Councilor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, and Ambassador Manuel Sager, Director-General of the Swiss development and cooperation agency. The parties reviewed the intense cooperation in vocational education between Georgia and Switzerland and touched upon the future cooperation perspectives. The Georgian delegation also visited Swiss academic institutions specialized in agriculture.

You can read more on this on our [website](#).

Benefits of studying in Switzerland

Dozens of Georgians have already graduated from reputed Swiss universities and institutes, and dozens await such a life-changing opportunity. We have decided to inquire more about their personal experiences and asked to share some remarkable moments of their study and living in Switzerland, and how this experience contributed to their personal and professional growth. More importantly, by doing so we believe we encourage many others to follow the path to success.

Please read their unabridged stories [here](#).

ECONOMY

EFTA-Georgia Free Trade Agreement



Alvaro Borghi, Deputy Head of the Embassy talks to GEORGIA TODAY
©Swiss Embassy in Georgia

In September 2017, the Swiss Parliament approved the Free Trade Agreement between the EFTA countries and Georgia, which had been signed in June 2016. Its entry into force for the relations between Georgia and Switzerland is expected for April 2018 at the earliest.

Please find [here](#) an interview with Alvaro Borghi, Deputy Head of the Swiss Embassy, on the expected consequences of once the agreement on the trade between the two countries enters into force.

DEVELOPMENT



Olivier Bürki (SCO) and Erika Kvapilova (UN Women) sign an agreement
©Swiss Cooperation Office for the South Caucasus

In the June Newsletter we have informed about the launch of the Cooperation Strategy 2017-2020. Within the framework of this Strategy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation signed a series of agreements along the lines of the Strategy's priorities:

On 6 November an agreement was signed by the heads of the SCO and the UN Women for the preparatory phase of a project that will aim at reduction of gender disparities through women's eco-

nomic empowerment. During the preparatory 6 months, the project will collect the baseline data and lay the groundwork for the main phase of the project expected to begin by mid of 2018.

Please see our [post](#).

On 11 December, Switzerland and Austria joined hands with UNDP to provide continuous support to the decentralization process with the program "Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia". Part of this program, 23 municipalities in 4 regions of Georgia (over 900'000 inhabitants) will be able to support citizens and local businesses in setting up economic development initiatives. Hereby generating additional employment and enhanced investment in rural areas.

Please see our [Photo Gallery](#).

On 12 December, the Regional Director of Cooperation, Olivier Bürki, signed an agreement with the South Caucasus Photography Hub for Education and Innovation (PHEI), represented by its director, Fatman Tchogovadze. On 18 December, another agreement was signed with Noosfera Foundation concerning the contribution to the CinéDOC-Tbilisi Festival. Both represent the two components of the *Regional Arts and Culture* program which promotes intercultural dialogue and exchanges in the South Caucasus. Implemented in collaboration with the aforementioned partners based in Georgia and networks in Armenia and Azerbaijan, the program aims at supporting visual arts (documentary film and photography), building up professional capacities, engaging civil society, and supporting local art scenes with a small grants' fund.

Please see our [Photo Gallery](#).

On 18 December, an agreement was signed with UNDP to initiate a partnership for the support to climate adaptation measures in Georgia. Throughout the next 7 months, baseline data, capacity assessment and preparatory work will be conducted with a view of preparing the introduction of a multi-hazard early warning system in Georgia.

Please see our [Photo Gallery](#).

CULTURE

After an intense first part of the year, marked by the *Francophonie* in March and by the *Monat der deutschen Sprache* in May, the Swiss Embassy organised two cultural events in October. The first one was the presentation of the Georgian translation of the greatest success of the modern Swiss literature, J. Dicker's "La vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert" (Please visit our [Photo gallery](#)). The second one was the screening of the film "Vecchi pazzi", by S. Boss.

On 30 September-1 October, Tskaltubo saw the fifth edition of the Tskaltubo Art Festival supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). For four consecutive years, as part of its wider intervention "Regional Arts and Culture Programme", the SDC has been supporting local artists and youth through a range of arts workshops. The festival was a concluding event where the results of hard work and dedication were presented to a wider audience. The Swiss Ambassador to Georgia H.E. Lukas Beglinger attended the Festival to bid goodbye to the long-supported festival and wished good luck to a local Tskaltubo IDP Women Union who will uphold the tradition of bringing European and Georgian artists together.

Please visit our [Photo Gallery](#).

Last but not least, the Swiss Embassy participated in the annual Winter Fair initiated and organized by the IWAG (International Women's Association Georgia). With the generous support of our sponsors, we are proud to have presented the best results and thus to be the biggest contributor to this charity action.

Please visit our [Photo Gallery](#).

OTHER

Road Safety Conference

Did you know that in 2016 Switzerland recorded the lowest road mortality in Europe (26 deaths per million inhabitants)? On the other end of the spectrum, according to OECD data, Georgia was the deadliest country in this regard (163 deaths per million inhabitants in 2016).

Aiming to promote road safety in Georgia, a local NGO brought together some of the highest ranking government officials, diplomats and international experts, alongside private and public sector representatives, to discuss the current road safety issues in Georgia through panel discussions, thematic workshops and round-table discussions. The Swiss road safety expert Roland Wiederkehr participated in the conference to share the Swiss experience.

You can read more on the conference [here](#)

Swiss Embassy in Georgia
11 Krtsanisi, 0114 Tbilisi, Georgia

www.eda.admin.ch/georgia
www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyTbilisi

Swiss Cooperation Office South Caucasus
34 Chavchavadze Ave., 0179 Tbilisi Georgia

www.eda.admin.ch/georgia
www.facebook.com/SwissCooperationSouthCaucasus