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Dear Swiss friends and friends of Switzerland,

Summer has arrived to Azerbaijan and many of you might already have left Baku for holidays.

The Swiss Embassy looks back to a busy first half of the year. Our goal remains the same: To promote the interests of Switzerland in Azerbaijan in a spirit of boosting bilateral cooperation and dialogue among the governments, business circles of our two countries and also to bring people of our societies closer together.

A highlight in this perspective was the official visit of Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann to Azerbaijan in early July together with an important delegation including representatives from politics and the Swiss private sector. This and more highlights of our work you will be able to discover in this newsletter's edition and on behalf of my entire team I would like to thank you for your support and your interest.

Let me wish you all an excellent summer!

Philipp Stalder

Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan

Politics

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Amman visits Azerbaijan in July



Meeting with President Ilham Aliyev

Swiss Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Johann N. Schneider-Amann paid an official visit to Azerbaijan together with a delegation consisting of representatives from parliament, cantonal governments and the private sector. The aim of the sizeable 35-strong Swiss delegation was to identify business opportunities for Swiss firms and to foster friendly relations with Azerbaijan as a member country of Switzerland's constituency in the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank, IMF).

During his stay from 8 to 9 July, Federal Councillor Schneider-Amann held separate meetings with President Ilham Aliyev, Minister of Economy Shahin Mustafayev and Minister of Finance Samir Sharifov. The sides discussed the ongoing economic developments in both countries and in particular Azerbaijan's role and impressive efforts to become a regional logistic and transport hub. In this regard, the two sides exchanged views over the prospects of cooperation in trade and investment in a number of various economic fields and sectors, including healthcare and education.

Following the meeting with Minister Shahin Mustafayev, both Ministers of Economy attended a bilateral Business Forum. This event was organized by AZPROMO in the presence of a large number of business people. Presentations were held by Azerbaijan's Investment and Promotion and by *economiesuisse* (www.economiesuisse.ch), the largest umbrella organization representing the Swiss economy in support of more than 30'000 businesses of all sizes. The following B2B meetings successfully finished the morning program before Federal Councillor Schneider-Amann and the economic mission headed to Sumgayit to pre-inaugurate the new SIKA factory (see separate article on page 6 of the Newsletter).

<http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-economy/finance-news/johann-schneider-amann-azerbaijan-switzerland-have-some-untapped-bilateral-business-opportunities-interview.html>

https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_received_delegation_led_by_head_of_Swiss_Federal_Department_of_Economic_Affairs_Education_and_Research_VIDEO-1177986

<https://www.azernews.az/nation/134485.html>

Meeting of the Presidents in Davos



President Ilham Aliyev and President Alain Berset

As it has become a kind of tradition in the last few years, President Ilham Aliyev was received by the President of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillor Alain Berset, within the sidelines of World Economic Forum (WEF). The meeting took place in Davos on 24 January. The head of states of Switzerland and Azerbaijan emphasized the existing high-level relations in energy, political, economical and cultural fields. The global energy and transportation projects initiated by and involving Azerbaijan were highlighted during the meeting. Europe's energy security and Switzerland's ongoing support for the Southern Gas Corridor and TAP – a Swiss-based consortium - was another topic of discussion.

Furthermore, a few days before the presidential meeting, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Abulfas Garayev attended in Davos a conference of European Ministers of Culture. The conference organized and attended by the President of the Swiss Confederation was dedicated to the 2018 *European Year of Cultural Heritage* and brought together the signatory states of the European Cultural Convention as well as the observer states on the Council of Europe. One of the topics was the need to highlight the importance of spatial planning and to preserve cultural heritage for our modern societies as an essential determining factor for the quality of life of city dwellers.

<https://en.president.az/articles/26819>

<https://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2018>

Political consultations on the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers



Deputy Foreign Minister Mammadgulyev and Azerbaijani Ambassador to Berne, Khanim Ibrahimova (right) at their official meeting with Deputy State Secretary Krystina Marty Lang

On 27 March, Deputy State Secretary Krystina Marty Lang received an Azerbaijani delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmut Mammadgulyev for talks on the current status of bilateral relations. The discussion included a broad spectrum of topics including prospects for bilateral and international cooperation, the situation of civil society in Azerbaijan and the unsolved conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

During his official visit, Deputy Minister Mammadgulyev also met with Ambassador Erwin Bollinger from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). With the newly appointed Swiss co-chair of the bilateral Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation the Azerbaijani delegation agreed to have a next round of discussions in this format in early 2019. The last meeting of the Joint Economic Commission took place in Baku in spring 2016.

Chairman of Parliamentary Friendship Group attends Silk Road Conference



Councillor of States, Mr. Filippo Lombardi, with the Deputy Head of Mission, Ms. Liliana Pescini (right) and Academic Intern, Ms Franziska Roth

The first international Conference of the Silk Road Support Group of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was hosted in Baku on 13–14 March 2018. Switzerland as one of the 22 member countries of the Support Group was represented at this event by Councillor of States, Mr. Filippo Lombardi. Mr. Lombardi is well known to Azerbaijan since he acts since many years as chairman of the Swiss-Azerbaijani Parliamentary Friendship Group.

At his speech, the Swiss politician emphasized our country's role as an important supporter of the Road and Belt Initiative to which Azerbaijan actively associates itself. For Switzerland, connectivity has always been significant and Mr. Lombardi illustrated this on the road and railway connection through the Gotthard and the Swiss Alps. On the sidelines of the conference, Mr. Lombardi held a number of bilateral meetings and was welcomed by members of the Swiss Embassy.

Development Cooperation

SECO Head of Operations visits Baku

The Head of Operations at Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Mr. Ivo German, paid a visit to Baku on 12 March. He had meetings with the senior officials from Central Bank of Azerbaijan, Ministry of Finance, and Financial Markets Supervisory Authority, as well as had talks with local representatives of international organizations. The talks covered discussion of results of ongoing projects in Azerbaijan and perspectives for future cooperation between SECO and Azerbaijani authorities. Mr. Germann expressed the interest of SECO in continuing the technical cooperation with Azerbaijan, focusing on macro-economic support and private sector support measures. In Azerbaijan, SECO operates under the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the South Caucasus 2017-2020.

Training for statistic professionals in Baku



Participants of the training in Baku

In late April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted an in-depth training for government officials in the area of Government Finance Statistics (GFS) in Baku, financed by SECO. The training was part of the three-year capacity development program in GFS for Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

The five days' course was attended by the statistic professionals of the Ministry of Finance, the State Statistics Committee, the Central Bank and other institutions collecting government finance data. IMF's Statistics Department aims at strengthening the Ministry of Finance to implement GFS methodology at all levels of government in Azerbaijan, with the objective to improve the quality of the fiscal data.

SECO finances establishment of Association for Credit Information Providers



A regional *Association for Credit Information Providers (ACIP)* was established in Baku on 17 April. The launch took place in the framework of the ongoing project on the modernization of the financial infrastructure in Azerbaijan, which is implemented by the International Finance Company (IFC) and financed by Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Azerbaijan has now a modern law allowing private credit bureaus to operate and has established its own credit bureau in December 2017, which also joined the association.

In her opening speech, the Deputy Regional Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office, Ms. Simone Haerberli, welcomed the creation of such a highly relevant association and expressed the hope that this platform will be widely used for knowledge exchange and mutual learning.

ACIP includes credit registries and private credit bureaus from eight countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, spanning from Belarus to Tajikistan. It is the first association of its kind in the region. It will contribute to the strengthening of the region's financial infrastructure by improving risk management methodologies and by promoting sharing of experiences. The ACIP will also facilitate peer learning and trans-border information sharing among member credit information providers.

Mobile Money Pilot Project in Nakhchevan



From left to right: Deputy Regional Director of SCO, Mrs. Simone Haerberli, Finance Minister of NAR, Sabuhi Mammadov, Head of IFC Azerbaijan Office, Mrs. Aliye Azimova and IFC head of Advisory Services, Mr. Jesper Kjayer

The Ministry of Finance of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (NAR), together with the Ministry of Communication and Technology, agreed to carry out an essential pilot project under the Mobile Money project, launched in Azerbaijan in 2017. The International Finance Cooperation is the implementer of this Swiss-funded project (SECO).

Thanks to the pilot in a small and quite isolated environment, it will be possible to test innovative payment solutions using mobile network and local payment system providers. People will be able to make payments using their phones. If the pilot is successful, the project can be rolled out throughout the Republic of Azerbaijan. The main objective of this project is financial inclusion. People living in remote and rural areas do not usually access formal financial systems, such as banks and electronic payments. The society is very much cash-based. It will be key to offer a solution attractive enough to change financial behaviors, so that people will prefer their phones over cash.

Secondment at the Central Bank of Azerbaijan - impressions from Benjamin Müller



Mr. Benjamin Müller, monetary specialist at the Swiss National Bank

I am an economist at the Swiss National Bank's Money Market and Foreign Exchange unit and from the end of January to the end of March 2018, I had the opportunity to complete a secondment at the Central Bank of Azerbaijan (CBA) in Baku. The secondment was supported by the Swiss National Bank, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the integrated Swiss Embassy in Baku. Against the backdrop of the 2015 crisis and the substantial devaluation of the manat, the CBA is in the process of reforming its conduct of monetary policy towards an inflation targeting regime. The aim of my secondment was to provide conceptual and operational support to the CBA in this process. During my three-month secondment, I worked closely together with CBA employees on projects in the areas of monetary policy implementation and money market development. The main deliverable was a report that provides an overview of the current challenges in the implementation of monetary policy and that gives recommendations.

My work was characterized by an excellent and open cooperation with the employees of the CBA. The work was closely coordinated with the Swiss Cooperation Office in Baku which is a part of the Embassy. It was further coordinated with projects of other institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, that also contribute to technical assistance in monetary policy and financial sector development in Azerbaijan.

Beyond my day-to-day work routine, I had the pleasure to travel to different regions of Azerbaijan, which gave me an insight into a beautiful and extremely exciting country with wonderful people. I will definitely come back! At this point, a big thank you to all the employees of the integrated Swiss Embassy in Baku and the people in charge at the CBA, who have supported me during my stay in many different aspects.

“Brave girls” have messages to deliver



Deputy Head of Mission, Simone Haerberli, together with members of Equals

Do young girls in Azerbaijan have many role models encouraging them to live their dreams and develop ambitions? The presentation of the book entitled “*Brave girls*” funded by Switzerland demonstrated that indeed there are numerous role models available to inspire young Azerbaijani girls.

The book “*Brave girls*” includes stories of 20 Azerbaijani women both from history and modern times. It features accomplished women with a story of their own to tell. Among them is the first ever Muslim woman pilot, who broke all stereotypes by taking up this “manly” profession in the 1930s. Other historical heroines include a writer, a composer, an actress etc. Modern heroines are young women who also broke all types of stereotypes to become

a mountain climber, a film producer, a professional taekwondo fighter, a professor at a US university and many more.

The texts of the book are written in simple language to be well understood by children. The book is intended to be read to girls and boys by their parents and grandparents at home. The last page is blank, providing space for big dreamers to put down their own story. The book will be presented at different schools in Baku, Sumqayit and Barda towns of Azerbaijan and will be accompanied by several activities where real life role models will also take part.

“*Brave girls*” was published as a part of the project “Bedtime stories”, which is implemented by *Equals*, a dedicated group of young feminist activists in Baku. The project also includes activities with young children to discuss stereotypes and introduce them to unusual women of Azerbaijan.

<https://www.facebook.com/cesurqizlar/>

Economy, Trade & Tourism

Swiss company Sika visited by Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann



Regional Manager Ivo Schädler presents SIKA to Federal Councillor J. Schneider-Ammann and Minister of Economy Shahin Mustafayev.

and Sika's Country Director for Azerbaijan, Mr. Yayla Adem, both Ministers received detailed information on the product portfolio of the new factory and did a tour at the facility which was constructed according to the latest available technology of the company. Mr. Schädler underlined. *"We have been selling our innovative products in Azerbaijan since 2005. The new, modern facility not only enables us to expand our product portfolio, it also means we can enhance product quality while lowering costs and strengthening our position as a high-caliber supplier to the country's up-and-coming construction market."*

In the frame of his official visit to Azerbaijan, Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann participated at the pre-inauguration ceremony of a new plant of Sika on 9 July. Sika is a Swiss manufacturer for specialty chemicals.

In his speech, the Swiss Minister of Economy said: *"Like many of our globally active brands, Sika is a true representative of the innovative and competitive Swiss private sector. The new Sika factory is another substantial investment of Switzerland into the non-oil sector of the economy of Azerbaijan."*

On behalf of the Azerbaijani government, Minister Shahin Mustafayev assessed the new Swiss investment equally positive and evaluated the presence of Sika as a sign of an existing fruitful environment for foreign investment in Azerbaijan.

In the presence of Sika's Regional Manager on Europe, Middle East and Africa, Mr. Ivo Schädler,

<https://globenewswire.com/news-release/2018/07/10/1534984/0/en/SWISS-FEDERAL-COUNCILLOR-SCHNEIDER-AMMANN-VISITS-NEW-SIKA-FACTORY-IN-AZERBAIJAN.html>

Swiss business community gather at the Nobel House



Ambassador Stalder with CEOs of Swiss companies in

In early March, the Embassy organized a special evening for the Swiss business community in Azerbaijan and invited the CEOs and their spouses to the Nobel House. The social event started with a tour through the Nobel Brothers' Museum where the guests received information about the fascinating history of the beginning of the oil industry in Azerbaijan and the Nobel House which is also called Villa Petrolea. This was the place where the famous brothers Ludwig and Robert Nobel and their families resided for a period of over 40 years at the late 19th and early 20th century.

Following the exclusive tour, the guests were invited to the second floor of the historic building for a delicious Azerbaijani dinner prepared by the staff of the Nobel Oil Club to which the museum belongs. Ambassador Philipp Stalder gave a short welcome speech and presented Mr.

Emil Hasanov as a guest speaker who gave us an insight about the more recent developments of the oil and gas industry and its continuous importance for the welfare of the country. Mr. Hasanov is a Founding Member and former President of Baku International Rotary Club.

Swiss Tourism Promotion - Vintage Poster exhibition «Take a holiday!»



Ambassador Stalder presents a poster to the Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Nazim Samadov

A vintage poster exhibition was organized by the Embassy at the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan in partnership with «Switzerland Tourism» in Baku in April. The exhibition aimed at promoting the tourism potential of Switzerland through some 50 posters during one century (1917-2017).

A wider collection of these historic and artistically valuable posters were exhibited at various museums in Switzerland on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the promotion association «Switzerland Tourism» (TS)

As the contribution of Switzerland in the framework of the Francophonie weeks, the event was well received by the visitors as well as by the local press. At the opening ceremony on 13 April, the Swiss Ambassador in the presence of Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Nazim Samadov, and Mr. Federico Sommaruga from TS

addressed the numerous audience from the diplomatic community and representatives from the art and culture scene in Baku. The Embassy is thankful to its partners - the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and TS – and the Swiss companies, Trans Adriatic Pipeline SA (TAP) and Axpo Holding SA for their financial support.

<http://salambaku.travel/ru/events/single/110-vystavka-vintazhnyh-posterov-vozmi-otpusk>

Culture, Education & Sport

Swiss National Day celebrated in Baku



The annual official Swiss National Day Reception was held at The Landmark on 27 June 2018. In his short welcome speech, Ambassador Philipp Stalder drew the attention of the audience to the invitation card which shows a classic steamboat on the beautiful Lake of Zurich – a subject which was taken from the Embassy's vintage poster exhibition. Speaking about positive dynamics of bilateral relations, the Ambassador also congratulated Azerbaijan for the tremendous achievements over the last 100 years and in particular the years since the regain of state independence.

On behalf of the Azerbaijani government, Deputy Foreign Minister Ramiz Hasanov positively evaluated the bilateral relations and warmly congratulated Switzerland and the Swiss people on the occasion of the National Day.

All guests and football fans were warmly invited to stay longer and to watch the World Cup group game Switzerland - Costa Rica. Numerous fans of both teams did so and saw an entertaining game which ended with a fair draw (2:2). Of course, the superb view from the 22nd floor and the deliciously prepared Swiss food by The Landmark have to be mentioned here as well and did not go unnoticed among our 400 guests who spent a pleasant summer evening under the Swiss flag.

https://azertag.az/xeber/Bakida_Isvechrenin_milli_bayrami_qeyd_edilib-1175271

Azerbaijani documentary on women in the past and the present



At the beginning of the year, the Embassy commissioned the production of a documentary entitled *"Republican Woman Daring to Change"* and four months later, the movie was presented to the audience as a première. This was done at YARAT Contemporary Art Space on 16 May 2018 in the framework of the *Euro Tolerance Film Festival*.

200 persons - among them many representatives of media, civil society, and foreign embassies including a member of the parliamentary friendship group Azerbaijan-Switzerland - attended the screening of the movie and participated at a discussion with the production team. The event ended with a long enthusiastic applaud and one can say that, for sure, it has been one of the most successful events of the entire Euro Tolerance Film Festival.

The documentary is dedicated to the *100th anniversary of women's right to vote in Azerbaijan* and describes the situation of Azerbaijani women over the last century. It takes the viewer on a fascinating journey through different historical periods, focusing on the political, social and educational contribution of women to the development of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan. A lot of rare film material from the archives has been used for the documentary and is shown to the public for the first time. After shedding light on 6 historical eras, the movie continues to discuss the unprecedented opportunities for today's women of Azerbaijan, but also highlights remaining challenges keeping women from fully realizing their social, professional and political potential. It should be highlighted that the documentary was produced by professional Azerbaijani women exclusively, from script writer to producer and the project executed by the Women's Association for Rational Development (WARD). As clearly mentioned in the documentary's credits, the Swiss Embassy does not necessarily share the opinions mentioned in the documentary and gave the producers free choice to handle the topic of female role models in Azerbaijan's history.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Philipp Stalder underlined the importance of tolerance: *"Tolerance" has been the motto of the current European Film Festival and with pleasure Switzerland and the Swiss Embassy associates itself to the tremendously important values of tolerance, mutual respect and peaceful cooperation among persons, people and nations*". Furthermore, he dedicated the film to the celebration of 100 years of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic and congratulated the Azerbaijani citizens and nation for all the achievements. Finally, the importance of human rights and women's rights was underlined by the notion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4XWiorzYw>

<https://en.azvision.az/news/86824/republican-women-daring-to-change.html>

<https://apa.az/medeniyyet-xeberleri/incesenet-haqqinda/isvecre-sefirliyinin-desteyi-ile-cekilen-deyisikliklere-cesareti-catan-cumhuriyyet-qadinklari-filmi-numayis-olunacaq-1463.html>

Swiss Boogie-Woogie Concerts in Baku



On the initiative of the Embassy, music lovers in Baku could enjoy two extraordinary Boogie-Woogie concerts – including a master class for students - by the famous Swiss pianist, Mr. Silvan Zingg. Boogie-woogie is an energizing musical genre created in the late 1920s and 1945s as a piano music style derived from the blues. Mr. Silvan Zingg performed on stage with legends like Chuck Berry, Ray Charles and many other great musicians. Being himself an exceptionally skilled pianist, the performance of Silvan Zingg is really impressive. His biggest hit “*Dancing The Boogie*” has reached over 8.1 million visitors on YouTube. His passion for this kind of music also led him to the creation of the “International Boogie-Woogie Festival” in Lugano which existed there since 2002.

The first concert took place at *International Mugam Center* on 27 January, followed by a second one a day later at *The Landmark*. The tickets for the first concert were available online and the concert hall was sold out to the last seat. Thanks to the joyful music, the piano virtuosity and the great talent to find an immediate connection to his public, Silvan’s concerts were not only a musical highlight but also very cheerful and entertaining events. As a supplement to the concerts, Mr. Zingg provided a Master Class on Boogie-Woogie history to students and played a jam session with Azerbaijani musicians.

<https://www.azernews.az/culture/126247.html>
<https://www.silvanzingg.com/>

Swiss cultural events in Ganja



Within the frame of the *week of the French language and the Francophonie*, the Embassy presented two cultural events in the second biggest city in Azerbaijan in March.

500 spectators attended the screening of the movie “*Heidi*” by Alain Gsponer (2015) at Yeni Azerbaijan Party Building. “*Heidi*” is based on the famous novel by Swiss author Johanna Spyri. It is story about a young orphan girl living with her grandfather in the Swiss Alps. The novel became a huge success all over the world after its publication in 1880 and since then also many films took up the inspiring story of this brave little girl Heidi.

On the following day (16 March), the opening ceremony of the **photographs exhibition of Mr. Cedric Christopher Merkli** dedicated to “Chästeilet Justistal” (cheese sharing tradition of Justistal) took place at the Mesheti Genjevi Cultural Centre. Mr. Merkli has a degree in Communication Design from Zurich and published his works in

various magazines and newspapers. He created especially for this exhibition in Ganja a new collection of photographs dedicated to the antique tradition of the Alp Cheese farmers in Switzerland.

Neues Germanistikinstitut in Baku eröffnet



Grusswort von Botschafter Stalder im Rahmen der Eröffnungsfeier

Das Institut für Germanistik wurde an der Sprachenuniversität in Baku am 1. März 2018 in Anwesenheit zahlreicher Gäste, darunter auch Botschafter Philipp Stalder, feierlich eingeweiht. Moderiert wurde die Feier vor rund 200 Anwesenden von Prof. Sieglinde Hartmann, die von Rektor Kamal Abdulla zur Gastprofessorin ernannt und mit der Begründung des Instituts beauftragt wurde.

Das Interesse an der deutschsprachigen Literatur und Sprache in Baku ist in den vergangenen Jahren stetig gestiegen. Besuchten 2010 lediglich 10 Studenten Lehrveranstaltungen in Germanistik, waren es gemäss der Institutsgründerin 2014 bereits 300 junge Menschen. Das Germanistikinstitut an der Sprachenuniversität ist bereits das zweite Institut in Aserbaidschan. Ein solches existiert an der Slawischen Universität in Baku seit 2015.

Welcoming a sport's delegation from Switzerland



Athletes of the Swiss Gymnastics Federation at the Swiss residence

Several athletes of the Swiss Gymnastics Federation (Schweizerischer Turnverband) represented Switzerland at the 26th European Championships in Trampoline, Tumbling and Double Mini-Trampoline in Baku. The competition took place from 12-15 April 2018 in the National Gymnastics Arena in Baku.

Ahead of the participation of Swiss athletes, the Embassy was kindly informed by the Azerbaijan Gymnastics Federation. This allowed us on short notice, to invite the whole delegation including instructors and referees for a coffee chat at the Swiss Residence and to wish them good success.

[http://www.ueg.org/en/26th-European-Championships-in-Trampoline,-Double-Mini-Trampoline-and-Tumbling--Baku-\(AZE\)-2018-2018-04-12](http://www.ueg.org/en/26th-European-Championships-in-Trampoline,-Double-Mini-Trampoline-and-Tumbling--Baku-(AZE)-2018-2018-04-12)
<http://www.stv-fsg.ch/de/>

Swiss Embassy represented at ADA International Festival



Ms. Marit Stalder and Academic Intern, Mr. Keivan Mohasseb

The Embassy took part at the Annual International Festival at ADA University on Friday 20 April. This annual event was organized for the 7th time with the aim to bring together representatives from different countries and to promote the intercultural exchange.

A large number of young Azerbaijani took this opportunity to learn more about cultures from all over the world. Apart from Switzerland, another 40 countries as well as the European Union were represented. At the Swiss booth, students were able to receive information on Switzerland in general, as well as on the Swiss education system. In addition, two home-made Swiss specialties, the Grisons Nut Cake ("Bündner Nusstorte") and freshly baked plaited loaf ("Butterzopf") were served to the guests.

Promotional event for hospitality education at the Swiss Residence



On 12 April, Ambassador Philipp Stalder hosted a promotional event for hospitality education in Switzerland at his residence. Representatives of Sommet Education presented the well-known Swiss hospitality management schools, Glion and Les Roches. The promotional event was attended by potential students, parents, alumni, hotel representatives and media

More than 50 students from Azerbaijan have already graduated from from these two hospitality schools. Both institutions offer an international dimension. Besides from Azerbaijan, there are students from all over the world (95 nationalities). Furthermore it is possible to study not only in Switzerland, but also at many other locations abroad. This is

possible thanks to Sommet Education's well-established global network. Particularly worth mentioning is also the fact that these institutions are very keen on combining theory and practice. As a consequence, a part of the education is deepened through internships in companies. Students further have the opportunity to select from a variety of specialisations, which are also taking current trends in the hospitality sector into account.

<https://www.glion.edu/>

<https://www.lesroches.edu/>

<http://www.lecarrefour.az/images/lecarrefourpdf/LE-Juillet%202018.pdf>

Visa & Consular Affairs

Personnel changes at the Embassy



Mr. Maniciati and Ms. Pescini

Within a few weeks in summer, two personnel changes of Swiss staff at the Embassy take place. Mid-July, our Consul & Deputy Head of Mission, **Ms. Liliana Pescini**, finished her assignment in Azerbaijan after three years.

Beginning of August, Vice-Consul, **Mr. Alain Maniciati**, will also be leaving Baku for his next posting after he served for two years at the Embassy.

We would like to warmly thank both colleagues for their great work and friendship and wish them much success for their future postings in Europe and Central Asia.

The successor of Ms. Pescini as Consul & Head of Administration is **Mr. Jürg Neuenschwander** has started his new function in July. The new Vice-Consul, **Ms. Martina Bergdorf-Hitz**, will be arriving to Baku in early September. We wish both colleagues an excellent start and a wonderful stay in beautiful Azerbaijan!

New online visa fee payment

The Embassy launched a new payment system for visa fees. Since 1 April 2018, applicants can pay online (ePayment) for visa. This option will be given to the applicant when he/she registers the application on Switzerland's Online visa system. Payment can only be made in Euro with Visa or Mastercard.

If the applicant is not sure that his/her visa will be free of charge or not, he/she should refrain from making ePayment.

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/azerbaijan/en/home/visa/entry-residency/visa.html>

Varia

Eine weitere Hochschulpraktikantin (Franziska Roth) sagt «auf Wiedersehen Baku»



Academic Intern Franziska Roth

Es ist unglaublich, wie schnell die Zeit vergeht. Ich erinnere mich noch gut daran, wie ich vor fast neun Monaten im heissen und schwülen Baku angekommen bin: etwas aufgeregt, weil alles neu und unbekannt war, aber auch neugierig auf Land, Leute und Arbeit. Ich ahnte damals noch nicht, was für eine lehrreiche und unvergessliche Zeit ich in Baku verbringen würde.

Der berufliche Start war positiv. Meine neuen Kolleginnen und Kollegen im Büro haben mich sehr nett empfangen und mir den Einstieg leichtgemacht. Die vielfältige Arbeit bei der Botschaft hat mir vom ersten Tag an Spass gemacht. Ich konnte einen Einblick in die verschiedensten Bereiche erhalten, sei es in die Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft oder Menschenrechte. Diese Vielfältigkeit hat mir besonders gefallen, denn fast täglich kam etwas Neues und Unbekanntes auf mich zu und stellte oft auch eine Herausforderung dar. Aber Herausforderungen

sind dazu da, gemeistert zu werden. Dafür hatte ich ein tolles und hilfsbereites Team, das mich bei allen Fragen und Unsicherheiten unterstützte.

Doch nicht nur in meiner beruflichen Entwicklung hat mich dieses Praktikum weitergebracht. Auch persönlich war es eine Erfahrung, die ich jedem empfehlen kann. Es hört sich beängstigend an, allein in ein fremdes Land zu reisen und dort zu arbeiten und zu leben. Doch egal, ob die Erfahrungen gut oder schlecht sind, man lernt daraus. Für mich waren sie in allen Bereichen positiv, und ich werde die Zeit hier nicht so schnell vergessen.


Football tournament to promote gender equality



Ambassador Philipp Stalder and Academic Intern Franziska Roth joined a friendly football game to mark the *International Women's Day* which was widely celebrated in Azerbaijan on 8 March.


Postponed from March to 14 April due to rainy weather, the tournament was jointly organized by the Azerbaijani Women's Football Federation (AFFA) and the association of the Heads of Missions' Spouses (HOMS). Many diplomats and their families supported this great initiative to promote the importance of gender equality through sports and it was much fun to play with very talented Azerbaijani female football players in mixed teams.

Facts & Figures



Switzerland. **WATER RESERVOIR OF EUROPE**

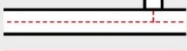
Over 6% of Europe's fresh water reserves are in Switzerland.

CH → 


↓

EUROPE

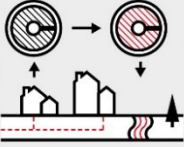
Over 80% of drinking and service water comes from groundwater and springs.



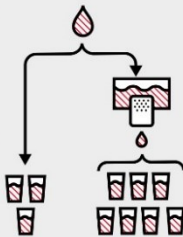
Most fountains in Switzerland are supplied with drinking water and are regularly monitored by the authorities.



97% of private households are connected to a central waste water treatment plant. The entire sewer system measures 130,000 km = 3 times the circumference of the Earth.



Around one third of all drinking water does not require any treatment before it reaches consumers.



© FDFA, PRS 2017 / Sources: Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Federal Statistical Office (FSO) / For more, visit aboutswitzerland.org

Switzerland is an important water source for Europe. Did you know that over 6% of Europe's fresh water reserves are in Switzerland?

Switzerland can be proud of its clean water. Around one third of all drinking water does not require any treatment before it reaches consumers.

80% of drinking water comes from groundwater and springs.

Most fountains in Switzerland are supplied with drinking water.

Media

Interviews of Ambassador Philipp Stalder:

<https://de.azvision.az/news/48542/socar%C2%A0ist-in-der-schweiz-zu-einer-marke-mit-wiedererkennungswert-geworden-philipp-stalder-exklusives-interview.html>
<http://caspianenergy.net/ru/ambassador/44158-tap-can-be-considered-as-an-important-tool-for-energy-import-diversification-philipp-stalder>
<https://en.azvision.az/news/85640/25-years-and-counting%E2%80%A6-exclusive-interview-with-philipp-stalder,-ambassador-of-switzerland-to-azerbaijan.html>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2XtKq8BLqg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm9gZWIUWiM>

Information related to the Embassy:

http://xezerxeber.az/son_x%C9%99b%C9%99r/201933.html
<http://azerbaijan.travel/en/events/single/186>
<https://de.azvision.az/news/48542/socar-ist-ein-brend-in-schweiz-philipp-stalder-exklusives-interview.html>
<http://cbc.az/en/en/news/azerbaijani-swiss-relations-in-spotlight1531156668>
<https://www.marktpuls.ch/artikel/permalink/293103>
<https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2926517.html>
<http://www.azerbaijan-news.az/index.php?mod=3&id=150377>

News related to Switzerland in Azerbaijani media:

<http://lecarrefour.az/index.php/actualites-en-ligne/1803-ambassadeur-l-azerbaidjan-peut-apprendre-de-l-experience-de-la-suisse-dans-le-domaine-du-tourisme>

Swiss abroad

Swiss political system at a click



Landsgemeinde, one of the oldest forms of direct democracy © FDFA, Presence Switzerland

Have you ever wondered how many voter signatures are needed to demand a change to the Constitution? You can now access all official information relating to the political system on the Swiss authorities' online portal. [More information](#)

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Education or training in Switzerland?



Switzerland has an excellent education system and offers a variety of opportunities to obtain a world-class education. Educationsuisse assists young Swiss abroad with advice about opportunities and funding. [More information](#)

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Swiss links



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Information about Swiss Administration: www.ch.ch



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Organisation of the Swiss Abroad: www.aso.ch

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