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AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE



Dear fellow citizens,
Dear partners and friends,

The present Newsletter is a collection of key activities and interventions the Embassy and its Cooperation Office undertook during the year of 2022.

The celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Switzerland and Georgia was a definite highlight of 2022; therefore, we opted to dedicate to it an entire chapter and present all the initiatives we organized to commemorate this milestone. From the official launch of the Cooperation Programme 2022-2025, which is a clear declaration of Switzerland's continuous support to the democratic agenda of Georgia, to an extended celebration of the Swiss National Day on August 1, the activities covered a wide range of Switzerland's support to Georgia and diverse areas the two countries cooperate on.

Along with the official launch of the Cooperation Programme 2022-2025, the Cooperation Office kicked off new projects and new phases of existing projects which offer hands-on experience, knowledge and expert faculty to address pressing topics, inter alia, food safety, migration, and unemployment.

The year of 2022 saw high profile visits both in Georgia and Switzerland, which further underpins the ever strengthening ties between the two countries.

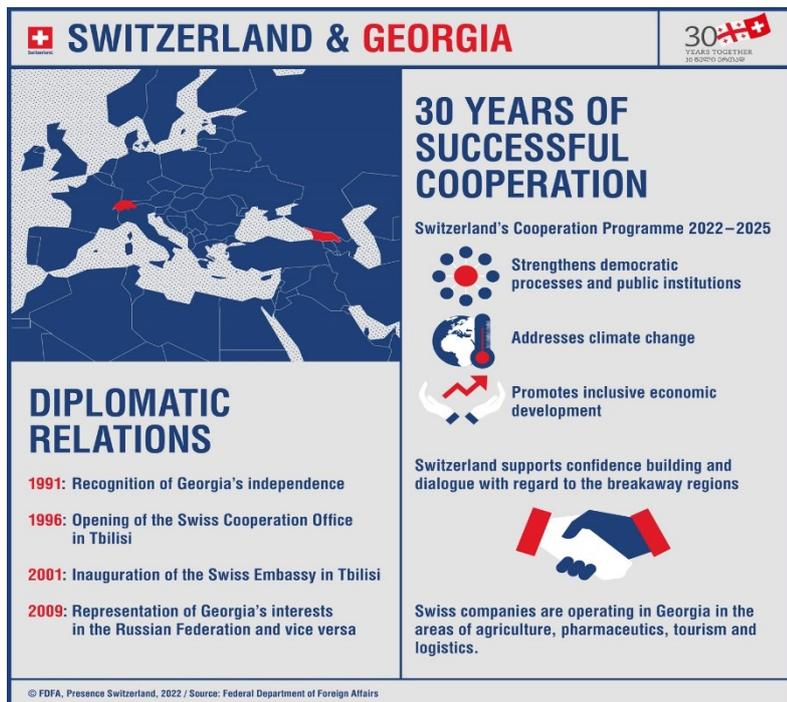
Last but not least, through our Consular department, the FDFA has presented an app "SwissInTouch", which is an additional and complementary tool to keep you, dear compatriots, posted on each and every update coming from Switzerland or from our representation.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Heidi Grau
Ambassador

The 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Georgia and Switzerland

2022 saw an array of events organized by the Embassy of Switzerland under the aegis of the 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Switzerland and Georgia.



Switzerland and Georgia celebrate this year the 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations. In recognition of the solid partnership, the president of Georgia, Salome Zurbashvili, and the president of the Swiss Confederation, Ignazio Cassis, exchanged congratulatory letters.

To mark this important milestone in the bilateral relationship, the Swiss FDFA prepared an infographic which reflects the key aspects of cooperation in the course of 30 years.

Launching of the Swiss Cooperation Programme 2022-2025



Within the framework of the 30th Anniversary, H.E. Heidi Grau, Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia, and Danielle Meuwly, Regional Director of Cooperation, officially launched a new Swiss Cooperation Programme for the South Caucasus 2022-2025 on 19 May. The Programme is a flagship document which defines the key priority areas of Swiss engagement for the period of 2022-2025.

The focus of the Swiss engagement will be on four key areas: 1) promoting civic engagement and cooperation in the region, 2) strengthening democracy and public institutions, 3) improving economic development and creation of decent jobs, and 4) strengthening climate resilience and sustainable resource management.

The focus of the Swiss engagement will be on four



Switzerland is currently supporting more than 20 projects. The new Programme 2022-2025 builds on past achievements and continues to make an effective contribution to the country's development pathways by initiating new projects in priority areas.

The press release please find [here](#).

The Swiss Cooperation Programme 2022-2025 please find [here](#).

Ambassadors of Switzerland and Austria plant a tree in the Goderdzi Alpine Garden



On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Switzerland and Georgia, and Austria and Georgia, Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia, H. E. Heidi Grau and Ambassador of Austria to Georgia, H. E. Thomas Muehlmann, the Regional Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in the South Caucasus, Danielle Meuwly and the Head of the Coordination Office for Technical Cooperation of the Austrian Embassy, Alexander Karner visited the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Ajara regions. The delegation met with the beneficiary of the Swiss

Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Austrian Development Agency (ADA) funded Alliances Caucasus Programme and local officials. To commemorate the Anniversary, the Ambassadors of Switzerland and Austria planted a tree in the Goderdzi Alpine Garden, an important tourist destination in the mountainous Ajara.

The press release please find [here](#).

Visit to the Swiss Agricultural School in Dmanisi



As part of the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Relations, Swiss Ambassador Heidi Grau, Regional Director of Cooperation Danielle Meuwly and UNDP Resident Representative Nick Beresford visited the Swiss Agricultural School Caucasus.

UNDP and the SDC signed an extended cooperation agreement ensuring continued support for the School within the framework of

the SDC-funded project “Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Georgia”.



1 August – Celebration of the Swiss National Day

The Swiss National Day this year was a special occasion to mark the Anniversary in the presence of more than 300 guests, including government representatives, partners and friends of Switzerland.



Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra performs at Tsinandali Festival



Supported by Switzerland and Norway, the Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra (PCYO) performed this summer at the Tsinandali Festival's 2022 edition in the historical Tsinandali Estate in Kakheti. The PSYO includes about 80 young musicians from the South Caucasus countries and beyond.

The PSYO was established by Tsinandali Festival in 2019 with a mission to build peace across the Caucasus and neighbouring countries through music and cultural exchange.

POLITICAL COOPERATION

President of the National Council, Irène Kälin visits Georgia



The president of the National Council, Irène Kälin, paid an official visit to Georgia from 10 to 12 October. In the framework of the 3-day visit, the President held meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and her counterpart, the Chairperson of the Parliament.

The Georgian officials expressed their gratitude to Switzerland for its protecting power mandate, solid partnership and long-standing support through development programmes.

At the meeting, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of the SDC-funded projects focused on socio-economic and institutional transformation of Georgia. The parties touched upon the avenues of future collaboration and the importance of high-profile bilateral meetings citing the meeting between President of the Swiss Confederation Cassis and Prime Minister Gharibashvili on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September (see President Cassis' Tweet below).



At the meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, the two sides discussed Georgia's progress in fulfilling the European Commission's 12 recommendations for EU candidate status. Following the meeting, Speaker Papuashvili and NC President Kälin led a joint press conference.

The meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs Ilia Darchiashvili and NC President Kälin focused on the potential for the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in such areas as economic relations, professional education, climate protection, and tourism.



The official press release please find [here](#).

Switzerland and Georgia establish a migration partnership

On 11 May, Federal Councillor Karin Keller-Sutter and Georgian Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on deepening the partnership on migration issues.



The agreement will provide a general framework for all aspects of cooperation in the field of migration between Switzerland and Georgia and further boost the well-established relations. In the framework of the visit, Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter paid a courtesy visit to Georgian Interior Minister Vakhtang Gomelauri.

The official press release please find [here](#).

President Cassis and PM Gharibashvili meet in New York

Ignazio Cassis
@ignaziocassis

Fruitful meeting with Prime Minister @GharibashviliGe 🇨🇭 Main topics: our excellent bilateral relations 🤝 and regional issues, including: the war in #Ukraine, #security in Europe, #energycrisis and Switzerland's mandate as protecting power between #Georgia and #Russia. #UNGA77



Georgian Minister of Education and Science visits Switzerland



On 7-8 November, Minister of Education and Science Michael Chkhenkeli visited Switzerland. The Minister held an official meeting with the Federal Councillor, head of the Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), Guy Parmelin. The Georgian minister emphasized the partnership in the area of vocational education and training, and in particular, the invaluable support of the SDC to the education system in Georgia.

During his visit, the minister held meetings with the principal of the Bern University and the representatives of the EHL Hospitality Business School.

The official press release please find [here](#).

The Mayors of Tbilisi and Bern exchange visits



In July, Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze and Bern Mayor Alec von Graffenried signed in Bern a Memorandum of Understanding shaping a new cooperation on, including but not limited to urban development, transportation, and culture. The two cities will also share experience in public safety and tourism. In September, Mr. Graffenried arrived to Tbilisi to meet his counterpart and discuss the status of implementation of the commitments stipulated in the signed MoU.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

MODERNIZING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING RELATED TO AGRICULTURE IN GEORGIA (PHASE 2)

Goal: The 2nd phase of the project aimed at improving employment opportunities for rural population through better access to vocational education.

Duration: 1 September 2018 - 31 August 2022

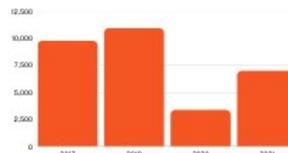
The project is implemented by UNDP with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.



The project facilitated the creation of the Skills Agency Georgia in 2021. The Agency is the first ever public-private entity based on the international model



The project fostered the partnership between the Swiss agricultural school Plantahof and the Swiss Agricultural School Caucasus based in Georgia. The partnership intensified further knowledge transfer from Switzerland to Georgia



GRADUATES BREAKDOWN

The overall attractiveness of the vocational education has increased. In total 22'534 youth graduated during 2018-2021. There was a slight drop in the times of COVID-19 in 2020, but the number almost doubled in 2021.

EMPLOYMENT:

55%

employment rate in case of graduating from VET

45%

Of youth graduating from agricultural professions on vocational education level are women



On average, 60% of farmers report productivity increase (56% women) as a result of their improved skills

GRANTS:

GEL 1.7 million
(USD 620'000)

to 40 training providers for forming public-private partnerships (PPPs). In total, 24 PPP models

GEL 210'390
(USD 76'000)

55 micro grants were issued to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and information on climate-smart agriculture, innovative technologies and green agriculture.

Exchange visits



In August, a delegation of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture visited Switzerland within the framework of the Swiss-funded project 'Modernization of the Vocational Education and Training in Georgia'. The delegation got acquainted with the Swiss system of extension services, including agriculture development strategies and skills development of service providers.



The Vocational Skills Agency of Georgia (GeoSkills) visited Switzerland for a study tour to explore Switzerland's vocational education policies and to meet with Swiss counterparts for experience sharing. During their stay in Switzerland, the GeoSkills representatives got to know Switzerland's overall VET policy, including qualification development, role of work-based learning, private sector's participation in VET and student exchange and mobility programmes.

The insights gathered during the study tour will further inspire the Georgian VET system and help it develop in line with the needs of education and economy sectors in Georgia.



The students of the Swiss Agricultural School Caucasus underwent a two-week intensive programme provided by the Swiss college 'Plantahof'. Plantahof is the partner college of the school 'Caucasus' within the framework of the SDC-funded project "Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Georgia".

CULTURE



In September, the Embassy of Switzerland partook in the Tbilisi International Festival of Literature. Supported by the Embassy, Writers' House and Pro Helvetia, the Georgian audience had a rare opportunity to attend two events – a meeting with a Swiss poet, Ariane von Graffenried and an evening dedicated to Max Frisch's "Questionnaire". Dr. Thomas Strässle, president of the Max Frisch Foundation, arrived to Tbilisi for this occasion.



The 23rd Tbilisi International Film Festival is another festival the Embassy of Switzerland partnered with. The festival programme included two Swiss movies: "The Line" by Ursula Meyer and "A Piece of Sky" by Michael Koch.

CONSULAR



Online desk for Swiss nationals residing abroad

Entering your personal details in the Register of the Swiss Abroad, ordering confirmations, announcing civil status matters and subscribing to publications: The FDFA's online desk offers Swiss nationals abroad the opportunity to request services from the comfort of their homes. The FDFA's online desk simplifies correspondence between Swiss nationals residing abroad and their Swiss representations.



SwissInTouch.ch

The App for the Swiss abroad:

- Information, events
- Quick contact with your local representation
- Guide to living and working abroad

[Marriage for all](#) – Law reform on July 1 2022

Switzerland recognises and permits same-sex marriage since 1 July 2022. As of the same date, registered partnerships are no longer concluded in Switzerland.

If your marriage or partnership was registered abroad, it must be entered into the Swiss civil register by the proper authority in Switzerland. In order to do so, you need to submit certain documents to your Swiss representation.

Introduction of the new [Swiss passport family](#)



The introduction of the new Swiss passport family took place on 31 October 2022. While the design is completely renewed, the functionality and the issuing procedure will remain unchanged. All previously issued passports will remain valid until the registered date.



[VoteInfo](#) application provides live voting results

The VoteInfo application developed by the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Office of the Canton of Zurich allows users to follow the results of the vote in near real time on voting Sundays. From midday onwards, VoteInfo users have access to the results for their municipality, their canton and the whole of Switzerland. The FSO continuously updates the results of the votes automatically delivered by the cantons.



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