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AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow citizens,
Dear partners and friends,

As the year is nearing its end, I would like to invite you to take a close look at the key events of 2023.

The political and economic cooperation between the two countries expanded further. The year saw high-ranking visits and official meetings taking place in both countries. The visits of the heads of SECO and the SDC signalled incessant commitment to support Georgia in the areas Switzerland holds thematic expertise. A number of new agreements and MoUs were signed laying solid foundation for future partnership and engagement in Georgia.

The Swiss Cooperation launched new projects that solidify the results of previous initiatives and respond to current development needs and priorities within the framework of the Cooperation Strategy 2022-2025.

The Newsletter offers a glimpse into the most landmark events and works of the Embassy. With many more initiatives we have embarked on and completed, tune in to our [Facebook page](#) and extend your journey with us.

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

Respectfully,

Heidi Grau
Ambassador

POLITICAL COOPERATION

Georgian PM meets President Alain Berset

Irakli Gharibashvili @GharibashviliGe · 14h
Had a fruitful meeting w/ president @alain_berset in the frames of @wef in Davos. Discussed successful + coop & prospects for deepening econ&trade relations. Focused on the + role in the Black Sea region & thanked President for + role as a mediator between + & +.



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On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023, Georgia's Prime Minister Gharibashvili held a meeting with President Alain Berset.

The close cooperation and friendly relations between the two countries, the importance of Switzerland's long-term contribution to the development of Georgia's economy and democratic institutions were emphasized at the meeting. The Prime Minister expressed hope that the trade and investment cooperation between the two countries would boost and that Georgia would become attractive for more Swiss entrepreneurs.

PM Gharibashvili thanked President Berset for supporting Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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

Georgian and Swiss presidents meet in New York

On 7 March, 2023, the President of Georgia, Salome Zourabishvili, met with her Swiss counterpart, President Berset. The presidents touched upon solid bilateral cooperation in the areas of vocational education, energy and environmental protection. The focus of the exchange was the possible cooperation in the field of mountain sports and resorts development.

President Zourabishvili expressed gratitude for the good offices Switzerland provides.



The post of President Zourabishvili please see [here](#).

Ignazio Cassis receives Georgian Foreign Minister in Bern

On 19-20 June, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilia Darchiashvili visited Switzerland. During the visit, Minister Darchiashvili met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Ignazio Cassis and President of the National Council Martin Candinas.

Ignazio Cassis @ignaziocassis
It was a pleasure to welcome Georgian Foreign Minister @IliaDarch to Bern.

Our discussions focused on the development of our bilateral relations, marked by growing economic exchanges, Swiss Good Offices in + & + and the consequences of the war against Ukraine.

+ + +



On June 19, Minister Darchiashvili held a meeting with his counterpart, Ignazio Cassis. The two ministers discussed the productive collaboration between Georgia and Switzerland across multiple domains and plans for further cooperation. Ilia Darchiashvili expressed gratitude to Ignazio Cassis for Switzerland's steadfast support in upholding Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, along with Switzerland's contribution to reconciliation and trust-building initiatives. The long-term efforts of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Georgia were recognized for their substantial contribution to the country's socio-economic progress.

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

MoU signed under Georgian-Swiss Intellectual Property Project



On 21 June, H.E. Heidi Grau, Swiss Ambassador to Georgia, and Soso Giorgadze, Chairman of Sakpatenti (National Intellectual Property Center), signed an MoU. The agreement focuses on the support of and cooperation for the priority areas defined by the Georgian-Swiss Intellectual Property Project (GESIP).

The GESIP has been implemented since 2022 with the financial assistance of State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Through this project, the Swiss Government supports Georgia in its efforts to facilitate trade and investment by promoting the protection and use of Intellectual Property Rights. The project also contributes to the strengthening of the intellectual property (IP) legal framework and the services of IP-relevant institutions in Georgia.

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

More about the project please find [here](#).

Delegation from SEM holds consultations with Georgia



The representatives of the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) visited Georgia to hold the 2nd round of consultations with Georgian counterparts within the framework of the Memorandum on Migration Issues signed in 2022 between Switzerland and Georgia. The focus of the bilateral consultations included: prevention of illegal migration, asylum issues, project cooperation and other areas provided by the memorandum.

The Swiss delegation was led by the Head of the International Cooperation Department of the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, Christina Probst-Lopez.

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

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

SECO State Secretary visits Georgia



On 31 May-3 June, State Secretary for Economic Affairs Helene Budliger Artieda paid a working visit to Georgia. During her visit, the State Secretary met with the government officials, private sector representatives, as well as explored the SECO-funded project in Rustavi.

On 1 June, the State Secretary met with Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economic and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Levan Davitashvili. The focus of the meeting was the robust economic relations and a positive impact of free trade. The

possibilities for further deepening cooperation in the areas of education, energy and tourism were also discussed.



Helene Budliger Artieda
@SECO_StateSec

#StateSecOnAMission

Visit of a textile company in Rustavi. More than 1500 jobs created thanks to a joint @IFC.org and #SECO initiative to improve the investment climate. Impressive standards of quality and labor conditions! Wish you a brilliant future. 🙌
Now back to 🇨🇭! 🇬🇪



... The State Secretary also met with the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Otar Shamugia. The parties discussed the prospects for deepening cooperation and expanding investment in the areas of environmental protection. The Minister highlighted the importance of Swiss-funded projects for the sturdy development of Georgia's economy and of Swiss support in effective and timely implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The Secretary's agenda also included a visit to one of the SECO-

funded and IFC-implemented projects. The Swiss delegation visited a textile factory in Rustavi. The mentioned project aims at improving the investment climate as a result of which more than 1'500 jobs have been created.



Swiss Roche and Georgian Government agree on cooperation



Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche and the Ministry of Health of Georgia signed a Managed Entry Agreement. According to the agreement, Georgia will receive innovative oncology products at a special, lower price, which will enable the Government to finance more patients and will increase access of the Georgian population to life-saving treatment.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Advisory Commission for Swiss International Cooperation visits Georgia



On 17-22 April 2023, the Advisory Commission for Swiss International Cooperation accompanied by the SDC Director General, Patricia Danzi, was on a mission to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The delegation was mandated to get familiarized with the Swiss-funded projects in the region. The visit of the head of the SDC reconfirms Switzerland's continued commitment to promote peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies in the region.

H.E. Patricia Danzi paid a courtesy visit to Levan Davitashvili, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. The focus of the meeting was the Swiss cooperation and all areas of Swiss engagement in Georgia.

The delegation travelled to the Kakheti region to check on the progress of Swiss-funded Climate Change Adaptation project. Specifically, the delegation visited a flood protection infrastructure on the Khodashnis Khevi River and the Atskuri School, where they met with young climate ambassadors. The delegation was joined by the representatives of the Georgian central and local governments, and UNDP.



On 19 April, the delegation held an information meeting with the managers of SDC-funded projects. They also had an exchange with local entrepreneurs, who had expanded their business and increased production capacity thanks to Swiss assistance.

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

Swiss Cooperation kicks off new initiatives

In line with the key priorities of the Cooperation Strategy 2022-2025, the Swiss Cooperation launched numerous new initiatives.



Fitting the Inclusive Economic Development priority, the main phase of the Local Economic Development project was launched in November, 2023. The project will foster collaboration between local and national actors across various sectors, including public, private, and civil society, to make markets work better for the poor. Such an inclusive approach is believed to tackle vivid regional disparities in the country. The project is financed by the SDC and is implemented by Helvetia in consortium with Wins.



Switzerland is committed to helping improve the capacities and management of migration movements in Georgia. As part of its intent, Switzerland started a long-term project "Enhanced Opportunities for the Returning Migrants in Georgia". The project aims to support returned migrants and local communities contribute to and benefit from inclusive economic development. The project is implemented by International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Georgia.



The above-mentioned project is not the only one focusing on migration. The Swiss Government, acting through its State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), joined hands with IOM to develop the Migration Data Analytical System (UMAS). The system contributes to the analysis of migration related data and development of evidence-based policies in the field. The support is part of the Migration Partnership, which lays down general framework for all aspects of migration cooperation between Switzerland and Georgia.

Switzerland facilitates women's participation in decision-making processes and women in politics. To underpin its efforts, the following initiatives kicked off this year under two separate projects:



School on Party Politics for Women Politicians will enroll more than 20 women politicians from 13 political parties and more than 10 civil activists. The school will assist women politicians to sharpen their skills through discussion platform, field studies, workshops, seminars, and other activities. The initiative is part of the project "Enhancing Political culture in Georgia" which is implemented by the Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP).



Women's Political Leadership Academy was opened under the project "Women's Increased Leadership for Democracy". The academy will facilitate women's participation in political and decision-making processes in urban and rural areas. The initiative is jointly implemented by Eastern European Center for Multiparty Democracy (EECMD) and UN Women in Georgia.

Peace and Human Rights

As part of the 2022-25 Cooperation Strategy, Switzerland continued various activities in the areas of peace and human rights, with a particular focus on conflict transformation and conflict prevention.

In connection with the protracted conflicts related to the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, support is provided for dialogue activities, informal discussion platforms with Georgian and Abkhazian participants and contacts in areas as health, education or business. Dealing with the past and activities that expand knowledge about the conflicts are also part of the programme.

In order to strengthen social cohesion and reduce the society's vulnerability to violent conflicts, Switzerland promotes better integration, inclusion and participation of ethnic minorities.

Strengthening a value-based political culture within and between Georgian political parties is another Swiss priority aimed at improving democratic processes. Furthermore, Georgian civil society and the expert

community are supported in their efforts to contribute to the development of peace policies among political actors, the media and the general public.

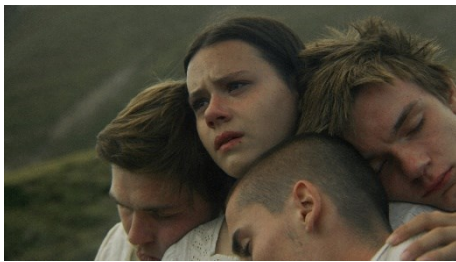


For example, as part of the project "Internal Dialogue for Transformation of Conflicts in Georgia", Caucasian House, the Institute for the Study of Nationalism and Conflicts and the Levan Mikeladze Foundation jointly organised a meeting that provided a platform for representatives of parliament, the government, civil society and experts to discuss the situation in the villages along the administrative boundary line and the impact of recent developments on the conflicts.

CULTURE



The Embassy of Switzerland marked the month of Francophonie with the screening of "Tambour Battant" by François-Christophe Marzal. In a small village amidst the Swiss mountains, two local brass bands compete for the Swiss final contest, while at the same time, women push to earn the right to vote.



The Embassy of Switzerland partnered with the Tbilisi International Film Festival. Swiss contribution was the film "Foundre" by Carmen Jaquier. The information about the screening was posted on the Embassy's Facebook page as well as on SwissInTouch app.



From 3 November through 1 December, the Center of Contemporary Art Tbilisi presented the first exhibition of the Swiss artist and photographer Beat Streuli's work "Zones Neutres, Tbilisi to Vorontsovka". The exhibition featured the artist's journey to the country where his maternal ancestors lived and worked at the beginning of the 20th century.

The exhibition was supported by Pro Helvetia.



On 27, 28 October famous Swiss director Thom Luz presented his theatre performance „Girl from the Fog Machine Factory“. The performance was part of the GIFT Festival 2023.

CONSULAR

On the consular side, important steps were again taken in 2023 to optimise and further develop consular services.

One example is the [Ageing Abroad project](#), to have comprehensive and attractive information and prevention material to raise awareness of the issue of retirement abroad among the Swiss community.



The new version of our [SwissInTouch](#) app keeps you connected with the authorities in Switzerland and your local Swiss representation where information and events in Georgia are published

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