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Message from the Ambassador

Dear Swiss citizens and friends of Switzerland,

Welcome – I hope you enjoy reading the first edition of the Newsletter of the Embassy of Switzerland in Muscat, which we intend to publish on an annual basis. This newsletter will be an additional channel to bring us closer to our fellow citizens and friends.

In May 2022 I had the honour to start a new journey by joining the Swiss Embassy in Muscat. The two years have so far been a wonderful experience, starting from the unique hospitality in Oman that our whole family could feel first-hand, the small but brilliant team at the Embassy, all the way to the unique encounters and people I was privileged to come across.

2023 was a particularly special year for Switzerland and Oman: we were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries. Unsurprisingly, this first Newsletter will hence pay tribute to the events during this celebratory year, which are testimony to the richness and diversity of our relations. The coronation of the 50th anniversary was the first-ever Presidential visit in the history of our relations, which gave a unique boost in deepening our ties. See next page for some highlights from the visit of President Alain Berset in November 2023.

This year has already started with a series of events. November 2024 will mark the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Swiss Embassy – so we will have another golden opportunity to celebrate this landmark event. We will send you invitations in due time.

On behalf of the whole Embassy team, I wish you and your families all the best during 2024. Please stay tuned by following us on [Instagram](#) and on [X](#).

Warm regards,
 Thomas Oertle



H.E. Dr. Thomas Oertle
 Ambassador of Switzerland to Oman and Yemen

SWISS PRESIDENT VISIT



Official Presidential Visit

30 November and 1 December, 2023 marked the first visit of a Swiss president to Oman. The president of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Dr. Alain Berset and his wife Muriel Zeender Berset along a delegation from the Swiss government, academia and private sector were received by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said in Al Alam Palace for discussions on how to deepen bilateral cooperation in trade, tourism, energy, health, peacebuilding, research, education and vocational training. Watch a recap video of the visit [here](#).



Mediation Week

From 28 to 30 November, 2023 the first Oman-Switzerland Mediation Week took place in Muscat. Four experts from Switzerland and thirty Omani diplomats participated in an exchange about opportunities and challenges in peace promotion. The last session was dedicated to the Global Health and Peace Initiative (GHPI) – a joint Omani-Swiss initiative within the World Health Organization (WHO) aimed to strengthen the role of the health sector as contributor to improving the prospects for peace. The ultimate objective is to better protect the health of populations in fragile, conflict-affected, and vulnerable settings. President Berset, who as Health Minister has been one of the initiators of this initiative, participated together with H.E. Hilal bin Ali Al Sabti to the session and particularly enjoyed interacting with the young Omani diplomats.

Agreements Signed

During his official visit, the Swiss President witnessed the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between Switzerland and Oman. One MoU, focusing on sustainable and renewable energy and energy technologies, was signed by Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals, and the Swiss Ambassador to Oman. This MoU aims to foster cooperation in green hydrogen projects encompassing research, production, processing, storage, and consumption. Another MoU was inked between the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman and Switzerland Tourism, aiming to enhance cooperation and exchange experiences and knowledge in the tourism sector. Furthermore, an agreement was reached between the Omani Foreign Ministry and the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This agreement allows persons accompanying official employees of both countries to work.



Oman-Switzerland Celebratory Stamps

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Oman and Switzerland, the postal authorities of both countries collaborated to unveil commemorative stamps featuring images of Jabreen Castle in Oman and Schloss Waldegg in Switzerland. Both historic castles were constructed in the 17th century. This significant ceremony, attended by H.E. Dr. Alain Berset, President of Switzerland, and Sheikh Ibrahim bin Sultan Al Hosni, acting CEO of Oman Post, honours our shared cultural heritage and the enduring bond between the two nations.



50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Oman and Switzerland have maintained strong historical ties since 1973, based on cooperation and mutual respect. Sharing similar views on many regional and international issues, the two countries continue to strengthen their relationship. To celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations, the Embassy organized a series of events throughout 2023. To watch our video created to celebrate the anniversary, [click here](#).



Non-Conformist Swiss Design Exhibition

The festivities celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Oman were initiated by the Non-Conformist Swiss Design exhibition at the National Museum of Oman, under the auspices of H.H. Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said. From January to July 2023, the museum showcased approximately 40 objects lent by various private and public collections in Switzerland. Notably, half of these items had never been publicly displayed before, offering visitors an exclusive glimpse into Swiss design heritage. Among the exhibited pieces were rare works by iconic architect Le Corbusier, alongside contemporary designs, creating a captivating blend of history and innovation. As part of the cultural exchange, the museum also organized lectures by Swiss design experts at the Learning Centre of the National Museum, at the University of Nizwa and at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences. Furthermore, a light installation by Swiss designer Tom Strala was hosted at the 19th century building Bayt Sayyid Nadir bin Faisal near Al Alam Palace. Watch the opening ceremony video [here](#).

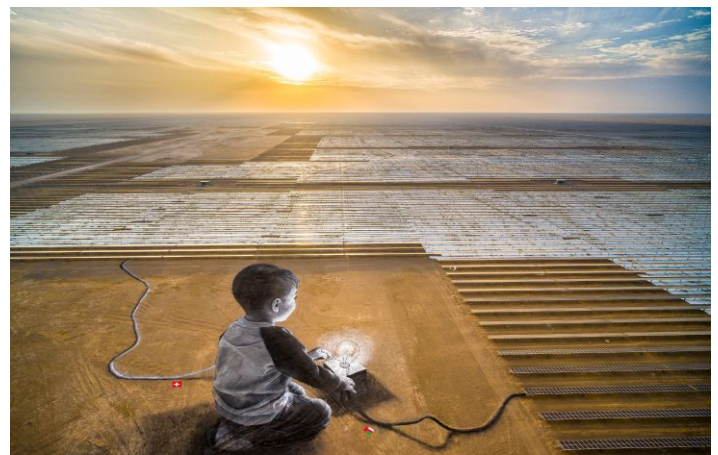
Oman Sustainability Week 2023

For the first time, the Embassy of Switzerland proudly participated in the Oman Sustainability Week, held from 13 – 15 March, 2023 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre. Throughout the event, we showcased Switzerland's innovative solutions and initiatives in sustainable development, highlighting our commitment to environmental conservation and green technologies. Engaging with attendees and participating companies at the Swiss booth, we exchanged knowledge and experiences, fostering dialogue and collaboration towards a more sustainable future. It was a privilege to contribute to this important platform and to further strengthen the bonds of cooperation between Switzerland and Oman in the realm of sustainability.



Saype Artwork

In March 2023, aligning with Switzerland's dedication to strengthening bilateral cooperation in sustainability, the Embassy extended an invitation to Swiss-French graffiti artist Saype to craft a monumental fresco in Oman. This impressive artwork, spanning over 10,000 square meters and crafted with eco-friendly paint, found its canvas at Ibri, Oman's largest solar power plant run by AcwaPower. This initiative symbolizes our shared commitment to fostering a sustainable world for future generations. To watch a video on the making of this project, [click here](#).



50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Swiss Chocolatier

In February 2024, for a week, the Embassy hosted, together with the Muscat Hospitality Academy and Hormuz Grand Hotel, the talented Swiss Chocolatier Romain Leemann. He shared some of his secrets with the students of the Academy and with chocolate lovers interested to create their own delicacies. This also allowed to put a limelight on the importance of vocational education and innovative spirit as the backbone of Swiss economy. Watch a video recap of the classes [here](#).

Swiss-Omani Meteorite Research

In February 2023, to celebrate the longest scientific cooperation between Oman and Switzerland, namely the over 20 years of collaboration in meteorite research, the Embassy of Switzerland took the opportunity during a lecture by Prof. Beda Hofmann from the University of Berne and from the Natural History Museum of Berne, to offer a fragment of Switzerland's most famous Twannberg meteorite to H.E. Salim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. The Swiss meteorite will be exhibited along meteorites found in Oman at the Natural History Museum of Oman.



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND OMAN



Muttrah Corniche, Oman



Montreux Riviera, Switzerland

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Oman, the Embassy posted bi-weekly content on their Instagram account highlighting the similarities between the two nations. By the end of the year 2023, we provided a glimpse of what these two countries have in common. To explore more examples of the similarities and other events related to the 50th anniversary celebrations, click [here](#).

VISITS AND EVENTS



Political Consultation

On 31 May, 2023, the fifth round of Political Consultations between Oman and Switzerland convened in Muscat. Led by H.E. Sheikh Khalifa Al Harty, Undersecretary for Political Affairs, and H.E. Ambassador Maya Tissafi, Assistant Secretary of State, this exchange marked the first political consultations since the outbreak of Covid pandemic and the respective bilateral visits of the Foreign Ministers to Oman and Switzerland. Bilateral relations as well as international and regional developments of common concern were addressed, with both sides emphasising their desire to further deepen the ties. The forthcoming sixth round of Political Consultations is planned to be held in Switzerland.



Oman Sustainability Week 2024

In March 2024, the Embassy proudly organized a Swiss Pavilion at the Oman Sustainability Week exhibition held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center, representing 14 Swiss companies across diverse sectors, such as sustainable infrastructure, construction, environmental technology, solutions and logistics. Additionally, the Embassy extended an invitation to Swiss innovator Frank Rinderknecht, who showcased his remarkable journey "Tour d'Excellence", undertaken with his spouse from Geneva to Salalah in an Electric Vehicle. His presence at the Ministry of Transportation Pavilion, highlighted the potential of environmentally sustainable transportation. Watch the exhibition highlights [here](#).

Green Hydrogen Summit Oman

The MENA region's most significant summit on green hydrogen was held from 13 – 14 December, 2023 in Muscat. Switzerland, aligning with climate science and the Paris Agreement, demonstrated keen interest in green hydrogen and its derivatives. The nation aims to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 while ensuring energy security, particularly during winter months. A 12-member Swiss delegation, representing academia such as the Swiss Federal Laboratory for Material Science and Technology, as well as businesses like ABB, Acelleron, Alpiq, Burckhardt Compression, and Ineratec, actively participated in the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman. The Embassy sponsored a side-event during the summit, featuring a panel comprising representatives from the Oman Ministry of Energy and Minerals, along with energy experts from Oman and Switzerland's private sector. Additionally, discussions on renewable energy research were held with the Swiss delegation at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and the German University of Technology (GUTech). This Swiss delegation forms part of an idea consortium associated with an applied research project on sustainable fuels, funded by the Swiss Energy Research for the Energy Transition (SWEET). The project, to be implemented in Switzerland, Spain, and Oman, underscores Switzerland's commitment to global sustainability efforts.



Upcoming Events – Stay Tuned!

December 2024
10 Swiss National Day

December 2024
12 Desert Bridges Concert at the Royal Opera House Muscat, House of Musical Arts

CULTURE AND SPORTS



Italian Film Festival



German Film Festival



Kids Movie Night



Swiss Hockey Team

In January 2024, the men's Swiss national team for Hockey5s, a new faster version of field hockey, took part in the first ever World Cup that took place in Oman. The Embassy hosted the team for a reception and the staff went to cheer them on during some of their games.

Film Festivals and Screenings at the Embassy

Multilingualism is a cornerstone of Swiss culture, reflecting the country's rich heritage and diverse linguistic landscape. Switzerland officially recognizes four national languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansh. This linguistic diversity is not just a cultural asset but also a significant part of the nation's identity, fostering mutual respect and understanding among its different linguistic communities. Embracing this diversity, the Embassy has been actively promoting films in various languages to celebrate and enhance cultural exchange.

In October 2023, during the "Settimana della Lingua Italiana", the Italian Film Festival the Embassy invited guests for a screening of the film "La Tentazione di Esistere" by Fabio Pellegrinelli, a director and screenwriter from the canton of Ticino. This event highlighted the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland and its contributions to the arts.

In February 2024, in a grander celebration of multilingualism, the fourth edition of the German Language Film Festival, organized together with the Goethe Institute as well as the German and Austrian Embassies at the InterContinental Muscat hotel, drew a large audience. The public enjoyed the comedy-drama "Die goldenen Jahre" by Barbara Kulcsar, showcasing the vibrant film culture of the German-speaking world.

Additionally, in March 2024 the embassy organized a Movie Night for Swiss kids in Oman screening the renowned "Heidi" movie at the Swiss residence garden. This delightful occasion evoked nostalgic memories of childhood and celebrated the lasting impact of storytelling.



Black Star Sailing

In February 2023, Oman hosted the opening of the RC44 class 44Cup with the participation of the team from Oman Sail and the Swiss crew of Black Star Sail led by Christian Zuerrer. The Embassy hosted a reception for the Swiss crew and with Dr Khamis bin Salim Al Jabri and the leadership of Oman Sail.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

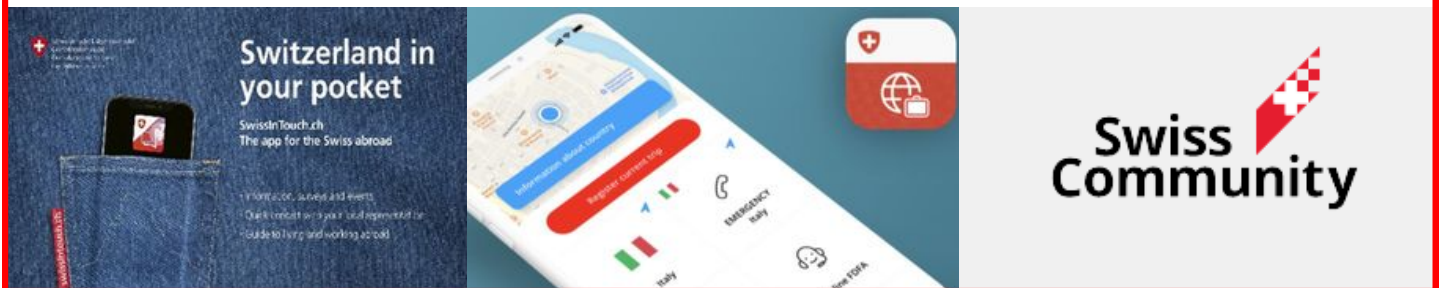
Consular Services in Saudi Arabia

All consular matters, including civil status, legalization, issuance of passports and ID cards, certified documents, and long-term visas (over 90 days) for Swiss nationals or residents in Oman or Yemen, are managed by our consular department at the Embassy of Switzerland in Saudi Arabia. Residents of Yemen requiring a Schengen visa for travel to Switzerland (less than 90 days) must apply at the Embassy of Switzerland in Saudi Arabia. Contact details for the Embassy of Switzerland in Saudi Arabia can be found on the last page of the newsletter.

In November 2024, consular staff from Riyadh will visit Muscat for consular days and passport applications. Further details regarding the procedures will be communicated to you soon by the Embassy in Riyadh.

Useful Apps for Swiss Abroad

Discover essential applications and services tailored for Swiss nationals abroad. [SwissInTouch](#) provides a comprehensive platform for accessing vital information from official representations and federal offices. [Travel Admin App](#) ensures safe and informed travel preparations, offering valuable support even in crisis situations like the recent pandemic. Meanwhile, the [Organisation of the Swiss Abroad](#) has represented the overall interest of Swiss nationals abroad since 1916, offering online resources, personal advice, and publishing the 'Swiss Review' magazine. Explore these invaluable tools further by clicking on the respective photos.



MEET THE TEAM



Team Member Highlight – “Rasheed”

Rasheed has been the heart and soul of the Swiss Residence since April 2015, keeping the house and garden neat and tidy for over nine years. Rasheed is much more than an efficient housekeeper. He has earned a stellar reputation as an excellent cook within the diplomatic community and among other guests of the residence. A native of Kerala, he masters the art of spices and delights guests with his signature dishes, which range from international and European cuisine, such as Austrian “Wiener Schnitzel” or “Apfelstrudel”, to Swiss specialties, like “Züri-Gschnezzeltes” or “Basler Lächerli” and beyond.

Swiss Embassy Team 2023-2024

- Thomas Oertle, Ambassador
- Sabina Läderach, Deputy Head of Mission
- Louloi Adi, Finance, Personnel & Administration Officer
- Sondos Omar, Trade & Diplomatic Affairs Officer
- Maher Al Maamari, Driver and Public Relations Officer
- Abdul Rasheed Sadique Manzil, Housekeeper & Cook
- Florian Brodard, Academic Intern (Feb. 2023 - Jan. 2024)
- Estelle Sauser, Academic Intern (Feb. 2024 - Dec. 2024)



OMAN-SWITZERLAND FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION



About OSFA

The Oman Switzerland Friendship Association (OSFA) was established in 2016, with a vision to implement sustainable programs that will improve mutual knowledge and understanding between the Sultanate of Oman and Switzerland. Over the years, it has created opportunities for its members to exchange ideas, learn from experiences and create friendships, subsequently encouraging the social and economic development of both countries.

OSFA Objectives and Activities

OSFA aims to promote exchanges and organize activities related to key sectors such as:

- Economy & Trade
- Education & Culture
- Science & Technology
- Sport
- ICT
- Tourism
- Youth
- Health

OSFA activities are centred around strengthening ties between Oman and Switzerland, achieved through:

- Bi-Annual Business Forum (hosted in rotation between Switzerland and Oman);
- Exclusive networking opportunities for members, often in partnership with the respective Embassies;
- Professional exchanges and training between practitioners of both countries;
- Other initiatives that are in line with the objectives.

Membership Benefits

Joining OSFA provides unique benefits:

- Access to a vast network of high-profile individuals with valuable connections in Oman and Switzerland;
- Connect with prominent businessmen and women;
- Opportunity to expand your network and explore new avenues for growth and commerce.

Become A Member

- Memberships run on an annual basis, from January to December.
- OSFA membership application form can be found on their website www.omanswiss.org

Individual Membership – 100 OMR

Corporate Membership – 500 OMR

Contact OSFA

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