



Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan

Fellow Swiss compatriots in Pakistan,

With 2020 drawing to a close, it's a good time to take a look back at some of the things we've done over the past 12 months, a year in which Switzerland's relationship with Pakistan continued to flourish despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. It has been a year like no other. The Covid-19 crisis has affected societies and economies around the globe. Yet I'm hopeful that 2021 will bring relief from, and demonstrate our collective ability to prevail over, the global pandemic. May this Christmas season bring you closer to all those that you treasure in your heart and have a Happy New Year!

I arrived in Pakistan at the beginning of July - succeeding Ambassador Thomas Kolly who left for Kosovo - hoping to see many of you in Islamabad or elsewhere in the country. However, I could only meet a few of you on specific occasions, given the risk of Covid-19 infections. The Embassy was also unable to organize its traditional celebration of the Swiss National Day on August 1st, and many other economic and cultural activities that we are used to putting together in normal times.

The Swiss Embassy in Islamabad went through a challenging phase even before the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, due to the closure of Switzerland's Development Cooperation Program in Pakistan. At the end of 2019 and after over 53 years of operations in the country, the Swiss Government decided to reallocate its resources for development and cooperation to the poorest countries in the world, especially in Africa. This decision obviously reflects good economic and social progress in Pakistan even though there are still challenges ahead.

On the economic front, I am very pleased to see that Swiss companies are very well represented in Pakistan and Switzerland remains the 5th largest Foreign Direct Investor in Pakistan over the past 10 years. This makes Switzerland a very relevant partner for Pakistan and provides me with an excellent opportunity to further develop our bilateral relations.

I look forward to seeing many of you when this crisis is over. In the meantime, my colleagues and I stand ready to assist you in any way we can.

Very cordially!
Bénédict de Cerjat
Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan



Ambassador
Bénédict de Cerjat



Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan Activities of the Embassy

As the official representation of Switzerland in Pakistan, the Embassy covers all matters concerning diplomatic relations between the two countries. It represents Swiss interests in the areas of political, economic and financial affairs, consular affairs, science, education and culture.

The period 2019-20 was marked by a reduction of activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Former Ambassador to Pakistan and Afghanistan Mr. Thomas Kolly left the country in June 2020. Ambassador Bénédict de Cerjat arrived in July 2020 and assumed charge of the Mission.

Here are a few highlights of the Embassy's activities:

New Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan and Afghanistan

Mr. Bénédict de Cerjat was appointed as the new Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan and Afghanistan and arrived in Islamabad in July 2020. H.E. Mr. Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan, accepted his credentials shortly after his arrival. On September 29, 2020, Ambassador de Cerjat paid a courtesy call on President Alvi at the President House in Islamabad.



On October 10, 2020, Ambassador de Cerjat handed over his credentials to H.E. Mr. Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan, in Kabul.



Prior to his official assignment in Pakistan, Ambassador

de Cerjat was the Assistant Secretary for the Americas at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne from 2016 to 2020. Ambassador de Cerjat has been the Ambassador of Switzerland to Belgium, with parallel accreditation as the Head of the Swiss Mission to NATO in Brussels, from 2011 to 2015, to Poland (with parallel accreditation to Belarus) from 2007 to 2011, and to Vietnam from 2004 to 2007.

Ambassador de Cerjat possesses an LLM degree and has command on international languages as German, French, Spanish and English. During his career in the Swiss Foreign Service, Ambassador de Cerjat also held positions abroad in Ottawa, Lima, and Washington as well as in Berne. He also served as the Deputy Head of Political Division II (Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America).

Review of Diplomatic Affairs

Visit of the President of Council of States of Switzerland (November 2019)

A three-member delegation of the Swiss Council of States (upper house of the Swiss parliament) led by Mr. Jean-René Fournier, President of the Council of States, visited Pakistan from 5 to 8 November 2019 on the official invitation of Mr. Saleem Mandviwala, Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan. The visit was aimed at strengthening further the parliamentary ties between Switzerland and Pakistan. During the visit, the delegation met with the top dignitaries of Pakistan including President, Prime Minister, Chairman of the Senate, and Chief of Army Staff.



A group photo of the delegation with H.E. Mr. Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan



Meeting of the delegation with H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, PM of Pakistan



Visit of Ambassador Kolly to Karachi (December 2019)

Ambassador Thomas Kolly visited Karachi from 25 to 28 December 2019. During the visit, he paid a courtesy call on H.E. Mr. Imran Ismail, Governor of the province of Sindh. During the meeting, issues related to bilateral trade and investment were discussed. Ambassador Kolly also visited the Mangrove Trees Plantation Project, implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the mangroves alongside Port Qasim in the Arabian Sea.

Islamabad joined 28 other Swiss Representations around the world to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. The Ambassador of Switzerland, H.E. Mr. Bénédict de Cerjat, who himself was a Government Fellow at the GCSP in 2016, hosted the "4th Global Annual Networking Night" (GANN) for the Pakistan Chapter at the Swiss Embassy in Islamabad on November 25, 2020. Mr. Ch. Naman Zafar, Hub leader of GCSP Alumni - Pakistan, while presenting a gift from the participants, underlined the importance of such events to broaden the knowledge of local alumni by sharing the experiences they made in Geneva.

Business & Trade Cooperation

Visit of Ambassador Kolly to Lahore (March 2020)

Ambassador Thomas Kolly undertook his farewell visit to Lahore from 4 to 6 March 2020. During the visit, Ambassador Kolly met with Mr. Ahsan Bashir, CEO, Suraj Cotton Mills, a client of Rieter Switzerland and Head of PM Imran Khan's task force on Textile Industry. Mr. Bashir briefed Ambassador Kolly on his recommendations to the government of Pakistan for the growth of the textile industry in Pakistan. Ambassador Kolly also visited the manufacturing site of OmyaPack Pvt. Ltd., a 50/50 joint venture between Omya of Switzerland and Packages of Pakistan. The facility produces Calcium Carbonate for industrial purposes.



Meeting of Ambassador Kolly with Governor of Sindh



Ambassador Kolly with the team of IUCN Pakistan while planting trees at the Mangroves

25 Years of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Islamabad, November 25, 2020



Ambassador Kolly's farewell lunch with the CEOs of the Swiss companies based in Lahore



Ambassador Kolly with the management of OmyaPack



Meeting of Ambassador de Cerjat with the Chairman of the Board of Investment of Pakistan (September 2020)



Ambassador Bénédicte de Cerjat met Mr. Atif R. Bokhari, Minister of State and Chairman of the Board of Investment of Pakistan (BOI) on 28 September 2020. During the meeting, the Chairman identified seven sectors to invite future investments namely, construction, tourism, textiles, logistics, food processing, IT, and automobiles manufacturing. The BOI also highlighted tax holidays to be available to the firms operating in the Special Economic Zones being set up under the aegis of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Meeting of Ambassador de Cerjat with the Federal Secretary of Industries & Production (October 2020):

Ambassador Bénédicte de Cerjat held bilateral discussion with Mr. Afzal Latif, Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production on 1 October 2020. The Ambassador was briefed about the initiatives being taken by the government to revive the manufacturing sector in Pakistan. The Ministry invited Swiss collaboration in the fields of automobile parts, industrial machinery & equipment, cutlery & kitchenware, surgical instruments, iron & steel pipes, product development & design centre, and testing lab for pumps and motors.

Closure of Operational Activities of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Pakistan (December 2019)

Development and Cooperation

In December 2019, after more than 53 years, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) closed its bilateral and humanitarian aid programme in Pakistan. From 1963 to 2019, Switzerland contributed over 695 million Swiss francs (CHF) as official development assistance. During the last 10 years, SDC contributed over CHF 155 million, focusing on the North Western regions (KP and FATA) on water, local governance, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), school reconstruction after natural disasters (earthquake/flooding), and support for Afghan refugees, including protection. Switzerland will remain present in Pakistan through its Embassy and its availability in case of major events through the Swiss Humanitarian Aid is ensured.



INSPIRING MOMENTS
SWITZERLAND IN PAKISTAN OVER DECADES

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Small projects supported by the Embassy

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (April 2020)



The Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan in collaboration with Sangtani Women Rural Development Organization (SWRDO) helped install water wells with hand pump machines in District Rajanpur, Punjab in April 2020. The 'Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)' project intends to increase access to sustainable, safe water and environmental sanitation for poor and vulnerable communities and reduce the prevalence of WASH-related diseases, including (bacteria, arsenic, fluoride and nitrate free) through the promotion of clean water facilities.



Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure the safety of doctors and paramedics in the fight against Covid-19 (July 2020)



The Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan provided 2000 high quality Covid-19 protection suits to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in July 2020 to ensure the safety of doctors and paramedics in the fight against coronavirus. PIMS Joint Executive Director Dr. Minhaj-us-Siraj, while receiving the suits, said that it was an extremely valuable contribution that would help in keeping healthcare workers safe from infection. The virus protection suits were delivered at an appropriate time when the tertiary care hospitals of the capital, especially PIMS, was gearing up to restore its outdoor services for the public. These services were withheld in the wake of spread of COVID-19 since four months.

Cultural Events at the Embassy

Islamabad Art Festival (November 2019)

Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with Hunerkada lead consortium, of artist bodies and national institutions held first Islamabad Art Festival (IAF-19) from 18-30th November 2019 in the capital. The Embassy of Switzerland invited three Swiss artists to participate in the Islamabad Art Festival 2019. Swiss cultural geographer and academic Professor Dagmar Reichert gave a lecture on 'Art at Risk: Creative Work in Challenging Contexts'. Swiss artist Mrs. Francoise Caraco featured a video "Forgotten & Remembered", while Ms. Eliane Rutishauser exhibited a large photoprint on textile.



Professor Dagmar Reichert with the students at the Sir Syed Memorial Hall, Islamabad

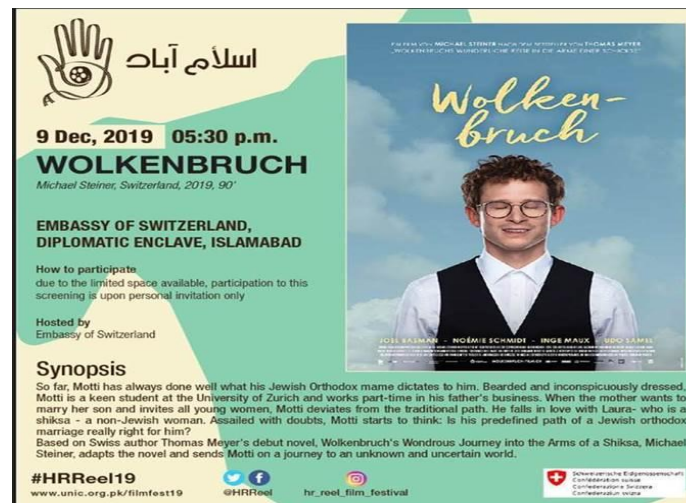


The two Swiss artists Eliane Rutishauser and Francoise Caraco at the Pakistan National Council of Arts

Human Rights Reel Film Festival (December 2019)

To mark the International Human Rights Day in 2019, the Embassy of Switzerland together with the United Nations in Pakistan EU and UN member states organized the 5th edition of the Human Rights Film Festival in Pakistan from 1-10th December 2019. The Embassy screened two movies during the festival.

The Embassy hosted its first screening "Wolkenbruch" with a message of tolerance and freedom on 9th December at the Swiss Residence.



Closing Event of the Human Rights Reel Film Festival (December 10, 2019)

To mark the closing event and to celebrate the Human Rights Day, the Embassy of Switzerland and United Nations Pakistan screened a documentary "Dick Marty, A Scream for Justice", followed by a panel discussion with eminent experts on human rights on December 10, 2019 at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA). The director of the movie Mr. Fulvio Bernasconi was also invited from Switzerland to attend the closing event. Apart from participating in the panel discussion and closing event, Mr. Bernasconi gave a lecture on film-making to the media students of the Riphah International University in Rawalpindi.



STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
#STANDUPFORHUMANRIGHTS

10 Dec, 2019 05:00 p.m.

DICK MARTY, A SCREAM FOR JUSTICE
Fulvio Bernasconi, Switzerland, United States, 2018, 51'

MAIN AUDITORIUM, PAKISTAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ARTS (PNCA)

How to participate
RSVP by December 09 at info.islamabad@unic.org

Hosted by
Embassy of Switzerland
United Nations Pakistan

Synopsis
After September 11, the CIA signed a secret agreement with several European States that allowed the kidnapping and torture of suspected Islamists. When the Washington Post reveals the case in 2005, the Council of Europe mandates Swiss citizen, Dick Marty to lead the investigation. With minimal means but armed with formidable tenacity, Marty defied America, Europe and Switzerland. Fulvio Bernasconi brings us a breathless investigation and the portrait of a quite extraordinary man.

#HRReel19
www.unic.org.pk/filmfest19

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hr_reel_film_festival

United Nations
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Movie Screening “Stray Dogs Come Out at Night” at the Swiss Residence (December 2019)

The Embassy organized a film screening event at the Swiss Residence on December 12, 2019. On this occasion Ms. Sophie Bourdon (Head of Open Doors and Deputy Head of *Locarno Pro*) who was in Pakistan, gave an informal talk on Locarno Open doors and its mission of discovering the talents of the region. After the talk, a short movie “*Stray Dogs Come Out at Night*” by the director Hamza Bangash (a Pakistani-Canadian director and screenwriter - selected for the Locarno Filmmakers Academy and the Asian Film Academy in 2019) was showcased.



Consular Services

At the end of 2020 around 400 Swiss citizens were registered with the Swiss Embassy in Islamabad. The largest communities are in:

- 1) Islamabad & Rawalpindi 118 persons
- 2) Lahore & Gujranwala 86 persons
- 3) Karachi 41 persons

General information on consular services related to Covid-19

Given the current circumstances, the Embassy of Switzerland and its consular services are operating with strict SOPs. All consular services will continue to be available, but in order to follow the recommended measures of social distancing, every visit to the Embassy has to be scheduled in advance. **Please contact us by e-mail to fix your appointment.**

Guichet en ligne DFAE
Online-Schalter EDA
Sportello online DFAE
Online desk FDFA

Online desk for Swiss nationals residing abroad

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is providing Swiss nationals residing abroad with an online desk for consular services. With the online desk you can enter your data yourself from the comfort of your home. You can also view your data at any time, order consular services and pay for them by credit card via ePayment. For detailed information, please click [here](#).

Reminder: Keep your contact and personal information up to date

Always keep your personal information updated. Please notify the Embassy of any change in civil status, address or phone number. Updating your e-mail address allows us to keep in touch and to keep you informed.

For general consular matters:
islamabad@eda.admin.ch
For civil status information:
islamabad.ziv@eda.admin.ch
For information on visa to Switzerland:
islamabad.visa@admin.ch

Travel and Visa Information Related to COVID-19

If you have to travel at the moment, please check the entry requirements and pandemic situation of your destination and, if applicable, transit country by consulting the relevant Embassy or Ministry of Health before you leave.

[The Federal Office of Public Health](#) provides information on the general situation in Switzerland, amongst other issues, details on the mandatory quarantine.

Entry to Switzerland has been restricted until further notice. For that reason, the Embassy cannot accept



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Schengen visa applications for a stay of up to 90 days. Detailed information is available on the website of the [State Secretariat for Migration SEM](#). As soon as the issuance of visas is possible again, it will be published on the Embassy's website.

Visa applications for a long-term stay (more than 90 days, national visa D) are processed under certain conditions. Please contact the [visa section](#) for inquiries and appointments.

COVID-19 Repatriation Flights for Swiss Nationals and their Families from Pakistan and Afghanistan

The Swiss Embassy has been fully mobilized to help Swiss nationals and their families in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the early stages of the outbreak. Together with the local government and in collaboration with the Embassies of Germany, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, Swiss nationals and their families in Pakistan (in total 35 people), who expressed the wish to leave the country, could be repatriated between March 31 and May 27 with flights to Oslo, London and Paris. Additionally on May 6, the Embassy of Switzerland together with the Embassies of Belgium and the Netherlands chartered a plane and was able to transport sixteen Swiss nationals to The Hague.



Embassy staff from Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland at Islamabad airport on May 6

Working with the Swiss Cooperation Office SDC in Kabul, the Embassy was able to monitor the situation in Afghanistan. The Swiss community in Afghanistan includes a high proportion of people working for humanitarian and development organizations, which themselves had implemented measures in the event of Covid-19. Fortunately, nobody had to be evacuated.

For your future travels please download the Travel App:



Moving back to Switzerland

Have you moved back to Switzerland or are you considering moving back soon?

Please do not forget to inform us about the change of address and send an e-mail to islamabad@eda.admin.ch. You can also find practical information such as entry and customs formalities, registration requirements, finding employment, etc. on the website of the [Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland](#).

Political Rights Your vote matters!

With over 770'000 Swiss citizens abroad the "fifth Switzerland" plays an important role for the country. All Swiss nationals abroad are encouraged to stay informed about the political happenings and to exercise their political rights. Those who have reached the age of 18 and are included in the Register of the Swiss Abroad, are able to vote federal issues and participate in National Council elections without having to travel to Switzerland.



Thank you for your attention and interest. If you wish to **follow the activities of the Embassy more closely**, you can follow us on social media or the Embassy webpage:



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Culinary Heritage of Switzerland

Recipe for Mailänderli

The holiday season is approaching fast. One of the traditions during this season is the baking of Christmas cookies. There are many different sorts but the *Mailänderli* is probably Switzerland's best-loved Christmas cookie with origins that can be traced back to the 18th century.



Ingredients:

250 gr butter 225 gr sugar
1 pinch of salt
3 fresh eggs
1 lemon
500 gr flour

For the egg wash:

1 fresh egg yolk
1 tsp milk or cream

1. Mix the soft butter in a bowl, add sugar and salt, then stir in one egg after the other. Continue stirring until the mixture becomes light in color. Grate off the lemon peel and add to the mix.
2. Add the flour, combine ingredients until they come together and form a dough, press slightly flat, cover and chill for at least 2 hours.
3. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees. Roll out the dough (in portions) on a little flour about 7 mm thick. Cut out different shapes and place on baking trays covered with baking paper. Chill the cookies for about 15 minutes. Mix the egg yolk and milk and coat the cookies with it.
4. Bake in the middle of the oven for about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, cool the Mailänderli on a rack. Store baked cookies in a metal tin.

Useful / Interesting Links

<https://www.aso.ch>

<https://www.swisscommunity.org>

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng>

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/living-abroad/fifth-switzerland.html>

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/aboutswitzerland/en/home/geellschaft/schweizer-kueche.html>