



SWISS WITH US

NEWS & VIEWS



From the Embassy of Switzerland in the U.S.

February 2025

From the Ambassador's desk

Dear Friends of Switzerland,

As we step into 2025, I am pleased to share highlights from the past few months and offer a glimpse of what is ahead. While Washington, D.C., is experiencing a period of transition, our commitment remains steadfast: we will continue to defend Swiss interests and strengthen the dynamic partnership between Switzerland and the United States.

This past quarter, we engaged in key discussions on global governance, celebrated Swiss achievements in innovation and law, and fostered connections through public diplomacy and cultural exchanges.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight just a few of the activities at the Embassy that rounded out the last year and helped us kick off the new year. Late last fall, my colleagues and I hosted an informative panel discussion about the UN Summit of the Future. Further, the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland received a prestigious award at the Global Investigation Review Awards Ceremony. You can read more about these highlights from late 2024 below.

Readers of this newsletter know how important Switzerland's role as a powerhouse in innovation and research is to me. It was an honor to accept an innovation award on my country's behalf at this year's Consumer Electronics Show. You can read below about the impressive Swiss start-ups I had the chance to visit at CES 2025.

Later in this newsletter, you will also find an article about the new *Quantum Diplomacy Game*, developed by our friends at GESDA, which will help prepare leaders and researchers of tomorrow for the future of quantum diplomacy. Also, our story on drone technology highlights the risks involved in some rapid technological developments.

Lastly, I would like to showcase some recent highlights in the field of public diplomacy. Switzerland is not just a powerhouse in innovation, but also a champion of literature, music, education—and, of course, winter sports! Find out more and join us in celebrating Swiss culture in the United States at our upcoming events.

Thank you for your continued interest in our country and our impact in the United States. I look forward to sharing more of our success stories with you in 2025.

Sincerely,
Ralf Heckner



Dr. Ralf Heckner is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States of America.

UN Summit of the Future – What Now?

More than 130 heads of state and government met at United Nations Headquarters in New York last September for the Summit of the Future. Encouraged by the energetic advocacy of more than 10,000 civil society representatives in the preceding “Action Days,” the global leaders gathering for the Summit of the Future produced a Pact for the Future, including a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations.

On December 17, the Embassy of Switzerland hosted a panel discussion moderated by Richard Ponzio, Director of the Global Governance, Justice & Security Program at the Stimson Center, to reflect on the summit’s tangible achievements. The panelists—U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Michele Sison, Swiss Ambassador Dr. Ralf Heckner, and Brenda Mofya, Head of Oxfam International’s United Nations/New York Office—discussed how these hard-fought agreements will be implemented and could serve as stepping-stones for even more ambitious reforms down the road. The event also served as an opportunity to reflect on Switzerland’s first term in the Security Council, which lasted from January 2023 to December 2024.

Read more on [SWISS IMPACT!](#)



From left to right on stage: Richard Ponzio, Michele Sison, Brenda Mofya, and Swiss Ambassador Dr. Ralf Heckner.

The Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland receives the GIR Award 2024 in the 'Enforcement Agency or Prosecutor of the Year' category

At the 10th annual [Global Investigation Review](#) (GIR) Awards ceremony, which recognizes the lawyers, investigation firms or prosecuting authorities that have particularly distinguished themselves over the past year, the OAG has received the 2024 Enforcement Agency or Prosecutor of the Year award. It was nominated in particular for its criminal proceedings in the complex of investigations against commodities traders (Gunvor and Glencore), as well as for the 1MDB (PetroSaudi) and Lava Jato (PKB Privatbank) cases.

The Attorney General of the Swiss Confederation Stefan Blättler attended the ceremony held in Washington on 14 November 2024. He had the pleasure of receiving the GIR Award on behalf of the OAG and gave a brief speech on the occasion.

The Attorney General was accompanied by the Swiss Ambassador to the United States, Ralf Heckner.



Stefan Blättler, Attorney General of the Swiss Confederation.

SWISS IMPACT @ CES 2025

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas is one of the biggest annual gatherings of innovators and a global showcase for breakthrough technologies. At this year's CES, which took place in January, Switzerland made a lasting impression as a global leader in innovation.

At the [swisstech Pavilion](#), 34 Swiss startups presented their innovative products and services to a highly targeted audience of 150,000 industry professionals from around the globe. At the SWISS IMPACT booth in the pavilion, industry insiders learned about Swiss innovation, economic relations, sustainability, culture, and the international partnership of Switzerland and the United States.

As part of CES, the Consumer Technology Association (CTA) recognized 25 countries as [Innovation Champions](#). Switzerland was among the honorees. Ambassador Ralf Heckner accepted the honor on the country's behalf.

Visit the [SWISS IMPACT page](#) to learn more about Switzerland's presence at the leading electronics trade show and take a look at our [Instagram reel](#) highlighting five of the most innovative start-ups at the pavilion.



Left: The swisstech pavilion at CES 2025. Right: Representatives of the 2025 Innovation Champions, with Ambassador Ralf Heckner representing Switzerland.

Kicking off the International Year of Quantum

On February 5, 2025, the Embassy of Switzerland in the United States, in partnership with the Open Quantum Institute at GESDA and Swissnex in Boston and New York, hosted the launch of the [International Year of Quantum Science and Technology](#) in Washington, D.C. This celebration happened simultaneously with the official launch at UNESCO in Paris.

On this special occasion, a diverse group of 32 selected participants—foreign diplomats, U.S. government agency representatives, think tankers, scholars, and industry representatives—played the [Quantum Diplomacy Game](#), a hands-on approach to diplomacy in a future shaped by quantum technologies.

Following the game, leading experts in the field of quantum shared their hopes and expectations for the International Year of Quantum and their suggestions for a future that leverages new technologies in beneficial ways. You can find a complete overview of the event and the game on [SWISS IMPACT](#).





Unmanned Aerial Vehicles & Counter UAS Homeland

In early February, the Armasuisse Washington Office attended two conferences in Arlington, VA, right next door to Washington, D.C., and home of the Pentagon.

The first conference focused on the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in the military. Aerial drones enable Armed Forces to be more effective and more aware of the situation on the battlefield. Yet these new developments, if deployed in large numbers, represent a challenge to armies in deconflicting allies and foes in the sky.

The second conference, Counter UAS Homeland, helped Armasuisse gain a full understanding of the extent of the threat posed by commercial drones when used for illicit purposes or with the intent to cause harm. Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) have already been the cause of major incidents. They represent a threat to critical infrastructure such as nuclear power plants and military bases, and terrorist groups and cartels could use this technology to target mass gatherings in

public events and compromise the security of prisons. Without changes to laws and stricter regulations, law enforcement services and experts in the field of counter drone technology fear

Public Diplomacy events: Wrapping up 2024 and (ice) skating into 2025

The Embassy's Public Diplomacy Team wrapped up 2024 with several exciting programs. On December 4, the Embassy collaborated with the Austrian Cultural Forum for an evening exploring the legacies of Swiss author Max Frisch and Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann. The evening, which began with a Swiss wine reception, included a discussion with literary experts and a [screening of Margarethe von Trotta's film *Ingeborg Bachmann – Reise in die Wüste \(Journey into the Desert\)*](#), which explores the romance between the two authors and its impact on their literary work.

On December 5, the Embassy hosted its 4th annual ice skating event at Washington Harbour in Georgetown, as part of the "Music and Chocolate: Tastes & Sounds of Europe" series, organized by the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC). Guests enjoyed a variety of activities, including a Swiss chocolate decorating workshop, Swiss trivia, unique musical performances, and a captivating performance by two local ice skating talents.

December also marked the beginning of another of the Embassy's annual partnerships: the Embassy Adoption Program. In partnership with Washington Performing Arts and DC Public Schools, the Embassy visited our partner classroom for the first time this school year. During that meeting, students learned about various Swiss holiday traditions, such as Christmas tree decorating, skiing, and baking [Christmas cookies](#).

We are excited to bring even more Swiss activities to the United States in 2025! Stay tuned and join us for an exciting lineup of cultural, sports, and educational events from the Embassy's Public Diplomacy section!





P.S. from Switzerland

It has been a cold and snowy winter here in Washington, D.C. At the Embassy, we are of course used to these wintry conditions, but they make us extra homesick for our Alpine sceneries and ski slopes.

Did you go skiing or snowboarding in Switzerland this winter? Send us a photo or video of your Alpine experience by March 9 and you may win a special cold-weather prize from the Embassy!

Send us your best Alpine photos of the year!



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