



# Newsletter

January 2020



Doha, January 2020

Dear Swiss citizens in Qatar,

Let me take this opportunity to wish you and your family and friends a happy and prosperous New Year !

It is now almost one and a half years ago since I have taken over the leadership of this Embassy. The purpose of this newsletter is to review some of the highlights of the past year and to provide you with useful information.

Together with my wife Junko Kimura Doerig I had the pleasure of meeting the majority of you at the traditional Santa Claus reception at the new residence both in 2018 and just a few weeks ago or on other occasions. It is my wish to further intensify the interaction between the embassy and the Swiss community in the years ahead. One of my ideas is to gather those of you working in thematic clusters such as education, engineering, hospitality or the airline industry to foster exchange among Swiss nationals and beyond.



The Embassy of Switzerland in Doha was set up as from 2012 and inaugurated on 4 April 2013. It was given the primary tasks of contributing to the strengthening of political, economic and cultural ties between our two countries and to cater for your consular and administrative needs. My dedicated consular and visa colleagues also take care of our citizens in Kuwait and have issued more than 10'000 visa last year. Many more topics are treated by Swiss and local staff with Qatari authorities and institutions such as development principles and migrant worker issues, science and education cooperation, health issues, tourism and sports promotion, just to mention a few.

We all hope to deepen our excellent bilateral relations further and look forward to celebrating the important milestone of 50 years of diplomatic relations in 2023, just after the FIFA Football World Cup 2022, coinciding with 10 years of existence of your embassy.

I would like to focus on the important economic relations between Switzerland and Qatar, to which a big number of you contribute actively.

With a population of only around 8.7 million Switzerland is the 20th economy by nominal GDP worldwide. Qatar has added its share to our strong performance by consuming and investing massively in a variety of sectors over the years. Likewise, Switzerland has strengthened Qatar's economy and a growing number of Swiss companies have in recent years set up offices in Qatar.

Swiss exports to Qatar amounted to CHF/USD 1166 million in 2018 (871 Mio CHF as of October 2019) and Qatari exports to Switzerland to CHF 341 million (385 Mio CHF as of October 2019). Overall trade in 2018 stood therefore at 1507 million CHF, which equals our country's trade with Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman combined !

Over the next years, I believe there are still manifold opportunities to be seized for Swiss companies in Qatar. However, in Qatar's fast evolving economy, Swiss business will not have the ground all to itself while facing an increasingly demanding environment. The Embassy of Switzerland in Doha alongside with the Swiss Business Hub Middle East located in Dubai and the Swiss Business Council Qatar will continue to support our business in Qatar. Together we



have been supporting Swiss SME's in many sectors since its inception. To see this one just has to look at their increased participation in Qatari fairs such as Watch and Jewelry Doha, Agritec,

QITCOM, Qatar Hospitality, a fact that reflects the continuous strengthening of economic ties between Qatar and Switzerland.

For 2020, big projects are coming to the Embassy and the Swiss Business Hub: We are working on a political gathering this year and a top level official visit in early 2021. Likewise, business trips to Switzerland of high representatives of important Qatari institutions will be on the agenda. And of course, alongside these exciting projects, the Embassy's first preparations for the FIFA Football World Cup in 2022 alongside Qatari Government bodies and FIFA are already starting and are expected to intensify continuously ! It is my wish to update and associate many of you in these preparations, hoping strongly that the Swiss National Team (the "Nati") will qualify. Hopp Schwiiz, Allez la Suisse, Forza Svizzera, Dai Svizra !

With kind regards,

Edgar Doerig  
Ambassador



## **Bilateral relations Switzerland - Qatar**

### **Swiss delegation participates in the 140th Congress of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU)**

The 140th Congress of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) was held in Doha from 6 to 10 April 2019. Switzerland sent a seven-member delegation, which travelled to Doha alongside two colleagues from the Principality of Liechtenstein, to take part in the congress. The Swiss delegation was led by MP, Council of States, Andrea Caroni (FDP, AR). The Embassy organized an accompanying program, which included discussions with their labour attachés as well as the Qatari Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs on labour reforms in Qatar.

A guided tour of the construction site of the World Cup's Final Stadium in the new town of Lusail and a meeting with the CEO of the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) were also on the agenda. Hosting the international IPU Congress was an important success for the Government of Qatar and provided an excellent opportunity for MPs to get familiar with the host country.



*Images: Meeting between Swiss parliamentarians, representatives of the Swiss Embassy and Labour Attachés from various Asian Embassies. Meeting at QIA.*

### **Swiss-Qatari collaboration regarding migrant workers**

On 1 October 2019, several important conferences and events took place on the topic of reforms of the Qatari migrant worker's scheme. Pietro Mona, Swiss Ambassador for Development, Forced Displacement and Migration, visited Doha to participate in the high-level forum "Business and migration: Strengthening dialogue between the private sector and governments" hosted by the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry in cooperation with various Ministries, the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Project Office for the State of Qatar.



Accompanied by Mr. Edgar Doerig, Ambassador of Switzerland to the State of Qatar, and Mrs. Simone Troller, Regional Advisor Migration & Development, Ambassador Mona met with leaders at the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, the ILO and representatives of NGOs. Various areas of concrete cooperation and exchange with Switzerland were discussed and we look forward to further support the fostering of migrant workers' rights in the country.

Various reforms were announced by the Qatari Government in recent months and relevant decisions taken just a couple of days ago. These include an important increase of the non-discriminatory minimum wage, the abolition of the required exit visas for many occupational groups, a lift of non-objections certificate as a prerequisite for changing jobs, the operationalization of the Wage Protection System as well as training of 270 labour inspectors.



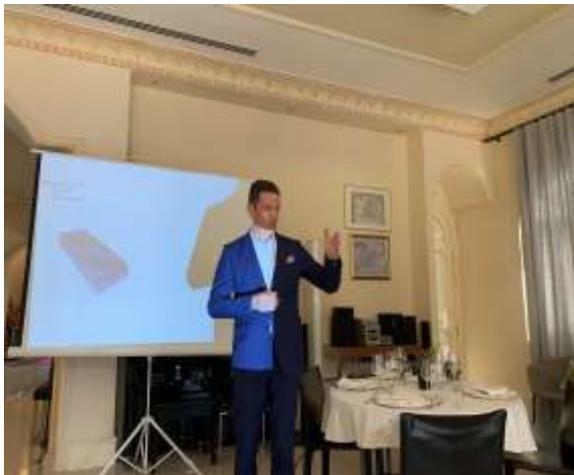
*From left to right: Ambassador Edgar Doerig, Under-Secretary for Labour Mohammed Hassan Al Obaidly, Ambassador Pietro Mona and Simone Troller discussed the situation of migrant workers in Qatar.*



## Economy

- New Head of Swiss Business Hub Middle East, Dubai

Mr. Frank Eggmann is the new Head of Swiss Business Hub Middle East (SBH) since September 2019. He is the successor of Mr. Chris Watts and assumes the role of Swiss Consul General in Dubai. In November 2019, Frank Eggmann visited Qatar for his first time. A luncheon reception was given on his behalf at the residence to meet with the Swiss Business



Community and Qatari businessmen.



### New CEO of Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)

From October 2019, Dr. Simone Wyss Fedele is the new CEO of S-GE. She is an expert on internationalization issues and has relevant experience in business and politics.

- In November, Tamara Yahfoufi, Associate Director of Admissions - Middle East & Turkey of Leysin American School in Switzerland visited Qatar for the first time to promote the school. The Embassy and SBH organized another residence event and invited local and foreign families in Qatar for a presentation.



*Tamara Yahfoufi, Associate Director of Admissions - Middle East & Turkey*

- The Embassy of Switzerland and Swiss Business Hub Qatar held a promotion event at the Swiss residence for The Bürgenstock Selection, which is owned by Katara Hospitality. Qatari businessmen, CEOs of local companies and media were present during the event. Mrs Bettina Haerberle, Area Director of Sales and Marketing, introduced the three luxury properties that are under The Bürgenstock Selection brand: the Royal Savoy Hotel & Spa Lausanne, the Hotel Schweizerhof Bern & THE SPA and the Bürgenstock Hotels & Resort Lake Lucerne.



*Bettina Haerberle, (second right) Area Director of Sales and Marketing; Saeid Heidari (second left), Managing Director of The Bürgenstock Selection Katara Hospitality Switzerland AG; Alain Kropf (left), General Manager, and Robert Herr (right), General Manager of The Bürgenstock Selection Switzerland.*



## Cultural Events

The Embassy of Switzerland organized more than thirty events throughout 2019. From a first-time private jazz concert to long-term classics like the National Day or the Santa Claus Celebration, a colorful variety of events was organized for the Qatari, business and Swiss communities in Doha. We hope you enjoyed our events and look forward to welcoming you to many more in the coming year !

## **Swiss National Day**

Switzerland celebrated last year its 728th anniversary. To celebrate this joyous occasion, a National Day celebration was organized for more than 250 people on 3rd April 2019. This early date can be explained with the extreme summer heat in Qatar during the month of August.

The event, which was supported by Qatari and Swiss sponsors, was celebrated with traditional musical performances by Severin, Andreas and Adrian of Nidwaldner Huismusig from the central part of Switzerland as well as typical raclette cheese from Valais among many other delicacies.



*Image 1 (from left to right): Mrs. Martina Masat, Mr. Thomas Fischer, Mrs. Junko Kimura Doerig and Ambassador Edgar Doerig welcoming guests.*

*Image 2 (from left to right): Ambassador Edgar Doerig with VIP guests.*

*Image 3: Ambassador Edgar Doerig addressing the Swiss colony.*

*Image 4: The National Day was celebrated at the Grand Hyatt in Doha.*



## Swiss athletes at the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Doha

Qatar hosted the biennial IAAF World Championships in Athletics from 27th September to 6th October 2019. It was the first time this event came to the Middle East. During the ten-day competition 1998 athletes competed in 49 events at the Khalifa International Stadium and the Doha Corniche. Three world records were set and six championship records broken.

21 Swiss athletes participated in the mega event. Mujinga Kambundji won the only Swiss medal, an outstanding success. She won bronze over 200 m with a time of 22.51 seconds ! The Swiss women's team at the 4 x 100 m relay, consisting of Ajla Del Ponte, Sarah Atcho, Mujinga Kambundji and Salomé Kora, narrowly missed the podium and finished fourth with a great time of 42.18 seconds. This is a new national record ! Lea Sprunger also broke a Swiss record in the 400 m hurdle final. She also came fourth with a time of 54.06 seconds.

In honor of the athletes, sports officials, support staff and their families and friends a reception for over a hundred guests was organized at the residence on 4th October 2019. Representatives of the Swiss community, the Swiss Business Council Qatar as well as representatives of numerous media also took part. The Swiss Ambassador in Qatar, Mr. Edgar Doerig, and Christoph Seiler, President of Swiss Athletics, opened the event with short speeches and presented the successful athletes with Swiss army knives. Then the guests had time to mix and mingle while enjoying Swiss raclette and local delicacies.



Image 1: From left to right: Lea Sprunger broke the national record over 400m hurdles.

Image 2 (from left to right): Ajla Del Ponte, Sarah Atcho, Salomé Kora and Mujinga Kambundji crossed the finishing line forth in the Women 4x100m relay.

Image 3: Ambassador Edgar Doerig with Swiss athletes at the reception at the residence.



## Beat Kästli at the European Jazz Festival

Award winning vocalist, songwriter, arranger and producer Beat Kästli and his Czech band, consisting of Petr Dvorský (bass), Tomáš Hobzek (drums) and Adam Tvrđý (guitar), represented Switzerland during the 6th Katara European Jazz Festival that took place from 4th to 9th November 2019 in Katara. The Festival was initiated by Switzerland alongside some other countries in 2014 with the goal of bringing together many voices and faces of Jazz to bridge the gap between the different cultures and languages of Europe and Qatar. Beat Kästli and his Czech band touched hundreds of jazz lovers with their minimalist, intimate, gentle and inspirational tunes on 8th November 2019.

Beat also impressed during an intimate concert at the residence that took place on 6th November 2019. The concert was intended to thank sponsors for their great and much appreciated support for the National Day celebrations.



*Image 1 and 3: Beat Kästli and band at the 6th European Jazz Festival.*

*Image 2: Beat Kästli and band performing at a concert at the Residence to thank sponsors.*



## Swiss Ladies Coffee Mornings

The wife of the Ambassador, Mrs. Junko Kimura Doerig, regularly invites to coffee mornings for Swiss ladies living in Qatar. Whether at the Ambassador's Residence or in different places spread out across the city, these events are always a great occasion to mix and mingle with fellow Swiss citizens who have made Qatar their home. If you have not yet been aware of these gatherings and would like to join, please kindly register your interest at the Embassy.

Mrs. Junko Kimura Doerig looks forward to welcoming you !



*Images: Swiss ladies coffee morning at the Mandarin Oriental Doha in May 2019.*



## Consular Affairs

### **Online Desk for Swiss nationals residing abroad**

The Online Desk offers the option to manage some administrative matters with the Embassy through an online tool.

Under the following link (<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/qatar/en/home/services/online-desk.html>) you can for example:

- Announce changes of address
- Update contact details (phone, email etc.)
- Order publications (Swiss Review, Information from the Embassy)
- Contact the Embassy



## **Swiss Review**

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) is highlighting the online edition of the “Swiss Review”. In addition, they would like to draw your attention to the regional pages of the “Swiss Review” which can be found under the following link: <https://www.revue.ch/en/news-from-your-region/>

As you are well aware, the “Swiss Review” is the official publication of the Swiss government for the Swiss abroad. Should you not receive it, you need to immediately contact the Embassy to clarify your email address.

## Other

### **Launch of new Facebook page**

The Embassy of Switzerland to the State of Qatar launched a Facebook page in May 2019. If you want to stay up to date on upcoming and past events, learn more about the country and its varied relation to Qatar, enjoy some beautiful pictures of mountains and lakes or just want to impress your friends with some great fun facts about Switzerland, like our page!

 [Like us on Facebook!](#)



### Carefree travels with the app «Travel Admin»

The FDFA's new travel app is available free of charge in the App Store or on Google Play. Download it to ensure carefree travels wherever you go!

