



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Der Bundesrat
Das Portal der Schweizer Regierung

Offizieller Besuch in Singapore - Empfang zum Schweizer Nationalfeiertag (en)

Singapore, 05.08.2023 - Ansprache von Bundesrat Ignazio Cassis, Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Departements für auswärtige Angelegenheiten (EDA) - es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Excellencies

Dear National Councillor Yvonne Feri

Dear National Councillor Thomas Aeschi

Dear friends of Switzerland

I am delighted to celebrate the Swiss National Day, which took place a few days ago, with you here in Singapore.

This year, our national holiday has a special flavour as we celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Federal Constitution, established in 1848.

This jubilee reminds us that Switzerland is one of the oldest and most stable democracies in the world. That's something we can be proud of!

The Federal Constitution of 1848 transformed Switzerland from a confederation of states into a single federal state with its own Constitution.

From the four corners of Switzerland and the world, we have all been contributing to the common identity and the national cohesion of our country for 175 years!

The "spirit of 1848" laid the foundation stone for a modern, liberal Switzerland, a model from which other nations have drawn inspiration, starting with Singapore.

As you may know, after having independence forced upon it, Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew studied various models of small countries surrounded by large neighbours to – and I quote: "observe the methods used to ensure their survival".

Three of these communities were deemed inspiring: Israel, Finland and Switzerland.

Today, given the scale of our exchanges, our capacity for innovation and our regional importance, I can say that the inspiration is mutual and I'm delighted that this tremendous momentum is carrying our two nations forward!

Dear fellow citizens

Switzerland is doing well, and that gives us cause to celebrate.

Confidence in public institutions is high;
Unemployment is low;
And inflation relatively contained.

Our economy is one of the most competitive and innovative in the world.

Our relations with South East Asia are a fine example of this:

- The Swiss government has adopted a South East Asia Strategy 2023 to '26, focusing on peace and security, prosperity and sustainability;
- Switzerland also wants to strengthen its relations with ASEAN, particularly in the areas of digitalisation, vocational education and training, climate risk management and human rights.
- We want to develop a Swiss hub here in Singapore for education, research and innovation, and also in the fields of finance, cybersecurity and sustainability.

As you can see, our cooperation programme is ambitious.

Our successes and high standard of living should not lead us to rest on our laurels, because nothing is more constant than change!

Who could have predicted a global pandemic or the return of war to Europe?

Nobody. And yet...

Today everything is accelerating:

New trends are born and fade with a few clicks of the mouse; tempers flare as much as the climate; and social media amplify this agitation, not always for the better.

Care Signore e cari Signori

In such a complex environment, our work to ensure Switzerland's prosperity is never done – at home and abroad.

The freedom guaranteed by our Federal Constitution only has meaning and a future if we make something of it!

In other words, in addition to our right to freedom, we have a duty of responsibility.

Before setting off on this trip I celebrated the first of August in Switzerland, on top of the Gotthard Pass.

In Italian, the road leading up to the Gotthard Pass is called la via delle genti – the way of the people... It is so true!

Our country puts people at the heart of politics. It links profoundly different cultures: northern and southern Europe.

This 'way of the people' is Switzerland's strength, capable of climbing mountains and building bridges!

This is also my birthday wish for our 175th anniversary:

We need to preserve that strength. We must retain the entrepreneurial spirit of our ancestors, their desire to keep moving forward, to innovate and to keep open a gateway to a stable and peaceful world.

We must ensure the via delle genti reaches from Bern to Singapore!

Grazie per la vostra attenzione.
Buona festa nazionale!

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