



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

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

Sydney, 06.08.2023 - Ansprache von Bundesrat Ignazio Cassis, Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Departements für auswärtige Angelegenheiten (EDA) - es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Liebe Mitbürgerinnen und Mitbürger

Chers et chères compatriotes

Cari concittadini, care concittadine

Chars Svizzers e charas Svizras

Dear National Councillor Yvonne Feri

Dear National Councillor Thomas Aeschi

Dear friends of Switzerland

Many thanks to all the Swiss organisations that made this celebration here today possible.

Thank you also to you, Mister Peter Pluess, for your kind introduction and the warm welcome to me and my delegation.

I am delighted to be with you in Sydney.

There are some “firsts” for me here: This is the first time I've celebrated the Swiss National Day in winter!

It is the first time for me to visit Australia.

It is also the first time that I have travelled so far to get so close to Gruyere, Engadine and Interlaken... I don't mean the originals in Switzerland, but the locations here in Australia

with Swiss links!

Ladies and Gentlemen

It's a pleasure for me to address so many fellow citizens gathered here in Castle Hill.

It's the biggest party in the largest Swiss community in Australia – the nation with the largest Swiss community in the Asia-Pacific region!

These superlatives are entirely fitting this year, 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.

The Federal Constitution of 1848 transformed Switzerland from a confederation of states into a single federal state with a central 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!

We can be proud of this diversity: You and all of us create this beautiful mosaic of human beings, constituting our nation. This diversity is beautifully represented in the history of Swiss emigration to Australia:

The first Swiss nationals to attempt this adventure were winegrowers from French-speaking Switzerland;
They were followed by the gold miners from Ticino;
And then by German-speaking farmers.

There are certain similarities with the current composition of the Federal Council – and I do mean certain!

But joking aside... Australia is still one of Switzerland's favourite non-European destinations, and this afternoon, with you and your warm welcome, I can easily see why!

Dear fellow citizens

In 1848, our ancestors laid the foundation stone for a modern, liberal Switzerland, a model from which other nations have drawn inspiration.

One of them was Australia!

Two Swiss emigrants – Henry Tardent and Heinrich Spoendlin – were involved in drafting the Australian constitution in 1891.

Their work inspired the adoption of the country's mandatory referendum for constitutional changes and the double majority rule.

This is a fine example of the adaptability of democratic instruments, which are not limited by the geography or the size of nations (NB: Australia's highest peak is only 2,228 metres and Australia is almost 200 times the size of Switzerland).

Switzerland and Australia are united in the values they share and democracies like ours can gain much from each other, despite global challenges and crises.

We are committed to universal human rights;
We stand for open and inclusive societies;
And we promote the rules-based international order.

Our cooperation continues to go from strength to strength. Not only in trade, science and tourism, but also in the digital space and in the global fight against climate change.

This collaboration became even more effective with the reopening of the Australian embassy in Bern last year: Australia got closer again to Switzerland.

I look forward to discussing the opportunities we can seize together with Foreign Minister Penny Wong tomorrow in Canberra.

The fruitful collaboration between our two countries will also be at the heart of my meeting with the Parliamentary Friendship Group which covers more than a fifth of all parliamentarians (49/227).

Dear friends of Switzerland

As we mark this Swiss National Day, I'd like to pass on a message of optimism: Switzerland is doing well!

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 – the continued

growth of our relations with this Pacific region is a perfect example.

That gives us cause to celebrate!

But – and there is a but – let's not forget why we're doing well.

Our dynamism and successes 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 Gotthardpass.

In Italian, the road leading up to the Gotthard Pass is also 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 keep our strength intact. We must retain the entrepreneurial spirit of our ancestors, their desire to keep driving forward, to innovate and to keep a gateway to the

world open.

We must ensure the via delle genti reaches from Bern to Canberra... and Sydney!

Grazie per la vostra attenzione.

Buona festa nazionale!

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