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Der Bundesrat
Das Portal der Schweizer Regierung

Offizieller Besuch in Neuseeland - Jahrestag der 60-jährigen diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Neuseeland (EN)

Wellington, 08.08.2023 - Ansprache von Bundesrat Ignazio Cassis, Vorsteher des Eidgenössischen Departements für auswärtige Angelegenheiten (EDA) - es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Kia ora!

It is my great pleasure to address you today on this very special occasion:

This year, Aotearoa New Zealand, the land of the long white cloud, and Switzerland, the land of the long white mountain range, are celebrating sixty years of diplomatic relations.

Today, more than 7,000 Swiss nationals call New Zealand their home.

This is not surprising, considering the many similarities our countries share.

Besides the beautiful nature that we both want to protect, we are like-minded partners in terms of democracy, our stance on multilateralism and a rules-based international order.

I very much appreciate our fruitful exchanges and cooperation, as was recently the case in the preparations for our non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2023 and 2024.

New Zealand - having served four times as a non-permanent member - has thankfully

shared valuable expertise in preparing us for this important role.

In this regard, I am looking forward to exchanging views tomorrow with the foreign minister Nanaia Mahuta and the acting Foreign Minister of Niue Mona Ainu'u.

But for now, the focus is on today's event!

Dear guests,

Swiss nationals living here in New Zealand in most cases probably have two beating hearts in their chest: one that beats for New Zealand and one that beats for Switzerland.

And that makes some moments more difficult than others...

I'm thinking of the FIFA Women's World Cup – that you currently organise together with Australia – and the match last week between Switzerland and New Zealand.

In the meantime, since then, our contries are out.

This is indeed a pity, but sport is sport. Now the Matildas are doing well and I wish our common Australian friends best of luck.

But when our two hearts beat together, something magical takes place:

This is what we saw during the America's Cup in 2003 when the Swiss yacht Alinghi won the silver ewer against Team New Zealand... with a New Zealand skipper, Russell Coutts, at the helm!

I have to admit that coming from a country of land and freshwater, I was very proud!

But joking aside...

It is a unique opportunity for me today not only to meet New Zealanders, but also to talk to Swiss community leaders and Swiss business representatives living here.

Being a land of opportunity, New Zealand first drew Swiss emigrants with its gold and fertile land.

Today, New Zealand's stable political and economic environment attract many Swiss professionals and multinational companies.

The latter are present here in the field of power generation, pharmaceuticals, nutrition, banking and insurance.

In the area of rail transport, for example, an important agreement has been concluded:

Stadler Rail, a Swiss manufacturer of railway rolling stock, has signed a contract with KiwiRail for the supply of 57 locomotives in 2021.

Not to forget our fruitful cooperation in the areas of vocational education and training, research and innovation, and *last but not least*, in addressing climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am convinced that both our countries could benefit even more from increased exchanges.

Our dynamism and successes should not lead us to rest on our laurels.

In the complex environment we are facing, our collaboration to ensure our common prosperity is never done – at home and abroad.

We mustn't forget why we're doing well.

Care Signore e cari Signori

As you may know, Switzerland is celebrating this year the 175th anniversary of its modern, liberal constitution.

For this special occasion – *just before setting off on this trip* – I went hiking with some fellow Swiss citizens 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 the strength of my country, capable of climbing mountains and building bridges just as New Zealand itself has done throughout its history.

This is also my message for the 175th anniversary and our 60 years of diplomatic relations:

We need to keep our strength intact.

We must retain the entrepreneurial spirit of our ancestors, the desire to move forward and innovate that enriches our relations.

Let's raise a glass to our current and future partnership!

May I propose a toast to King Charles III, the Government and the people of New Zealand - cheers !

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