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Partner



H.E. Philippe GUEX,

Ambassador of the Swiss
Confederation to Serbia

**Less Corruption And A Stronger
Judiciary Bring New Investors**

Ursula Läubli,

Director of Swiss Cooperation,
Embassy of Switzerland

Partnership And Mutual Trust

Yana Mikhailova,

President of the Swiss-Serbian Chamber Of
Commerce, Regional Director - Nestlé Adriatic

**Swiss Companies Recognise
Positive Changes In Serbia**

Ana Grujović,

SSCC Executive Director

**"SSCC Member's Reunions"
For Stronger Connections**

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Nestlé – 2030 ambition to help 50 million children lead healthier lives

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With this goal Nestlé formed global Kids Programme which helps children and adolescents balance good nutrition and healthy hydration with an active lifestyle. Programme is based on supporting educators and families, who are ultimately responsible for educating children.

The Programme stimulates changes in school sets and communities that will create environments in which children can learn, but also experience healthy lifestyles. Within the Programme kids learn the basics of nutrition and gain practical advice on good eating and drinking habits.

Nestlé Healthy Kids Programme is currently running in 84 countries, annually reaching almost 7.5 million children. Serbian seventh graders are part of this global network.



Healthy Kids
ZdravoRastimo

ZdravoRastimo is local variant of the Programme implemented with the support of our partner Serbian School Sports Federation. In collaboration with experts, and based on specific needs of the local community special attention is given to seventh graders. **More than 19,000 from Serbia in six sessions benefited from this Programme.**

This Programme is also implemented in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, reaching in total more than 45,000 kids in region so far, making it the largest project of this kind in this part of Europe.

The impact of good health extends far beyond the well-being of individuals; it contributes to the development and economic success of entire countries. The society is paying much more attention to the need of promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing disease. It is our responsibility, as a food producer, to support parents and society overall in raising healthier generations.

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Inspiration and support

Switzerland is a partner from which Serbia can draw inspiration in many areas: from clever pursuit of neutrality policy while simultaneously fostering close and strong ties with the European Union, to building a strong economy based on knowledge and well-educated staff.

Next year will be 110 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Serbia. If we look only at the recent history of these relations, it can be said that in the 1990s, at the time of the political and economic crisis, the cooperation between the two countries were mostly of humanitarian character. After the political changes in October 2000, the cooperation gained a new quality and the focus was shifted to institutional reforms to ensure a peaceful transition of society into a modern democracy and a sustainable market economy. Today, in addition to maintaining excellent political relations, the attention of the two countries is dedicated to knowledge transfer - through foreign investments, which increasingly include migration of quality jobs from Switzerland to Serbia in the IT sector and other service industries with higher added value, a reliance on Swiss experience in dual education, which plays a major role in building a competitive economy and high quality employment of young people, and assistance in building a strong public finance and debt management sector.

In many ways, Switzerland is an inspiration for Serbia. The macroeconomic stability that Serbia has managed to achieve in recent years, and which should now be ensured by further reforms, is enjoying great support from Switzerland as the country that leads the constituency in the international financial organisations of which Serbia is a member. Although not itself a member of the EU, Switzerland, with

its respect for the EU values and through direct assistance for reforms, supports Serbia's path to the EU.

This support is realized through two federal agencies: the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) under the Federal Department of Economic Affairs. Through various pro-

conditions continue to pose challenges that Swiss investors point out when deciding to invest in Serbia.

From their own experience, the Swiss, perhaps better than some EU countries, know how important it is to have transparent business conditions and be competitive in the world, especially when the country cannot rely on significant natural resources. Hence, their message that Serbia, if it wants

to enhance economic cooperation with Switzerland, has to build a competitive economy, is very powerful.

There is much debate in Serbia about whether its industry can be restored by relying on foreign investors or by investing instead in the development of domestic companies. Switzerland is an example of a country with a strong industry that has never had a developed industrial policy, but above all a rational and practical approach in creating the conditions for developing a private sector capable of



The new strategy of Swiss assistance to Serbia from 2018 to 2021 promises a continuation of good cooperation between the two countries. The focus will be on encouraging the building of a knowledge-based economy, raising employability, financial stability, developing e-government and fostering inclusive development

grammes Serbia receives assistance from Switzerland worth CHF 15 million a year.

Although tangible progress has been made, there are still challenges that Switzerland and other developed countries point out to Serbia. This refers, first of all, to the still insufficient improvements in building of a stable, independent and transparent legal system. Administrative barriers, corruption and unstable business

dealing with global challenges.

At the same time, Switzerland is one of the leaders in innovation, although it does not have a developed innovation policy. Although well-designed public policies in all key areas of society's development are welcomed, these examples actually point to the importance of encouraging the freedom of entrepreneurship and innovation in practice. ■

Less Corruption And A Stronger Judiciary Bring New Investors



An economist by training, Swiss Ambassador H.E. Philippe Guex monitors Serbia's economic reforms with particular attention and claims that the biggest successes in the European integration process have been made on the macroeconomic front.

H.E. PHILIPPE GUEX,
AMBASSADOR OF THE SWISS
CONFEDERATION TO SERBIA

The Swiss Ambassador expects greater interest in Serbia among foreign investors, the prerequisite for which is a more stable business environment that implies combatting corruption and a stronger judicial system. Ambassador Guex explains why he believes that the EU is for Serbia what the North Star was for the three wise men of the Bible. Speaking about his impressions of Belgrade, Ambassador Guex notices the great interweaving of history and current politics both in Serbia and throughout the entire region.

STABILITY

Swiss politicians largely recognise that the EU is the main guarantor of stability and prosperity in Europe.

AUSTERITY

The austerity policy of the Government has brought the Serbian economy back onto a sound economic footing.

EDUCATION

In Switzerland, two-thirds of young men and women choose a dual education system pathway.

-When I took on my duties in Belgrade, I was indeed struck by the level of resentment that remains in the whole region, not only due to the wars of the '90s, but also going back to World War II. Be it in Zagreb, Sarajevo, Pristina or Belgrade, political life is frequently punctuated by sudden surges of tension linked to the past. The rhetoric can turn to provocative statements with nationalist references. These incidents are a symptom of a reconciliation process that has yet to be achieved. Reconciliation can occur only if it is underpinned by sincere political devotion to dealing with the past, which then should not be obstructed by a nationalist narrative. The recent appointment of the new Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor after a long vacancy can serve as an important step in this regard.

• You also used an unusual metaphor to praise the Serbian Government's commitment to European integration. Specifically, you said in an interview that "for this government joining the EU is what the North Star was for the three wise men from the Bible". That's a strong metaphor for an observer from a country that isn't a member of the EU? -I used the metaphor of the three wise men from the Bible because the journey to EU membership is on a long and rocky path. Reforms which have to be carried out are often painful and unpopular. And Serbia has to implement these reforms for its own sake and not just to please Brussels. This is

not always well understood by the population. During this long journey, the challenge for the Serbian government is not to get distracted by alternative ways, hence the use of the North Star metaphor.

As a Swiss diplomat, I do not have any problem speaking positively about the EU, because there are few EU countries that are as integrated into the EU as Switzerland. We are the EU's third biggest trade partner after the U.S. and China. Goods worth a billion euros are traded every single working day. The 1.4 million EU citizens living in Switzerland represent 16 per cent of the population. Every working day 300,000 EU citizens cross the Swiss border to go to work. The reasons why Switzerland does not belong to the EU are linked to our history and our semi-direct political institutions. Swiss

politicians largely recognise that the EU is the main guarantor of stability and prosperity in Europe.

• After the relatively short time you've spent in Serbia, how would you assess bilateral relations with Switzerland?



Reforms which have to be carried out are often painful and unpopular. And Serbia has to implement these reforms for its own sake, and not just to please Brussels

- Bilateral relations are based on four pillars: (a) strong high-ranking political ties; (b) a large Serbian diaspora; (c) still modest bilateral economic relations, but with much potential; (d) significant development and economic cooperation, with Switzerland among the "top three" bilateral donors in Serbia.

The Serbian diaspora encompasses 200,000 people who live and work in Switzerland, contributing to the prosperity of the country. Switzerland has been a country of emigration for citizens of the former Yugoslavia since the early 1960s. As such, it is not surprising that today five per cent of the Swiss population speak Serbo-Croatian as their first language. From an economic perspective, the diaspora living in Switzerland sends about €400 million of remittances to their relatives in Serbia

each year. This significant Serbian diaspora could be a pool for new investments in Serbia that needs to be further exploited.

Annual trade with Serbia is rather modest (€300 millions), as it accounts for only one per cent of Switzerland's global trade. However, Swiss direct investments total amount €900 million, making Switzerland the 10th largest investor in Serbia. I expect direct investments to increase in the future, as the Serbian economy becomes more competitive and the enforcement of the rule of law more reliable.



The Serbian Government's economic policy is driven by foreign direct investment and privatisations. It is therefore crucial for the Government to give the investors the predictability they need

Export-orientated, outsourced services are clearly a sector to which Swiss companies are paying more and more attention when considering investing in Serbia. For the time being, the focus is mainly on engineering, information technology and online customer services. A clear competitive advantage is well-educated personnel who are fluent in English. Last but not least, the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce, chaired by Yana Mikhailova, is a driving force behind intensifying trade and investments between our two countries.

• As an economist, how would you assess reforms in the economic domain, and what is lacking that would ensure a large influx of foreign investment?
- The austerity policy of the Government has brought the Serbian economy back onto a sound economic footing:

a substantial reduction of public deficit, inflation under control and stabilisation of the national currency. By the way, not a single euro zone country would be able to achieve what Serbia did: reducing the public deficit by five per cent of GDP within two years.

In any place on this planet, foreign and domestic investors need the same: profitability and predictability. In countries like Serbia, which have to catch-up with the rest of Europe in an economic sense, investment profitability is usually not a concern. But predictability is. You get predictability by improving rule-of-law, guaranteeing judicial independence, fighting against corruption and making tax administration transparent. Serbia has certainly made substantial progress in terms of business climate, but there is still space for improvement in order to bring predictability for investors, in line with European standards. The Serbian Government's economic policy is driven by foreign direct investment and privatisations. It is therefore crucial for the Government to give the investors the predictability they need.

• Considering Swiss business practises, what would you suggest that the Serbian government focus on in the future?

- If Switzerland has managed to maintain one of the most competitive industries in the world, it is because it never had an industrial policy. If Switzerland is among the most competitive countries in terms of R&D and innovation, it is because it never had an innovation policy. The Swiss "state hands-off policy" is certainly a source of inspiration for Serbia, in particular when it comes to privatising Serbian state-owned companies.

The dual education system is a second source of inspiration for Serbia. In Switzerland, two-thirds of young men and women choose a dual education system pathway.

With this background, we are ideally positioned to promote youth employment in Serbia. That's why we are pleased to support the Government's continuing reform initiatives to develop a Serbian dual education system. With this aim, the Swiss Embassy's Cooperation Office has launched a €7 million programme in Serbia called E2E, which stands for Education to Employment.

• Have you had the opportunity to hear the concerns of the academic community, educators and trade unions regarding the initiative to introduce dual education, which is being considered with a view to the Swiss model?

- We are aware of the concerns of the academic community, educators and trade unions. At the same time, in Serbia we observe a significant mismatch in the

labour market, where the offer of skilled labour often doesn't match the demanded skills of the private sector. Taking into account the high unemployment rate in Serbia, particularly among young people, we think it is important to try to reduce this gap in the labour market. One way to do that is to more strongly involve the private sector in the development of curricula, in order to ensure that the vocational formation equips future employees with the skills needed in the workplace. In Switzerland we have a long tradition of dual educational training and we see that continuous dialogue and collaboration between the private sector and vocational schools is crucial to ensure the development of the skilled people demanded by the labour market. Experiences in Switzerland and elsewhere also show that it is often a valuable experience for apprentices to grow within a company, and they identify strongly with "their" companies. However, we are aware that the introduction of elements of the dual vocational education system represents a substantial change for the Serbian education system. From our perspective, the concerns which different stakeholders expressed need to be taken seriously. It is important that decision makers enter into an open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders, in order to answer open questions and take on recommendations to counteract those concerns.

• **Following Montenegro's accession to NATO, the issue of relations with the Alliance is again in focus. Your predecessor considered that Serbia could remain neutral. What is your stance?**

- Serbia is a key country for the stability of the whole region. Therefore Belgrade's foreign policy draws much attention from abroad. No country has ever

been forced to join NATO. Six EU member states are not part of NATO, namely Austria, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. It goes without saying that Serbia, as a sovereign state, can remain neutral. Look at Switzerland: we have been neutral for 500 years now.

• **We saw you visiting the Nikola Tesla B thermal power plant, which has been modernised thanks to a Swiss donation. What can you say about this project, which should significantly reduce harmful gas emissions?**

- Overall, the TENT B project is very successful. We experienced some delays in implementation, but now that the monitoring and control room is fully rehabilitated in both units, we are very satisfied with

the results. Through energy efficiency gains in both units, we expect a reduction of CO₂ emissions that corresponds approximately to the CO₂ emissions of an Airbus A320 flying 11,200 times along the Belgrade-Zurich route, or which equals the annual CO₂ emissions of the entire urban population of Obrenovac. These are substantial results that show a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions. The project partner, Electric Power Industry of Serbia (EPS), proved to be a good and dedicated partner and we experienced good collaboration, which is crucial for the successful



It is important that decision makers enter into an open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders, in order to answer open questions and take on recommendations to counteract those concerns

implementation of such a project. However, despite the good results of the TENT B project, Switzerland will in the future concentrate its support on projects that are more strongly linked to renewable energy sources, instead of coal-based energy projects.

• **You signed an agreement with the Serbian Ministry of Energy and Mining to grant eight million euros to improve energy efficiency in public buildings, mostly schools, in Serbia. Could you tell us something about the Energy Cities Project, which is being implemented within the framework of the Strategy for Cooperation of Switzerland with Serbia for the period 2014-2017?**

- In our view, the Municipal Energy Efficiency and Management Project (MEEMP) is a very inspiring

project. Besides the concrete implementation of energy efficiency measures in 26 public buildings and capacity building measures, Switzerland will support the introduction of the European Energy Award (EEA). The EEA is an originally Swiss approach to energy management at the local level, connected deeply to Swiss expertise and knowhow. In the case of Serbia, the EEA will be suitable to support municipalities in implementing the new Serbian law on energy efficiency. We are looking forward to starting the implementation of the project and to seeing the EEA approach implemented in Serbia.



Switzerland will in the future concentrate its support on projects that are more strongly linked to renewable energy sources, instead of coal-based energy projects

We are convinced that this energy management tool, which is already used in 1,300 municipalities in 11 countries, will also be very useful for Serbian municipalities, contributing to the development of sustainable energy management at the local level.

• **Swiss International Airlines has established a new Niš-Zurich route. How important is this route and could it become a permanent link after the summer?**
- The new Zurich-Niš route is in fact a permanent, all-year-round, flight. This new link is an additional window enabling more business, more tourism and more family reunions for the Serbian diaspora living in Switzerland. There is a strong need for South Serbia to improve its connection with the rest of Europe. South Serbia has serious competitive advantages to promote abroad.

Therefore I am confident that this new route will bring this region closer to potential Swiss investors, as it needs more trade, more foreign investments and more jobs. There are a total of 37 flights a week connecting our two countries. With four flights a day, Zurich has become the top route of Nikola Tesla Airport. It is yet more evidence of how intense our bilateral relations have become throughout the years.

Moreover, Zurich International Airport is leading a consortium that is bidding in the public tender to grant a concession for the management of the Nikola Tesla Airport in Belgrade. Considering the significance of the Belgrade-Zurich route, substantial synergies would materialise if Zurich Airport were to get the concession.

• **You are continuing the tradition of Swiss ambassadors when it comes to fostering cultural ties and supporting artists in Serbia. What can you announce for the coming autumn season?**

- Firstly, let me point out that local artists contribute greatly to mutual understanding between different cultures, being usually tolerant and open-minded citizens. In a society they are implicitly, if not explicitly, advocates of "living together". As people-to-people exchanges remain the backbone of our bilateral relations, my first priority is to bring Swiss artists to Serbia, and vice versa. We are working on an exhibition that will gather three Swiss artists and three Serbian artists, and which will take place in two different locations in Belgrade.

Secondly, we recently welcomed young Swiss pilgrim artist Marinka Limat, who is walking from Kassel (Germany) to Athens, a 2,500 km journey crossing nine countries within 167 days. This pilgrimage is a tribute to the major cultural event "Dokumenta" in Kassel, the 2017 edition of which

has been relocated to Athens under the topic "North is meeting South". As Belgrade is the city par excellence when it comes to "West meeting East", I am pleased that Marinka made a major stopover at the U10 collective gallery and met several Serbian artists in town.

Additionally, an exhibition curated by the Swiss Institute in New York is currently open to the public (until 21st August) at the Čolaković Legacy of the Museum of Contemporary Art. The Swiss Embassy in Belgrade is also supporting performances of two theatre plays for the upcoming BITEF, performed by Konzert Theatre Bern and directed by Ersan Mondtag. BITEF is followed by the Belgrade Book Fair 2017 in October, where Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein are guests of honour under the theme "4 countries, 1 language". ■



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Swiss Companies Recognise Positive Changes in Serbia



Reforms undertaken in your country in the last few years, economic stability and strong macroeconomic indicators impact positively on conditions for doing business. In the last few years the ICT sector has started becoming more attractive, with Swiss investors choosing Serbia to locate their development departments and service centres, such as in the cases of Namics and InterVenture. Serbia has a strong opportunity to become an attractive destination for the outsourcing of all kinds of services

YANA MIKHAILOVA,

PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS-SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
REGIONAL DIRECTOR - NESTLÉ ADRIATIC

The Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce was founded a little more than three years ago, with the aim of improving business communication between the two countries and introducing Swiss standards to Serbian business circles. Here Yana Mikhailova, Regional Director - Nestlé Adriatic, speaks about how satisfied they are with the results.

- Today the SSCC (Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce) is a diverse business community uniting some of the world's leading enterprises and SMEs from different industries, who work together to make Serbia a better place to do businesses. It's satisfying to see the SSCC community growing stronger. We welcome new members who are willing to contribute to the SSCC's purpose, participate in the further development of economic cooperation

between Switzerland and Serbia, and promote Swiss ways of doing business: compliant, transparent, expert-driven and efficient.

Conferences and seminars organised by the SSCC aim to facilitate public-private dialogue, provide constructive feedback to stakeholders and offer concrete proposals on topics that are important and relevant to the Swiss business community operating in Serbia, such as dual education or SME development.

This year the SSCC participated in the 8th meeting of the Joint Economic Committee Switzerland-Serbia, which took place in Belgrade on 20th June. Furthermore, the SSCC signed the Service Performance Agreement with "Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)". In cooperation with S-GE, the SSCC will increase capacities for providing business assistance to potential Swiss investors evaluating the possibility of entering the Serbian market.

Yet another important accomplishment of the SSCC is a strengthened relationship between SSCC members, which are now participating in Members' reunions and field trips to members' production sites, as well as contributing willingly to the SSCC agenda.

• Switzerland is among the 10 largest investors in Serbia, having invested more than €500 million in the last decade. In which sectors do you see room for the SSCC to play a greater role in accelerating the development of the Serbian economy?

- Swiss investors are successfully operating in many sectors in Serbia, such as construction, food manufacturing, wood processing, the ICT sector, pharmaceuticals, the automotive and energy industries, as well as textile production.

Serbia offers good prospects for developing production and export, with its geographical position, well-developed infrastructure and the advantages of its well-developed framework of free trade agreements, not only within the region through CEFTA and the EU, but also with Russia, Ukraine and Turkey.

In the last few years the ICT sector has started becoming more attractive, with Swiss investors choosing Serbia to locate their development departments and service centres, such as in the cases of Namics and InterVenture. Serbia has a strong opportunity to become an attractive destination for the outsourcing of all kinds of services, not only IT services. In order to further accelerate the ICT sector, Serbia will have to swiftly address the issue of the availability of skilled workers, such as engineers, IT experts and other specialists.

• The survey of Swiss investors suggests that conditions for doing business in Serbia were better in 2016 than in 2015. What remain the biggest criticisms when it comes to improving the business climate in Serbia?

- Reforms undertaken in Serbia in the last few years, economic stability and strong macroeconomic indicators, positively impact on the conditions for doing business. And Swiss companies recognise positive changes. SSCC member companies rated the business environment as satisfactory, with 63.6% of companies having a

positive view of the business environment in Serbia, and nearly a quarter of surveyed companies expecting the business environment in Serbia to improve in 2017 compared to last year.

However, the survey confirmed that obstacles still persist and companies expect the local business environment to further improve. The survey results show that the key challenges of doing business in Serbia are still related to bureaucracy and administration, the tax system and the fight against corruption, as well as ensuring legal security and stability.



Conferences and seminars organised by the SSCC aim to facilitate public-private dialogue, provide constructive feedback to stakeholders and offer concrete proposals on topics that are important and relevant to the Swiss business community operating in Serbia, such as dual education or SME development

In addition, respondents referred to high social charges as an important factor impacting their businesses, which was already identified as an area for improvement during the SSCC's Conference on SMEs, held in October 2016.

• SMEs account for 99 per cent of companies in Switzerland and represent the basis for the country's economic development. How can this recipe be applied in Serbia, where the development of SMEs is rather neglected?

- SMEs are the backbone and an important contributor to the resilience and stability of the Swiss economy. In Serbia, the importance of the development of small and medium-sized enterprises is well recognised and certainly not neglected, which is why the Serbian Government has launched its strategy aimed at creating a healthy economic environment for the development of sustainable and export-orientated SMEs.

The SSCC sees the importance of the SME sector in the further enhancement of economic relations between Switzerland in Serbia.

In October 2016, the SSCC organised its “Conference on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, SMEs”. The idea behind this event was to contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of Serbian SMEs which are expected to become important accelerators of economic growth, innovation, employment and market development.



Switzerland is renowned for its dual education system. Swiss companies in Serbia face similar challenges in finding skilled workers. In order to address the gap in skills, many SSCC members offer in-house training, apprenticeships and internship programmes to train newcomers and graduates

Switzerland has strong knowhow in supporting the development of SMEs. However, when using the Swiss approach it's important to consider the different context of Serbia and give priority to addressing issues that have a negative impact on SME development in Serbia.

Rule of law and law enforcement are crucial to the sustainable development of the private sector and entrepreneurship. One major problem is that inconsistent applications of the same law by different public institutions still remain. Sudden legislative changes in Serbia remain a major risk for SMEs, as small companies lack the resources to cope with the changes. Improving the efficiency of public administration by introducing e-government and m-government will foster the development of start-ups and SMEs.

One of the biggest obstacles to Serbian SMEs is the overall shortage of access to finance. Switzerland is renowned for providing support to the SME sector through numerous instruments, one of which is available to Swiss investors who start projects in Serbia:

SECO Start-up Fund (SSF). The SSF promotes private sector investment projects in countries with developing or transition economies.

The acceleration of the development of SMEs requires the further improvement of the business environment and consistent support from all relevant stakeholders, including governmental and financial institutions.

• **The value of the trade exchange between the two countries was around €286 million in 2016, with Serbia importing more than it exports. In which areas do Serbian products have the best chance on the Swiss market?**

- Exports of Serbian products to Switzerland are growing every year and increased by 27 per cent in 2017, which is a good growth pace. Serbia is traditionally strong in exporting agricultural products, fruits and berries, metal parts and textiles, and these products will remain an important part of Serbia's export, as they have already built a reputation on the market. However, the export of ICT products and services is expected to emerge in the coming years.

It is important to mention the fact that several SSCC member companies invested in production in Serbia with the aim of exporting to the markets of the EU, U.S. and other countries.

• **How would you assess the potential of Serbian companies when it comes to their inclusion in subcontractor and supply chains?**

- Serbian Companies are already included in the supply chains of SSCC member companies, and this process will evolve. These companies are innovative, open for development and dialogue, and share important values, such as amenability, quality and transparency. Opportunities exist in the supply of raw and packaged materials and services. In order to realise these opportunities, Serbian companies need to meet quality requirements.

• **Dual education has become synonymous with Switzerland, which is also helping Serbian in this domain. What are the results like to date**

and how would you assess the readiness of the authorities to engage in the significant changes implied by a different education system?

- Switzerland is well known for its dual education system, which prepares graduates to enter the workforce, and currently Swiss institutions are providing assistance in developing a similar education system in Serbia. A good example of Swiss assistance on this issue is the new programme designed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) “From Education to Employment, E2E”, which covers activities related to youth employment at the policy level and at the implementation level. The benefit of the Swiss dual educational system is in providing young people with a choice to start working right after completing school, well-equipped with professional skills, or to continue their further education. Vocational Educational Training Reform in Serbia is currently under development, while full implementation will require time.

Serbia has a strong base in academic education. What's missing are links between the education system and industry, as the current educational model leaves a gap in certain skills usually covered by companies' training courses.

Swiss companies in Serbia face similar challenges in finding skilled employees - graduates usually lack technical knowhow and managerial skills. In order to address the gap in skills, many SSCC members offer in-house training, apprenticeships and internship programmes to train newcomers and graduates. For example, Nestlé's Alliance for Youth programme is uniting companies around the globe to employ and train young professionals for work in companies.

• Early June saw the staging of the second all-Serbian summit in Switzerland, which is home to around 200,000 Serbs. This is the first serious step in activating the diaspora in the country. What are its capabilities, primarily when it comes to helping Serbian investors wishing to compete on the Swiss market? - Activating the diaspora is an opportunity that has not yet been exploited to its full potential, as the diaspora could drive entrepreneurship in Serbia. There are a few good examples of investors

who came from the Serbian diaspora in Switzerland and decided to invest in Serbia, and who now run successful businesses here.

• What are the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce's priorities for the period ahead?

- The World Bank's 2016 Doing Business survey raised Serbia to the rank of 47, which indicates that improvements have been achieved,

The SSCC sees the importance of the SME sector in the further enhancement of economic relations between Switzerland in Serbia. Switzerland has strong knowhow in supporting the development of SMEs. However, when using the Swiss approach it's important to consider the different context of Serbia and to give priority to addressing issues that impact negatively on SME development in Serbia

and that is a good signal for the business community. The challenge we are facing currently is to make the country's growth momentum sustainable, accelerate the reforms and ensure law enforcement.

The SSCC will continue contributing to public-private dialogue aimed at addressing the main challenges of the Serbian economy, and working together with all SSCC member companies to make Serbia a better place to do business. ■



Multi standardni punjači DC/AC

Za punjenje svih serijski proizvedenih električnih vozila

ABB stanice za punjenje električnih vozila omogućavaju punjenje električnih vozila od 15 do 120 minuta zavisno od kapaciteta baterije vozila. Punjači su opremljeni internet aplikacijama koje korisnicima pružaju jednostavno priključivanje njihovih uređaja na različite softverske sisteme, kao što su baze podataka, platforme zaplaćanje ili inteligentne energetske mreže. Idealni su za postavljanje prvenstveno na javnim površinama, a posebno na autoputu i brzim magistralama, kao i na benzinskim stanicama, parkiralištima, tržnim centrima i restoranima. abb.rs



15 Years of Constant Growth



By quickly and efficiently adapting to market conditions and changes, while retaining the recognisable and recognised high quality of products, professional technical support and services, Sika Srbija d.o.o. has managed not only to meet all challenges, but also become probably the local market's most important company in its area of business.

DRAGAN GAVRILOVIĆ,
GENERAL MANAGER, SIKA SRBIJA D.O.O.

Through consistent implementation of the corporate Sika Strategy 2020, along with continuous investment in the development and promotion of employees and managers, we will also ensure respectable growth and further improvement of the achieved results in future.

SIKA has been operating in Serbia for 15 years. I can proudly acknowledge that Sika Srbija d.o.o. has been constantly growing in all business segments since its establishment in 2002. Today, according to many parameters, Sika Srbija is highly ranked among Sika subsidiaries, of which there are almost 100 in the world. In addition to the excellent results within the Group, we are pleased to have a highly respectable local market position, which is being continually improved and strengthened. By quick and efficient adaptation to the market conditions and changes, while retaining the recognisable and recognised high quality of products, professional technical support and service, we have managed not only to meet all the challenges, but also become probably the most important company in the local

market in our business area, says Dragan Gavrilović, General Manager, SIKA Srbija d.o.o

• **Has your 2014 investment in the factory in Šimanovci paid off?**

- Important factors of our success surely are realised investments, first in the production of concrete admixtures in 2012, and then in the mortar plant in 2014. Carefully planned and realised investments have contributed to the creation of conditions for the full affirmation of other, probably key, success factors, which primarily relate to the quality and organisation of all employees in Sika Srbija. Their commitment, knowledge, loyalty and effort, as well as the well-known Sika Spirit, are certainly our highest values.

Through consistent implementation of the corporate Sika Strategy 2020, along with continuous investment in the development and promotion of employees and managers, we will also ensure respectable growth and further improvement of the achieved results in future.

• There are many active construction sites in Serbia at the moment. The company has already taken part in a number of major projects: bridges, roads, shopping centres... Which infrastructure projects do you participate in and to what extent are you involved from Serbia in projects in the region?

-Sika Srbija follows and actively participates in all infrastructure projects in the country, with special attention and dedication. Sika has had a formed team for more than 10 years, composed of employees from various units, in charge of monitoring and providing complete support to all parties engaged in the implementation of infrastructure projects. By fully understanding the importance of investing in infrastructure projects, like all citizens of Serbia, we are also pleased with every effort and every step forward made in the construction of such projects. However, as employees of Sika Srbija, we are naturally a bit more pleased for each of several dozen bridges, tunnels and other infrastructure facilities, in which we actively participated and contributed. Employees engaged in construction projects have the privilege of feeling special satisfaction by being able to observe and use the facilities in whose construction they participate, which in time grows and lasts a full lifetime, making it more meaningful. By travelling through the completed sections of corridors 10 or 11, today we are able to feel the same pleasure again and again.

We hope that further works on corridors 10 and 11 will be carried out even faster and more efficiently, but they are also strongly needed on all other infrastructure projects.

Over the past year, we have been very engaged in the implementation of the capital infrastructure project that is the Bar-Boljare highway, which is being carried out in Montenegro.

With its grandeur and importance, the project goes beyond all current infrastructure projects of a similar type in Europe. We are also pleased to be able to

contribute to the construction of dozens of tunnels, bridges, viaducts and other facilities through cooperation with companies BEMAX, CRBC and other partners.

Sika products manufactured in Serbia are also exported to the countries of the region and widely used and successfully applied in their infrastructure projects. One peculiarity, apart from exports to all countries in the region, is also the placement of Sika products produced in Serbia in highly developed European countries, including Switzerland.

• Your company is among the world's leaders in the field of construction and industry. Are you able to apply the same or similar standards and innovations

that are used today in the world on the markets of Serbia and the region?

-- Innovative power and application of new technologies are Sika's trademarks since its foundation in 1910. I can say with great satisfaction that such trend is retained in Serbia and in the countries of the region. All innovative and modern technological solutions are quickly accepted and used successfully in the local market, and some of them made "revolutionary" breakthroughs in the construction and industry. I assume that the former strength of the local construction and its former global presence has contributed to it. We believe that this will soon help in strengthening of local construction potential, which would return us to many markets where we were strongly present and made extraordinary results.



Carefully planned and realised investments have contributed to the creation of conditions for the full affirmation of other, probably key, success factors, which primarily relate to the quality and organisation of all employees in Sika Srbija. Their commitment, knowledge, loyalty and effort, as well as the renowned Sika Spirit, are certainly our highest values

• Considering the type of work you do, great attention is paid to the concept of green building. How does work in this field differ between the developed countries where Sika operates and, for example, countries like Serbia, which still need a lot of work in this domain?

-The Sika Group allocates significant funds to the green building concept, recognising above all its importance in terms of more efficient resource management and environmental protection, and then being driven by commercial reasons for its implementation and improvement.

We promote this concept actively and are ready to maintain this trend. We are also looking forward to the times to come, in which this concept, with complete justification, will have full affirmation. ■

Partnership And Mutual Trust



The Swiss Cooperation Office in Serbia manages a broad portfolio, with around 30 projects in three areas: Governance, Economic Development and Employment and Sustainable Energy and Resilient Cities. This is complemented with a Migration Partnership to strengthen Serbia's capacities to deal with the challenges of migration

URSULA LÄUBLI,
DIRECTOR OF SWISS COOPERATION, EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND

In all our interventions, we aim to achieve results that lead to tangible benefits for the people of Serbia and strengthened institutional capacities. Switzerland is in a good position to do so: we can build on our long-term presence in Serbia, credibility and earlier accomplishments. On this basis we cooperate with Serbia in a spirit of partnership and mutual trust, - says Ursula Läubli.

• **Switzerland is one of the most important donors when it comes to transition support. How would you assess the results achieved in recent years in these domains?**

- We have contributed to Serbia's transition towards strong democratic systems, inclusion and enhanced competitiveness of its economy on the path to European integration.

The achievements that we are particularly satisfied with include:

- Our contribution to strengthened macro-economic conditions in Serbia, notably to the

development of the public finance management reform strategy, the fiscal strategy 2017-19 and revisions to the public debt strategy and their implementation in critical areas.

- Increased income and employment opportunities, especially for young women, in the furniture, horticulture and tourism sector, and also the development of new curricula for private sector responsive dual education in Serbia. Furthermore, thousands of new jobs and additional income were generated in collaboration with the Science and Technology Park in Belgrade, leading to "brain gain" and nine per cent rise in IT exports.

- Our support to the Government of Serbia's Social and Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit SIRPU in mainstreaming social inclusion in national strategies, in accordance with EU requirements.

• The new "Swiss Cooperation strategy for Serbia 2018/2021" has been prepared. What are the main changes compared to the previous one, as well as the finances foreseen?

- We held a participatory workshop with our partners to elaborate the basis for the new strategy. It will be very much in line with government priorities regarding the fostering of a knowledge-based economy, promotion of employability, financial stability, e-governance and closer relations of the society with the government for inclusive development.

Our areas of intervention remain relevant and are closely linked to national needs and priorities towards European integration, as well as required social reform policies. We will increase support in

the area of Employment and Economic Development, based on a request from the government and the potential to scale up successful interventions for more impact. Given that fostering local level processes proved to be a good approach, we will promote this further, together with our national and subnational partners, who are key for this. As a sign of our commitment, 90 million euros has been envisaged for the new Swiss Cooperation Strategy Serbia 2018-21, which is an increase of 10 per cent.

We will increase support in the area of Employment and Economic Development, based on a request from the government and the potential to scale up successful interventions for more impact

• Switzerland has supported VET reforms in many countries for more than 60 years. Why do you think that dual education is an important topic for Serbia?

- Very bluntly, the creation of sorely needed jobs and decent incomes is a key condition for social peace and poverty reduction. We welcome that the government has declared this a priority and requested Swiss support. A step by step VET reform has huge potential to better prepare young people for decent jobs, thanks to work based learning. However, it is clear that Serbia needs to find its own model for dual education, based on its needs and in accordance with everything.

• How do you assess the effects of projects for economic empowerment of rural areas, and why is that important for Serbia?

- Our main contribution is support for the implementation of reforms at the municipal level. We



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have a long and good track record of supporting such processes in Serbia. Our added value lies in our experiences, with more than 200 years' experience as a decentralized state.

Among our many interventions for a better enabling business environment, we have supported



Our main contribution is support for the implementation of reforms at the municipal level. We have a long and good track record of supporting such processes in Serbia. Our added value lies in our experiences, with more than 200 years' experience as a decentralized state

models for territorial partnerships that serve now as showcases for future regional development policies. They are important to promoting a more balanced socio-economic and more conducive environment for inclusive regional development, and for absorbing future IPA and cohesion funds.

We believe that strong regions are important for Serbia's inclusive growth. Our focus is on supporting poorer regions in becoming more competitive. This is crucial in an increasingly globalised world, and to provide better opportunities to young women and men.

• Do you think that small and medium-sized enterprises can be "an important link in the development of Serbia"? How is it in Switzerland?

- Yes, of course they are an important link and should play a stronger role. The Swiss economy is more than 90 per cent comprised of SMEs, which are the backbone of our economy.

During my visits to South and Southwest Serbia, I have spoken to many SME owners with whom we cooperate in our private sector development and vocational education projects. I was impressed by the way they operate their business and adapt it to changing needs in order to remain successful. They have, however, made it clear how difficult it is for them to cope with a large number of regulations. This is something which needs to be tackled at all levels.

• Which areas need the most donor support?

- The effects of the 2008 financial crisis and the devastating floods of 2014 did not allow for a substantial improvement in living conditions. However, donor support contributed to easing the recovery.

It is impressive how the Government of Serbia has pursued fiscal, structural and regulatory reforms. What are also needed are good prioritisation and coordination to ensure the good quality of implementation and the good absorption of IPA funds. In that field, well-coordinated donor support is crucial. Donors can contribute to test policies and support adaptations of the legal frameworks on the basis of what has proved successful.

• What kind of cooperation does the Office have with state bodies in Serbia?

- We have very good collaboration with Serbian partners and work together on joint endeavours. Representing the Swiss

Cooperation Office in Serbia, together with my capable and motivated team, we have the pleasure to work with a broad range of partners from different public institutions. We join forces for better perspectives for Serbia.

As a bilateral donor, we can only facilitate change; the Serbian people are the drivers. What I see in our most successful interventions is that for good and sustainable results, the behaviour of people and shared values are key. It needs to be ensured that no one is left behind in Serbia's transition. ■

FLORENT RONDEZ, CEO, SWISS EDUCATION GROUP



The hospitality industry has grown continuously over the last half century. In 1950 there were 25 million international tourists and by 2014 this figure had increased to 1.1 billion. Our industry currently represents nine per cent of world GDP and one out of every 11 jobs worldwide is in the hospitality sector. This is a powerful market and one that is continually expanding, with new positions and opportunities

In today's environment, the hospitality business therefore provides a perfect career solution, offering a safe and exciting workplace with much diversity. Over the next 15 years, the industry is forecast to maintain growth at a steady rate of 3.3% per annum, reaching 1.8 billion international tourists by 2030 and thus remaining one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. (source: UNWTO)

The Swiss Education Group's main focus and strategy is on supporting the growth of this industry within an ever-changing environment. We maintain and nurture very strong relationships with industry leaders, and Swiss Education Group has chosen to partner with some of the world's

Preparing for the Future of Hospitality



leading companies, such as Four Seasons, UBS, Ritz Paris, Kerzner and HUBLOT, to name just a few. These prestigious partners bring fresh input from the market, sharing with us current and future trends, as well as the skills required of future managers. This precious and first hand information allows us to tailor our programmes to meet the demands of future employers.

We ensure that our students are equally well prepared for their future careers from a practical perspective. All of our students undertake two work internships while studying with us as part of their curriculum. We also founded the International Recruitment Forum, which will be in its 18th edition in October this year. This unique bi-annual event is exclusive to Swiss



Education Group students. With 135 companies a year attending this two-day event, it brings together over 4,500 students seeking that all-important internship, management-training programme or full time position. There are 145 hospitality industry presentations and 50 roundtable discussions that include such diverse topics as luxury resorts in remote locations, contemporary room trends, career mapping and talent assessment. Each student averages two job interviews during the forum, serving them with the perfect springboard to launch their professional career. Attending this unmissable event allows the industry to confirm their trust in Swiss Education Group and our graduates.



JOVANA PEJICIC, Regional Manager,
Swiss Education Group

Swiss Education Group encompasses five schools based across seven campuses throughout Switzerland. Each school benefits from a variety of strengths and features, providing each student with the perfect fit to best suit their needs. You can choose from a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a variety of specialisations to tailor your education. In total, we have over 6,500 students from 111 countries within our current student body, with each school offering a diverse international experience on each beautifully located campus.

For further information please contact:

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www.swisseducation.com ■

“SSCC Members’ Reunions” For Stronger Connections



We offer an opportunity to our members to increase their corporate visibility within the SSCC network and to maintain regular communication with other member-companies. We are also publishing interviews with representatives of our member-companies in order to promote the activities of Swiss companies in Serbia and highlight their good business practises

ANA GRUJOVIĆ,
SSCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The aim of the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce is to unite companies wanting to foster economic relations between the two countries. Since its creation in 2014, the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce (SSCC) has brought together 66 member-companies. The SSCC member community includes companies of different sizes and from various economic sectors. In order to build stronger connections between our member-companies, and unite them even further, we started to organise member gatherings under the name: “SSCC Members’ Reunions”, says Ana Grujović, SSCC Executive director.

- The “SSCC Members’ Reunions” offer an opportunity to our members to increase their corporate visibility within the SSCC network and to maintain regular communication with other member-companies. So far, corporate presentations have been held by the following companies: SR Technics, Omya Venčac, Nestle

Adriatic, Namics, and many others. Furthermore, our reunions are also a platform for the exchange of business experiences and ideas, as well as for networking. We are pleased to confirm that SSCC members are showing great interest in this type of event.

• **As one of the SSCC’s goals is to strive to contribute to the further strengthening of the Swiss-Serbian economic relations, could you please tell us more about the SSCC’s role in this matter?**

- Economic relations between Switzerland and Serbia include regular government meetings in the form of Joint Economic Committees (JEC), which are held with the purpose of establishing priorities, discussing challenges and also developing new investment and trade opportunities. The last JEC was held in June 2017 in Belgrade, and it is my pleasure to inform you that the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce, for the first time since its creation in 2014, participated

actively in this Committee. On this occasion, SSCC President Yana Mikhailova provided insight into how Swiss companies operating in Serbia perceive the local economic environment and discussed key opportunities for the further development of long-term, sustainable business relations between Switzerland and Serbia.

• Has the SSCC developed cooperation with relevant Swiss organisations in order to foster bilateral economic relations further?

- Yes, I'm honoured to say that the signing ceremony of the Service Performance Agreement between Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) and the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce took place on 19th June 2017 in Belgrade. Switzerland Global Enterprise's mandates by the Swiss government (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO) cover the fields of export and investment promotion. S-GE has been informing, advising and guiding SMEs from Switzerland and Liechtenstein in their international business ventures since 1927. It has also been responsible for promoting Switzerland as a business location abroad, since 1st January 2008.

The signing of this agreement clearly shows that S-GE has recognised the SSCC as a reliable partner in Serbia that is able to provide up-to-date market-information on a range of sectors and themes of importance for Swiss companies interested in developing their business operations on the local market.

• The Swiss method of doing business implies accuracy, precision, transparency of operations, efficiency... The SSCC wants to transfer that method of doing business to Serbia. How difficult a mission is that?

- Switzerland is well-known for its traditional values of democracy, punctuality, efficiency, first class service and precision. The SSCC is committed to the promotion of Swiss values, knowhow and knowledge. With this in mind, we initiated a new marketing project entitled "SSCC Success Stories"; we are publishing interviews with our member-companies in order to promote the activities of Swiss companies in Serbia and highlight their good business practises. So far, we have published interviews with seven member-companies, including Standard Furniture Serbia, Namics, SR Technics, InterVenture, Nestle Adriatic, Aquawell and Novartis.

• What kind of activities is the SSCC planning for the second half of 2017?

- As every year, the SSCC is planning to organise its flagship event in the second half of 2017: The SSCC Annual Conference, with the aim of facilitating a public-private

dialogue and providing an opportunity for direct talks between public officials and businesses. The last conference, which was held in October 2016, focused on SMEs as a growth driver of Swiss-Serbian economic relations, and resulted in a document, "*SSCC Recommendations*", which comprises a collection of conclusions drawn during the debates of the conference. The "Recommendations" were submitted to the Government of Serbia as a response to pressing issues faced by SMEs relating to bureaucracy, access to finance, labour productivity and law enforcement. In this way, the SSCC strives to contribute to creating a better economic environment for the SME sector in Serbia, as well as to the further strengthening of business ties between Swiss and Serbian companies.



Our reunions are also a platform for the exchange of business experiences and ideas, as well as for networking. We are pleased to confirm that SSCC members are showing great interest in this type of event

• Which sectors have the greatest potential for future economic cooperation between Switzerland and Serbia?

- Serbia has great potential in many sectors, such as ICT services, the wood processing industry and the food industry, amongst other sectors. In March 2017 the SSCC organised a visit to the "Science Technology Park in Zvezdara", which is home to a great number of companies, including two Swiss ICT companies. SSCC member-company InterVenture, based at STP Zvezdara, is a Swiss IT near-shoring company, established in Zurich in 2010, which specialises in the establishment of client-own and specific software development teams in Serbia. Their success story clearly confirms the potential of the Serbian ICT sector and its importance for the further development of Swiss-Serbian economic cooperation. ■

Stable Economy Based On Hard Work

Switzerland is a pretty stable country as far as employment is concerned. Even crises on the world economic stage tend not to cause catastrophic effects. But it is a busy job. Swiss full-time workers log on average 41.7 hours a week on the clock.



There are large regional differences between salary levels, as shown by the Federal Statistical Office [external link](#). Disparities can be explained by the nature of the economic activity conducted in the different areas. The pharmaceutical trade accounts for higher wages in the Basel region, and Zurich and Geneva still enjoy relatively high wages per capita as well as strong purchasing power.

Swiss law does not specify any minimum wage or average earnings. In most cases, pay levels are agreed between the employer and the employee during the recruitment process.

There are two types of employment contracts – Individual and collective.

For all of that work, full-time employees are entitled to paid leave of at least 20 working days per year. This is less than in many other European countries. Public holidays vary from canton to canton, but there are generally eight or nine.

A survey external link of 71 cities round the world carried out by the Swiss bank UBS in 2015 showed both Zurich and Geneva have become “markedly more expensive since the last study” (in 2012) and still offered the highest net salaries as well as the highest purchasing power compared with other cities across the world.

Individual employment contracts regulate the rights and obligations of employers and employees. They are not subject to any formal requirements and may – with the exception of apprenticeship contracts – also be the result of a verbal agreement. It is, however, in the interest of both parties to draw up a contract in writing. Special regulations, such as prohibition of competition or overtime rules, must be set in a written employment contract. A distinction is made between fixed-term (the contract ends on the date set at the outset) and open-ended (the contract ends by notice of termination) employment contracts.

Collective employment agreements are concluded between employers' and employees' associations. In these agreements, the social partners define the minimum requirements (e.g. minimum wage), which may not be undercut in individual employment contracts. A distinction is made between generally binding (sector-specific) agreements and non-generally binding agreements (only for trade association members).

Unemployment rates vary according to region: the French- and Italian-speaking areas tend to have higher rates than the German-speaking ones. Women tend to be more affected than men and foreigners more affected than Swiss.



FOREIGN WORKERS

Nearly one in three wage earners in Switzerland is foreign. The Swiss economy could not function without foreign workers of all sorts.

The agreement between Switzerland and the European Union on the free movement of people has brought an influx of workers from EU countries. However, Swiss voters approved an initiative in February 2014 to re-introduce quotas on workers from the European Union, and the government's implementation of its terms could affect the free movement agreement. More information can be found [here](#).

In addition, in June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. It will remain an EU member for at least two years while negotiations are carried out. After that, it is not clear how Brexit will affect British citizens wanting to live and work in Switzerland.

The greatest number of EU workers come from Italy, where the majority of workers come to Switzerland for short stays. Contradictorily, those who emigrate permanently from Italy are also the group most likely to stay in Switzerland for 30 years or more.

Germans make up another very large group, as Switzerland has become the country of choice for German immigrants. Most are highly qualified managers, teachers and medicine workers.

WORKING ILLEGALLY

It is illegal to work in Switzerland without a permit and doing so is punishable by law. Legally you cannot begin work, even at a job for which you have been granted a permit, before you have registered with local authorities. Do not start a job before you have completed these steps. (See section on Work Permits).

Nearly one in three wage earners in Switzerland is foreign. The Swiss economy could not function without foreign workers of all sorts

Working illegally subjects you to a fine or worse. Your employer can also be punished. There are no legal grounds for an employer to pay you for work that has been done illegally.

CROSS-BORDER COMMUTERS

Cross-border commuters are a special category of EU workers. Originally they had to live and work in specific border areas, but those restrictions no longer apply.

Over half of these commuting workers live in France; smaller numbers come from Italy and Germany. They work in northwestern Switzerland, around Lake Geneva and in Ticino.

For more on Switzerland's foreign workforce, see the site of the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies [external link](#).

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Layoffs in Switzerland are generally a very last resort. Employers in business and industry are quite reluctant to let people go; they tend to tough it out with "reduced working hours" until times get better.

There is independent freelance work of various kinds, and if, after a while working in Switzerland, foreign workers decide to go out on their own, they will need to get themselves certified as a bona-fide freelancer by the cantonal government. Potential customers may well ask freelancers to document this before they hire. Otherwise they might find themselves stuck with the freelancer as a de-facto employee, because the labour laws in this regard are quite strict. ■

Among The World's Leaders

The Swiss financial centre is highly attractive for both Swiss and foreign companies seeking to raise capital. Switzerland is among the world's leading financial centres, noted for its innovation, stability and security, and banks which have an excellent track record as regards placement power



The main stock market index for the SIX Swiss Exchange is the blue-chip index, the SMI, or Swiss Market Index. The index consists of the 20 most significant and most liquid large and mid-cap SPI equity-securities based on free float market capitalisation.

LEADING THE WAY IN COMPETITIVENESS

One of the reasons for Switzerland's outstanding competitiveness is the innovative strength of the domestic and foreign companies headquartered there, which invest heavily in R&D to supply leading-edge technology for world markets. This success also stems from a series of economically beneficial factors and attractive operating conditions that help persuade a large number of international firms to relocate to Switzerland.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

The Swiss economy has traditionally maintained strong links to global markets. Hardly any country has a comparable concentration of internationally experienced managers. Switzerland's lead in innovation can also be attributed to its highly qualified and multilingual workforce.

Liberal employment laws give companies a great deal of freedom for action. Added to quality of life, political stability and high levels of legal and social security, there are also favourable tax conditions for companies and individuals alike. Switzerland also leads the world in terms of infrastructure.

With the Zurich-based SIX Swiss Exchange (Switzerland's principal stock exchange, the other being the Berne eXchange) as a proactive partner, you will benefit from an efficient process of going public and gain access to the huge capital pool of major Swiss and international investors.

Switzerland has remained a leading financial centre at the heart of Europe for decades, thanks to its innovation, competitiveness and political and economic stability. It is also a key place for trading capital and commodities worldwide.

MAGNET FOR INTERNATIONAL FIRMS

A constant stream of companies is attracted by the conditions Switzerland offers, choosing the country as the location for either a new branch office or their global or European headquarters. Big names that have moved to the country in recent years include Kraft Heinz, Procter&Gamble and McDonald's, in the consumer goods sector, Google, eBay and Groupon, in the technology sector, Toyota in the automotive sector, and Evolva and Abbott in the healthcare sector. Companies like Evolva followed up with a listing on the Swiss exchange in order to make the most of the Swiss financial sector's advantages.

The SIX Swiss Exchange is also an attractive proposition for a secondary listing. Around 15 per cent of the companies listed have registered office in another country, which is a higher proportion than for other stock exchanges.

HIGHLY CAPITALISED FINANCIAL SECTOR

The financial sector is a major driving force behind Swiss economic growth, contributing 10 per cent of total economic output in 2016. As a financial centre, Switzerland manages assets totalling around CHF 5,600 billion, with roughly two thirds of this invested in equities and funds. About half of these assets are owned by foreign investors. Switzerland is the world's leader in cross-border private banking, with a market share of 25%. Added to this is a large and international base, with approximately 2,000 institutional investors. Foreign institutional investors currently hold around CHF 1,200 billion in Swiss equities.

There are around 480 banks and insurance companies, as well as around 1,800 pension schemes, operating in Switzerland. The strong position of Switzerland's banks and insurers in the financial market makes it easy for companies on the Swiss exchange to engage in dialogue and networking with the investor community, both nationally and internationally. The many advantages of doing business in Switzerland make the banks very powerful when it comes to financing and the placement of shares.

INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKET ACCESS

Given all of the aforementioned, it is hardly surprising that the Swiss financial centre boasts an extraordinarily high concentration of global corporations, financial services firms and potent investors. This naturally gives the SIX Swiss Exchange a competitive edge, as it



Switzerland has remained a leading financial centre at the heart of Europe for decades, thanks to its innovation, competitiveness and political and economic stability. It is also a key place for trading capital and commodities worldwide

can provide the status of a listed company with access to experienced, highly capitalised Swiss and international investors and high liquidity. Moreover, investors in Switzerland have years of experience in handling cross-border, sector-specific investment strategies.

Investors also benefit from a market-driven regulatory environment. The regulatory requirements of the SIX Swiss Exchange are market-driven, which makes the process of going public as efficient as possible. The exchange enjoys self-regulation powers under Swiss law, giving it the best possible scope to strike a balance between robust investor protection and a regulatory framework that is not excessive from the company's point of view. Self-regulation means that we can offer a market-driven environment that makes it much easier to raise capital while minimising costs and paperwork.

PERSONAL ADVICE AND FIRST-CLASS SERVICES

The SIX Swiss Exchange provides personal support before, during and after going public. With our expert assistance, clients can complete the listing process in just four weeks. Users also benefit from first-class services, as well as a proactive partnership that will raise your profile with investors, analysts and the media.

Thanks to Swiss industry-leading knowhow, it could be reduced workloads to a minimum and enable investors to fund their businesses efficiently, with a view to achieving long-term growth. ■

July 2017

Vernissage Switzerland Picture Exhibition

Switzerland Tourism, in cooperation with the Embassy of Switzerland and the SSCC, has organised a vernissage of the exhibition of pictures around the Grand Tour of Switzerland. The exhibition is on display at Belgrade's Kalemegdan Fortress from 28th July until 4th August.

Among the guests of the exhibition vernissage were Federico Sommaruga, Switzerland Tourism's Director of Emerging Markets, H.E. Philippe Guex, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Serbia and to Montenegro, Yana Mikhailova, President of the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Ana Grujović, SSCC Executive Director, and Andrej Reljić, representing the Swiss-Serbian Diaspora.



June / April / May 2017

SSCC MEMBERS' REUNION



In line with the SSCC Board's decision to increase members' visibility within the SSCC network and maintain regular communication with member-companies, the SSCC organised the "SSCC's Members' Reunion", which took place on 7th April 2017, on the premises of Roche d.o.o. Serbia.

On this occasion, three SSCC members had an opportunity to present their corporate activities: Namics – Mrs Catherine Ferrary

Simon, Unit Manager, Namics d.o.o. Belgrade; Havas Adriatic – Mr Nenad Milić, New Business Director, and Mrs Ana Mijajlović, Media Director; Coreside Savills – Mr Srđan Vujičić, Director of real estate operations.

The second members' reunion was held during May on the premises of Nestle Adriatic. Mrs Mikhailova, SSCC President, welcomed guests and presented the results of the SSCC Business Climate Survey.

This event also saw three SSCC members present their corporate activities: SR Technics, BDK Law Office and Omya Venčac.

The third members' reunion was held in June on the premises of MK Group d.o.o. On this occasion, three SSCC members presented their corporate activities: MK Group, Nestle Adriatic and Addeco Serbia.

These presentations were followed by a networking reception.

May 2017

SSCC Business Climate Survey Results 2017



This year marked the conducting of the 3rd Annual SSCC Business Climate Survey among the members of the Swiss-Serbian business community. The 2017 report highlights companies' concerns regarding Serbia's business environment, their perceptions of ongoing reforms, as well as the opportunities and challenges companies face in their operations. According to survey results, most respondents rated the current business climate in Serbia as satisfying: the number of companies with a positive view of the business environment in Serbia remained approximately the same over a one-year period: 63.6% in 2017, compared to 65.7% in 2016. The results also showed that the surveyed companies expect to see changes in the following business environment areas: bureaucracy and administration, the tax system, the fight against corruption and the ensuring of legal security and stability. In addition, respondents referred to high social charges as an important factor impacting on their businesses, which was already identified as an area requiring improvement at the SSCC's October 2016 Conference on SMEs. With regard to the introduction of obligatory membership in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, survey participants perceived this legal obligation as an additional para-fiscal charge.

SSCC LAUNCHED A NEW MARKETING PROJECT „SUCCESS STORIES OF SSCC MEMBERS“

The first interviewees were: Edin Dacic, Owner of Dacommet AG, Catherine Ferrary Simon, Unit Manager at Namics Serbia, Marko Đuric, Founder of Interventure, Mischa Jovanovic, CEO of Aquawell Production.

All the interviews are available at SSCC's official website: www.sccc.rs

March 2017

SSCC VISITS SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY PARK

Members of the Swiss-Serbian Chamber of Commerce visited the Science Technology Park - STP Belgrade. The STP was established with the aim of creating a favourable environment for developing links between industry and universities and research organisations, and stimulating technology development, innovative commercialisation and development of the knowledge-based economy. STP Belgrade was established with the support of the Project Science and Technology Park on Zvezdara - the new export instrument of Serbia, supported by the Swiss Government's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, SECO. This technopark was inaugurated by Swiss Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann in 2015 and has become a major player in the innovation ecosystem.

Participants were welcomed by Gordana Danilović Grković, STP Director, Gerhard Brügger, Deputy Ambassador and Counsellor at the Swiss Embassy in Serbia and Montenegro, and SSCC President Yana Mikhailova. Jelena Petrović, Business support officer at the STP service centre, presented the Science Technology Park's model and services. Several companies located within the STP also presented their activities: Interventure, Strawberry, Digital Worx, Festo and others.





February 2017

SSCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The SSCC Annual General Assembly was held at Belgrade's Holiday Inn Express-City Belgrade, with SSCC President Yana Mikhailova presenting results achieved in 2016 and the plan of activities for 2017. On this occasion, Adecco Serbia Country Manager, Operations Director Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia, Marko Kolenc, was elected as the latest member of the SSCC Board.

After the election, two SSCC member companies – Cash Back IMO d.o.o. and Telekomunikacije Računari Servisi d.o.o. TRS – presented their corporate activities to all participants.

October 2016

SSCC CONFERENCE ON SMEs



The SSCC's "Conference on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises" was held as part of SSCC's efforts to emphasise the importance of the SME sector to furthering economic relations between Switzerland and Serbia. Organised in the context of the Year of Entrepreneurship in Serbia, this event's main objective was to contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of local SMEs.

Keynote speakers included H.E. Swiss Ambassador Philippe Guex and Serbian Economy Minister Goran Knežević, who said "we want

GDP growth to be over three per cent and sustainable over the next four years, so that we can bring the living standards of our citizens closer to those of the citizens of EU countries." Noting that Serbia's industrial output is up by five per cent, Knežević said that the trend of growing exports was encouraging.

Ambassador Guex said that a strong SME sector was very important for the economic growth of any country. He highlighted that SMEs were the backbone of the Swiss economy – considering that



they account for 99 per cent of all enterprises – and that they ensure the prosperity of the middle class. A very important condition for the development of the SME sector in Serbia is a predictable regulatory

framework for their operation, as well as good conditions for financing and innovation, said Ambassador Guex, adding that Serbia must adapt its education system to the needs of the labour market.

August 2016

SWISS NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION



The Swiss Embassy hosted a reception at its residence in honour of the 723rd anniversary of the creation of Switzerland. Former Swiss Ambassador to Serbia, H.E. Jean-Daniel Ruch, gave a welcome speech in which he remarked, "Switzerland and Serbia have been nurturing traditionally good relations thanks to mutual understanding". The reception took place in the garden of the Swiss Ambassadorial Residence in Senjak and guests included the highest state officials, numerous public figures, representatives of the diplomatic corps in Belgrade, economic and business leaders, and representatives of religious communities in Serbia.



MEŠA PODBIČANIN, FOUNDER, EMILIO STECHER DOO, PRIJEPOLJE

Anything of stone, as the foreign client desires



Almost the whole production is for export, especially the Swiss market. Qualified and trained workers needed.

Everything is possible - this is the slogan of Emilio Stecher doo in Prijepolje who can make anything a client can imagine from over 300 types of stone. Almost the whole production is exported, mostly to Switzerland. Noting the differences in the quality and demands of markets, company founder Meša Podbičanin says that they apply the standard ISO 9001:2008 and SIA quality norms. A decade of satisfied foreign clients shows how successful they are at their work.

• **First you worked in Switzerland, and now you export there from Prijepolje. In the meantime you were made best manager in Zlatibor district in 2014. Where do you see the greatest differences in working in these two countries, and has the business environment in Serbia improved meanwhile?**

After more than 20 years working in Switzerland I returned to Serbia and set up business here. To start with it was hard, there were huge differences in the systems. It was hard to accept and fit into a new business environment. The biggest problems were created by the administration, complicated and long-lasting procedures. The procedures have changed to a minor degree, but they certainly need more work doing on them. Our production is equipped with the most modern machines for cutting and forming stone and when we started work it was hard to find suppliers that could provide machines, tools, spares and maintenance so we had to get all that from foreign suppliers. But that's changed: there's a growing number of domestic suppliers that can meet our demands, with whom we have established good collaboration, which has made our work much easier. One of the things lacking in the system is sufficient qualified and trained workers. We advocate dual education in secondary schools, since we have difficulty in our branch finding good workers. ■

Swiss Offer World's Best Quality of Life



Switzerland ranks very well in many wellbeing measures relative to most other countries in the Better Life Index. Switzerland rates above average in subjective wellbeing, jobs and earnings, income and wealth, health status, social connections, environmental quality, education, skills, and personal security, though it ranks below average in civic engagement

Money, while it cannot buy happiness, is an important means to achieving higher living standards. The average Swiss household's net-adjusted disposable income per capita is \$35,952 a year, which is considerably more than the OECD average of \$29,016 a year. There is a considerable gap between the richest and poorest – the top 20% of the population earns more than four times as much as the bottom 20%.

In terms of employment, 80% of people aged 15 to 64 in Switzerland have a paid job, above the OECD employment average of 66%, and one of the highest rates in the OECD. Some 84% of men are in paid work, compared with 75% of women.

Good education and skills are important prerequisites for finding a job. In Switzerland, 88% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education, which is above the OECD average of 76%. This is truer of men than women, with 90% of men having successfully completed high-school compared with 86% of women. In terms of the quality of its educational system, the average student scored 518 in reading literacy, maths and science in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This score is higher than the OECD average of 497. On average, Swiss girls outperformed boys by five points, less than the average OECD gap of eight points.

In terms of health, life expectancy in Switzerland stands at almost 83 years, three years higher than the OECD average of 80 years, and

one of the highest in the OECD. Life expectancy for women is 85 years, compared with 81 for men. The level of atmospheric PM2.5 – tiny air pollutant particles small enough to enter and cause damage to the lungs – is 17.3 micrograms per cubic metre, higher than the OECD average of 14.05 micrograms. Switzerland performs better in terms of water quality, with 97% of people saying that they are satisfied with the quality of their water, compared with the OECD average of 81%, and one of the highest rates in the OECD.

Concerning the public sphere, there is a strong sense of community and a moderate level of civic participation in Switzerland, where 93% of people believe they know someone they could rely on in time of need, higher than the OECD average of 88%. Voter turnout, a measure of citizens' participation in the political process, was 48% during recent elections. This figure is the lowest rate in the OECD, where average turnout is 68%, due to the high frequency of elections in the country. Voter turnout for the top 20% of the population is an estimated 57% and for the bottom 20% it is an estimated 41%, a broader difference than the OECD average gap of 13 percentage points.

In general, people in Switzerland are more satisfied with their lives than the OECD average. When asked to rate their general level of satisfaction with life on a scale from 0 to 10, Swiss people gave it a 7.6 grade, one of the highest scores in the OECD, where average life satisfaction is 6.5. ■

MILAN GLUŠAC, MAYOR OF VRBAS



Energy Policy Pioneers



In a preliminary assessment for the European Energy Award, the municipality of Vrbas was rated as advanced, alongside the best European local governments

- As one of four Serbian municipalities, the municipality of Vrbas has recently been chosen to take part in a Swiss government project in the field of energy efficiency and energy management. Mayor Milan Glušac speaks to CorD about the main aspects of this project.

- The project will have three parts in all beneficiary municipalities. The first part deals with improving the municipal climate and energy policy management systems through introducing the European Energy Award Programme. This programme leads systematically to sustainable improvements in the energy management system and enables a more efficient use of resources in implementing energy efficiency measures. Through the first part of the project, we will also continue to work on what we are already doing with the republic and provincial authorities and with our partners from the RES Foundation and the Belgrade Open School - cooperation

with other local governments, including the beneficiaries of this project. The second part, which takes up most of the funds, is related to implementing measures to increase energy efficiency in public buildings by improving insulation, replacing windows, interventions on various parts of the heating system and other ways. The third part of the project is dedicated to capacity building in the municipal structures among users of public facilities and the general population, to recognise the room to improve energy efficiency and to gain knowledge on how to use it. This programme includes various types of training, lectures and cooperation with the aim of expanding the knowledge base on energy efficiency.

- Vrbas municipality is a positive example of a local community that devotes great attention to energy management, as evi-

in monetary terms. Today we are recognised as the pioneers of energy policy in Serbia and we intend to be among the first to develop plans for achieving the goals related to the 2030 EU climate and energy framework. In a preliminary assessment for the European Energy Award, our municipality was rated as advanced, alongside the best European local governments. These are all the results of the understanding, work and vision of municipal management and the Energy Management Office.

- The Fiscal Council recently published an opinion that the fiscal problems of cities and municipalities threaten Serbia's public finances. As a mayor, what would you suggest to other local governments so they could operate better financially? - In the spirit of our discussion so far, I think that we can point out the importance of

Today we are recognised as the pioneers of energy policy in Serbia and we intend to be among the first to develop plans for achieving the goals related to the 2030 EU climate and energy framework

denced by the remarkable work of the Municipal Energy Management Office. What would you consider indicators of the office's success?

- Vrbas municipality's energy policy is rooted in our development policies and implemented in spite of the difficulties our municipality is facing. We know where and how much energy we spend and how to change that. Compared to when we started, we have reduced our energy consumption by about 20%, and the savings are even higher

energy efficiency and sustainable energy management in improving public finances. Many problems indicated by the Fiscal Council are related to the high cost of utility services. Reducing energy consumption in public lighting, district heating systems, public buildings, can significantly reduce the pressure on local public finances. There is a need for knowledge and investment to realize these opportunities, but the return on investment is fast and large if the job is done properly, and we are a real example of this. ■

World's Design Capitals



The Stadtlounge in St Gallen

Switzerland is one of the world's design capitals, famous for classic Swiss watches, the Swiss Style of graphic design and Le Corbusier, among others

This hand-picked list of designers and studios illustrates the confidence of contemporary Swiss product design, as well as addressing issues as diverse as environmental sustainability and the preservation of artisan crafts. Their experimental and efficient design approaches strive for design innovation at every turn, from the Alps, to Zurich, to Geneva.

ZMIK

ZMIK is a multidisciplinary design studio currently comprising six members: Rolf Indermühle & Mattias Mohr, Cornelia Vinzens, Heike Ehlers, Philip Strub and Petra Eggenberger. This group of designers and architects also works with a wide network of specialists in order to develop and implement projects. Since 2006 they have worked on projects for numerous cultural institutions, private enterprises, exhibitions and brands, focusing on creating communicative spaces with their own identities. Their practise fuses multiple design disciplines, including interior design, scenography, architecture and product design. ZMIK's unique, bold, spatial environments, such as the Regent Lighting Centre, Zurich (2013), a place to gain knowledge and experience in dealing with light, and the innovative chandelier 'Kroon' (designed for Moooi in 2013) showcase the studio's ability to amalgamate the members' individual talents and work across diverse platforms, creating sophisticated and experimental design solutions.



Jakob Schlaepfer innovative fabric Phantom,



JAKOB SCHLAEPFER

Textile design and manufacturing company Jakob Schlaepfer was established in St Gallen in 1904 as an embroidery business. This now globally-successful company designs and produces around 3,000 types of textiles, characterised by their innovation and vibrancy, for use by haute couture and prêt-à-porter fashion designers such as Chanel, Vivienne Westwood and Louis Vuitton, among others. Jakob Schlaepfer also launched an interior decoration collection in 2008, called Décor, which includes curtains, wallpapers and wall-coverings created using a combination of industrial and state-of-the-art technology and handcraft techniques. Schlaepfer was awarded the prestigious Red Dot Design Award and the Design Preis Schweiz Award in 2011 for their ground-breaking, innovative fabric, Phantom, an iridescent high-tech material made of bronze, aluminium and copper fibres. Weighing just 10 grams per square metre, it is the world's lightest fabric.

MORITZ SCHMID

Product designer Moritz Schmid established his own studio in Zurich in 2008, following four years engaged as a designer and project leader at Alfredo Häberli's studio. He works across multiple design disciplines, such as furniture, tableware and exhibition design for clients including Atelier Pfister, Helmrinderknecht contemporary design gallery, Kvadrat, the Museum of Design Zurich and Röthlisberger, among others. In 2013 he was awarded the Design Preis Schweiz and the Swiss Federal Design Award for his serial production shelf 'Etagé' (2012). Made of oak, ply and arura vermelho wood, 'Etagé' (designed for Röthlisberger) is a consideration of the open and closed modes in furniture, with one part always open and the other closed. A concealed shelf is also revealed by raising or lowering a thin, wrap-around shell.



Moritz Schmid, Furniture collection for Atelier Pfister

HERZOG & DE MEURON

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron established their office in Basel in 1978. Herzog & de Meuron is a partnership led by five Senior Partners: Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, Christine Binswanger, Ascan Mergenthaler and Stefan Marbach. The partnership has grown over the years – Binswanger joined the practice as Partner in 1994, followed by Robert Hösl and Mergenthaler in 2004, Marbach in 2006, Esther Zumsteg in 2009, Andreas Fries in 2011, Vladimir Pajkic in 2012, Jason Frantzen, Wim Walschap in 2014 and Michael Fischer in 2016. An international team, comprising around 40 Associates and 380 collaborators, works on projects across Europe, the Americas and Asia. The firm's head office is in Basel, while additional offices are located in Hamburg, London, Madrid, New York City and Hong Kong. Their designs range from small-scale private homes to large-scale urban designs, though Herzog & de Meuron have gained particular acknowledgement for their highly recognisable public facilities, such as museums and stadiums. Their 2011 design for the Serpentine Gallery Summer Pavilion in London marked their twelfth contribution to Kensington Gardens. For this project, Herzog & de Meuron collaborated with artist Ai Weiwei to create an archaeological pavilion rooted in the idea of memory. Taking visitors below the Serpentine's lawn to explore the remains of previous pavilions, it was formed of twelve columns, eleven to characterise each past pavilion and one to represent and support the current structure, with its floating platform roof.



Herzog & De Meuron, Caixa Forum Madrid

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ADRIEN ROVERO

Adrien Rovero works across furniture, lighting and exhibition design. A graduate of the ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne, with a Master's in Industrial Design, he opened his own studio in Renens in 2006. Rovero creates works for high-end design brands like Hermès (France), Pfister (Switzerland), Droog Design (Holland), Campeggi (Italy), Nanoo (Switzerland), Tectona (France) and Cristallerie Saint-Louis (France). His designs are also displayed at international galleries and he features in several permanent museum design collections. Inspired by his personal observations of the needs of his surroundings, his highly inventive designs are uncluttered and efficient through his effective use of shapes, materials and functions. The Saving Grace design (for Droog), a series of lamps designed specifically for energy-saving light bulbs, takes advantage of the different quality of light provided by the technology, shaped to diffuse light in specific ways.

Adrien Rovero, Escapade, Scenography designed for Hermès leather goods department



Adrien Rovero, Rolle



Bureau A, Stonehenge



BUREAU A

Bureau A, the association of Leopold Banchini and Daniel Zamarbide, was founded in 2012. A multidisciplinary platform, the studio aims to blur the boundaries of architectural research through its evocative and socially critical designs. Their recent project, 'Le Chalet d'en Bas', for the 2013 Montreux Jazz Festival, took the shape of an obsessively repetitive library exhibiting the collection of Claude Nobs (founder of the festival), and explored the primal impulses behind collecting. Prepared in collaboration with curators Veronica Tracchia and Mauricio Estrada Muñoz, this immersive and experiential installation questioned the fate and relative value of the items within the collection. The firm won the Architecture Award at the Swiss Art Awards 2013 for their design 'Parole', a sculptural cage based on the design of Geneva's Champ-Dollon prison. The project, scaled at a 1:24 ratio to laboratory mice, highlighted the role of architects designing ethically questionable buildings and addressed issues of prison overcrowding.



Postfossil, Shoes Books and a Bike



POSTFOSSIL

The Postfossil design collective creates and produces objects for the home, focusing on issues of resources and the post-fossil era. Their mantra, 'working across borders', extends across all of their designs with their use of environmentally-friendly and renewable sources – although they believe that 'Fossil' stands not only for energy sources, but also for social behaviour patterns. This is a trigger for many of their projects, such as the 'Shoes, Books and a Bike' stand, a piece of sports furniture celebrating eco-friendly nature and the growing popularity of cycling. In essence, Postfossil's work is based on three key factors: the first is conducting material research based on an oil-free future. The second is production: Postfossil self-produces all works, allowing them to both retain the design and manage the production and distribution of their designs. The third factor is engaging with the user and transmitting the Postfossil philosophy. They achieve this through their design works, public discourse and workshops.



Postfossil, Little garden tool

NICOLAS LE MOIGNE

Young, interdisciplinary designer Nicolas Le Moigne creates works across lighting, furniture and product design that are a celebration of juxtaposition. His designs are simultaneously delicate, organic, robust and industrial, whilst retaining a true sense of sophistication. His use of opposing materials forms and processes allows contrasts to come together in creating works that act as an elegant counterpoint to today's supersaturated design culture. This innovative and dexterous approach has seen Le Moigne gain the attention of international design galleries and manufacturers, including Atelier Pfister and Eternit. Collaboration with the latter, which is a fibre cement company, resulted in the Trash Cubes designs; a series of stools using leftover cement and fibres, designed to have the most basic form whilst using the maximum amount of waste material. Each piece is inherently unique, depending on how the discarded raw material settles when condensed and sculpted in a mould.



Nicolas Le Moigne, Three rooms in one

FRIES&ZUMBÜHL

Kevin Fries and Jakob Zumbühl have been collaborating since their time studying at the Zurich University of the Arts and have been partners in the development and realisation of numerous design projects since 2003. Their design success comes from their incorporation of each designer's different way of thinking and working, combined with their mutual interests and design backgrounds. The pair also believe that furniture design is the most sublime design form, allowing them, as industrial designers, to get as close as possible to artistic activity. In this way, they create new objects with their own identities, meeting both the functional and sculptural demands of the user. This comes across in their furniture designs like those of the 'Link' chairs and couches, which won the prestigious Red Dot Product Award in 2012. Their functional and humorous design 'Error', a mute wallet stand (for MOX design) also won the Interior Innovation Award in 2013.



Fries&Zumbühl, 'Tetris'



Fries&Zumbühl, 'Darling' bed

All Beauties In One Place



St. Moritz and The Engadine Valley

The Swiss National Park is not just the oldest national park in the Alps, but also the best protected and the only national park in Switzerland. Established in 1914, the aim of its founding members, all of whom were nature conservation pioneers, was to ensure that a piece of Switzerland's mountain landscape would be left to develop absolutely naturally, and that any changes should be the subject of scientific observation and research. This experiment gave rise to one of the most significant "field laboratories" in the world, providing a unique reference area for scientific research

BThe Swiss National Park is the only national park in Switzerland. Located in the Engadin Valley near the border with Italy, the park covers around 170 square kilometres of alpine nature reserves. How come a country this beautiful has just one national park?

The Chamanna Cluozza (“chamanna” means “hut” in Romansh, the language in these parts) was built in 1910, four years before Switzerland created a national park around it. The first in the Alps, it was founded on 1st August 1914 by the Swiss Society for the Protection of Nature (now called Pro Natura), which aimed to set aside a section of Switzerland’s increasingly cultivated alpine landscape to develop naturally, free of human interference. A century later, it remains the country’s only national park.

Consequently, this area of the Upper Engadine, in the canton of Graubünden, eastern Switzerland, benefits from the highest level of protection. It can’t be farmed, logged or built upon; its animals can’t be hunted. Closed to the public in winter, during summer visitors cannot camp, cycle, fish, light fires, pick flowers, walk dogs, ride horses, wander off the designated paths or do anything that might leave a mark on the landscape. Wardens patrol the park and impose hefty fines on those who break the rules.

Strict though they are, these rules are understandable. Prior to the park’s formation, this was a mining area that became heavily deforested, with the timber used to fuel foundries. As for wildlife, Switzerland’s big three – lynx, brown bear, wolf – were hunted to extinction in Graubünden by the late 19th century and, apart from the odd bear pottering over from Italy, have yet to find their way back.



Zurich

Closed to the public in winter, during summer visitors cannot camp, cycle, fish, light fires, pick flowers, walk dogs, ride horses, wander off the designated paths or do anything that might leave a mark on the landscape

The park’s creation halted any further destruction and instigated a healing process. Today numerous species of alpine plants and animals flourish here, with ibex, chamois, marmots and red deer among the wildlife frequently spotted by 150,000 annual visitors doing the one activity that is allowed – hiking.

It has alpine forests, large rock formations, and alpine meadows. A total of 80 kilometres of well-maintained trails are to be found



Six wooden sculptures of artist Dominic Müller were taken by a group of climbers to the summit of the Virgin and are installed there for six weeks

SUMMIT ART ON THE VIRGIN

The national event of this year’s World Heritage was held in Naters, UNESCO World Heritage site Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch. Six wooden sculptures of artist Dominic Müller were taken by a group of climbers to the summit of the Virgin and are installed there for six weeks. This summit is intended to positively surprise people and embody the bond with nature. It is intended to inspire people for the cultural and natural treasures of the world, but also to appeal to the responsibility of all of us.

The summit “Des Alpes” is intended to convey the idea and the values of the action throughout Switzerland. Each Swiss welter is therefore given a sculpture. The Welterbe office is now looking for a suitable place for the work of art. Ideas or hints are accepted. The office decides on the final location of the work.



Alpine areas should come between July and August, while May to October are suitable months for hiking in the park's lower foothills. Winter hiking is limited to day hikes and short walks on those trails that are kept free of snow.

Tourism is an essential part of Switzerland's national park. The country's national pastime is hiking and walking, and the Swiss encourage tourists to join them in their hikes within their beloved national park, as well as hiking between their picturesque Alpine villages, towns and cities. Visitors are welcome to enjoy the park's trails and attractions, and the average tourist will find it easy to arrive at the national park in Zernez in the Engadin Valley, with Zurich being the starting point for most foreign visitors. From Zurich visitors can board a train for the 2.5-hour ride to Zernez, after which they can take a postal bus to the park itself. Remember to make hotel reservations ahead of time, as the area's accommodation can remain packed to the rafters during peak season, while no camping is allowed in the park.

It has alpine forests, large rock formations, and alpine meadows. A total of 80 kilometres of well-maintained trails are to be found within the park for hikers to enjoy, though no camping is allowed inside the park itself

Alternative activities are available at all times of the year, while there is a selection of destinations to see for visitors to the Swiss National Park. Near the entrance of the park is the quaint village of Zernez, which offers tours all year round and serves as a winter venue

hosting such sports as cross-country skiing, snowboarding, toboggan sledding and skating for its visitors. Winter festivals, film fests, bike marathons, and farmers markets are other local attractions to be

within the park for hikers to enjoy, though no camping is allowed inside the park itself. The best time to visit for general mountain hiking is between July and September. Those trekking the higher

hosting such sports as cross-country skiing, snowboarding, toboggan sledding and skating for its visitors. Winter festivals, film fests, bike marathons, and farmers markets are other local attractions to be





enjoyed. Tourists can also join village tours to experience a journey back in time into Seventeenth Century Guarda, another quaint village up on the sun terrace, just above Zerne. There's also another mountain valley tour at Mustair, close to the Italian border. Before entering the park, one can learn more about it by dropping by its helpful Visitor Centre and meeting the staff there in Zerne.

The park is essentially a large Alpine nature reserve, and as such is home to a wide variety of Alpine flora and fauna. The four seasons allow for a change of the captivating scenery, which also allows for different vantage points for capturing its boundless seasonal beauty. Flora in the park includes conifer trees, larches, mosses, Swiss Androsace, glacier vegetation, meadow wildflowers and Edelweiss, Switzerland's national flower, all of which form important parts of the park's ecosystem. Other plants inside the park are gentians, alpenroses, vanilla orchids, bell flowers and thorny thistles, as well as such fungi as mushrooms. Among the fauna, the keen-eyed visitor may spot red deer, wolves, chamois, lynxes, ibexes, foxes, marmots, brown bears, grass frogs, bearded vultures, northern viper, elk, golden eagles and voles.

Trails in the park are sometimes slippery, due to local weather conditions, and tourists should take care at all times to avoid falls and sprains. Some wild animals in the park are large enough to pose a threat to people, and keeping a distance and walking away from them should be considered a rule to follow. For such reasons, as well as to prevent unnecessary environmental disruptions, feeding animals inside the park is not allowed. The human impact on the park is an issue that has affected the park's ecology, and hikers are asked to only remove from the park what they brought. Furthermore, no pet dogs are allowed in the park, and gathering plants is prohibited. Visitors should walk only along designated trails, and backcountry camping is not allowed due to the many wild, and potentially dangerous, local animals. ■

The park is essentially a large Alpine nature reserve, and as such is home to a wide variety of Alpine flora and fauna. The four seasons allow for a change of the captivating scenery, which also allows for different vantage points for capturing its boundless seasonal beauty



Switzerland Mountains



National park

Going Beyond The Obvious



Bertrand Piccard (right) and André Borschberg

Bertrand Piccard is a Swiss psychiatrist and balloonist. He was the initiator, chairman, and co-pilot, with André Borschberg, of Solar Impulse, the first successful round-the-world solar powered flight. Piccard was born in Lausanne. Both his grandfather Auguste Piccard and his father Jacques Piccard were famous scientists and explorers.

Bertrand Piccard is the initiator and visionary behind Solar Impulse, the very first airplane capable of flying perpetually. Even more than attempting flying around the world without fuel, his ambition is to leverage the spirit of exploration for a useful contribution to the cause of renewable energies.

This is why he spent the last 15 years bringing together the major partners providing technology and funds for this adventure. Together with his wife Michèle, he conceived the Solar Impulse project as a now widely recognised platform to raise public awareness and encourage political actions in favor of clean technologies.

Nearly a decade and a half ago, Bertrand was among the firsts to advocate ecology through the lens of profitability, to show the economic opportunities lying in the fight against climate change. "Clean technologies

should serve the environmental challenges of our time!" Solar Impulse was built to carry this message. Taking turns at the controls of the airplane with his partner André Borschberg for the first ever round-the-world solar flight, successfully achieved in July 2016, Bertrand demonstrated that renewable energy and energy efficiency could achieve incredible goals – reinforcing that it will be easier to protect the environment with a broader use of modern clean technologies, than by fighting against societal trends in mobility, comfort and growth. Thanks to this zero-emission airplane of unlimited endurance, he has become a convincing ambassador, regularly invited to express his vision at major international conferences on innovation, energy, environment and technology.

Bertrand's conviction and strength of experiences mobilized a large scope of partners to support Solar Impulse, despite the skepticism of

the aviation industry. While André Borschberg took on the mission to design and build this revolutionary prototype, Bertrand brought on board more than 60 corporations, institutions and individuals that provided the technologies and the \$170 million needed for the project. These industry leaders recognised in Bertrand's vanguard philosophy a relevant opportunity to stimulate their innovation processes and promote the modern solutions society needs for a sustainable future.

The solar airplane may seem like the focal point, but beyond the aeronautical dimension, Bertrand's overriding aim is to encourage our society to manage the challenges of our time with the spirit of a pioneer.

It is in Bertrand's DNA to go beyond the obvious, explore and achieve the impossible. The ocean depths and the stratosphere attracted his father and grandfather; the challenges of our time fascinate him. Rather than new territories, he wants to discover new ways of doing and thinking, in particular in the field of quality of life. After completing the first ever round-the-world balloon flight, he launched the challenge of a solar airplane of perpetual endurance. Bertrand's vision, Solar Impulse, has flown around the world without a drop of fuel, to encourage global implementation of clean technologies.

A forward-thinking leader for progress and sustainability, Bertrand's dual identities as a medical doctor and explorer give him a unique perspective on psychological capabilities and the way to manage changes and crisis. He is independent, not affiliated to a particular party or lobbying group, and as such is a trusted adviser and influencer for the development of new societal solutions, and a very sought after speaker for private and public audiences. The inspiration he received from other explorers and pioneers during his childhood gave him the desire to inspire young generations in return.

The breadth of Bertrand's experiences brings credibility to his guidance, as he challenges others to embrace new ways of thinking. He is a born communicator, respected for not only achieving lofty goals but also demonstrating the steps needed to achieve them. For more than two decades, he has shared his experience in inspirational speeches for corporate or public audiences, treating topics such as achieving the impossible, creativity and innovation, crisis management, team work and communication. His words have the power to touch entrepreneurs as well as political leaders and children.

Referred to as the "Inspioneer," Bertrand encourages others to challenge common assumptions by focusing on solutions instead of problems and showing how the fight against climate change is opening up new industrial markets and new opportunities for economic development. Bertrand has become an influential voice heard among the most distinguished institutions across the globe, including the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, the government of the United Arab Emirates, COP21, TED and the European Institutions. He has been appointed Champion of the Earth and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Environmental Program (UNEP). Today he is leading the Future is



Bertrand' success lays in his ability to build bridges between extremes to develop synergies where others see oppositions. He also acknowledges that sustainability is not limited to the environment and therefore is actively committed to humanitarian causes

Clean Initiative that brings together more than 420 organisations around the world toward a common goal of environmental progress through clean technology solutions.

Bertrand's success lays in his ability to build bridges between extremes to develop synergies where others see oppositions. First with Solar Impulse, Bertrand promotes the reconciliation of ecology and economy. He also acknowledges that sustainability is not limited to the environment and therefore is actively committed to humanitarian causes. Bertrand chairs the Winds of Hope Foundation that he co-founded with Brian Jones and Breitling after the round-the-world balloon flight. Through this organisation, he created the "No-Noma International Federation" to coordinate the eradication of Noma, a disease associated to extreme poverty, which roots lay in malnutrition and lack of hygiene.

Also an author, Bertrand is able to bring to life his experiences through writing. Even in the midst of a new challenge, he is documenting his experiences to share later. He wrote several best sellers and aims to use his pen as a tool to inspire the reader to greatness in their own lives. ■

Preserving History Through Sport



Switzerland is known for its beautiful mountains that are perfect for skiing, snowboarding and, of course, mountaineering. A haven for winter sports, Switzerland has been a "Mecca" for winter sports enthusiasts since the 19th century. Apart from skiing, Switzerland loves football, especially the "Nati", the Swiss national football team, while the country's biggest tennis names include Stanislas Wawrinka and, of course, Roger Federer

But some traditional Swiss sports have a history dating back at least 800 years. Lonely shepherds tending flocks in remote Alpine valleys needed activities that provided exercise, fun, and the comradeship and company of other people.

Although competitions in these sports are today most commonly intended for tourists, their values, rules and competitive spirit are still preserved and deeply valued by Swiss folk today, because they testify to the history and tradition of the nation.

SCHWINGEN

Schwingen is a special form of wrestling that is unique to Switzerland. One of the differences is that the wrestling takes place within a circle of sawdust. Some may find this pretty exciting, but Schwingen is a traditional competitive sport that isn't dubbed the battle of giants for nothing. Whoever wins the Swiss National Wrestling Championship carries the title of King. Swiss wrestling is a rather spectacular sport and can put quite a bit of strain on the hips. At first glance, it's not easy to be overly enticed by this sport, but it is traditional in Switzerland to test one's strength in this game. It's also called "Hoselupf", because the wrestlers used to grab each other's trousers in an attempt to bring each other down, with the winner being declared when the loser yells that he wants to give up.

A true blood Swiss person will always enjoy the Swiss National Wrestling Championship, which has some parallels with Spanish bullfighting (though it's not quite as wild). The competition is heartfelt and beautiful, and celebrated every three years. The wrestling competition draws countless spectators, though the next possibility to visit this event will only come in 2019, and is something many Swiss are already looking forward to. For non-Swiss people who have never seen Swiss wrestling, it's also really worth a visit.

Wrestlers who compete in the Schwingfest wear specially tailored pants made out of drill, a stout durable cotton fabric that is highly absorbent and was, in bygone days, part of every grandmother's linen chest. There isn't much drill available in Switzerland anymore, so the material for the shorts is largely imported. However, three or four places in the country still manufacture and sell drill. The drill shorts are light and dark brown and may feature the Swiss emblem. The pants are also cut wide so that the wrestlers can get a good grip on them.

Athletes participating in Swiss wrestling may only use their hands to try and bring their opponent down. When one of these mountainous men go into the ring, he can be assured of huge support. The average weight of a wrestler is 105kg and it can be quite a sight to see the competitors go for each other with their muscular arms and legs.

The National Swiss Wrestling Championship enjoys an international reputation and is visited by approximately 53,000 people each time. Practically all Swiss people love watching a good wrestling match.

There are seven bouts in which the athletes duel against each other. The wrestlers who “survive” all seven rounds without landing on their backs and who get the most points go on to compete in the final round.

The last round, and the highlight of the National Swiss Wrestling Championship, always takes place on a Sunday afternoon. The winner of the final round may call himself King, not just for a season or until the next championship – the title is for life.

The winner of the National Swiss Wrestling Championship doesn't take home a cup or anything like that – the ultimate prize is a live bull. The last bull won at the championship, named “Mazot de Cremo”, was worth €18,000. The winner kept the bull for breeding.

HORNUSSEN

Hornussen developed from a pagan tradition. In the past, it was common to chase away evil spirits by setting wooden logs on fire and then batting them down into the valley. After a while, this tradition took hold in the valleys and turned into a team sport. As with every sport, the goal is to beat the opposition. However, hornussen does not involve direct body contact, nor is it directly aggressive in any way.

The first written accounts of the game can be found in church records from the 16th and 17th centuries. One of the entries is about the consistory court in Lauperswil (Emmental) reprimanding hornussen players for having the audacity to play during catechism lessons. In his book “Uli der Knecht”, Jeremias Gotthelf gives a detailed account of the game and its significance to rustic life in those days.

Hornussen quickly became a competitive sport; the first hornussen competition took place in Trub in 1655. In the 19th century, the gymnastics association successfully pushed for hornussen competitions to be part of the first National Swiss Wrestling Competition. The National Hornussen Association was founded in Burgdorf in 1902 and gained 24 hornussen associations with a total of around 600 players as members within the first year.

In hornussen, it is all about the hornuss (nouss). The hornuss is a small black puck 32 to 62 mm in size, with a weight of 78 grams. The hornuss has a groove on both sides. Another piece of equipment needed to play

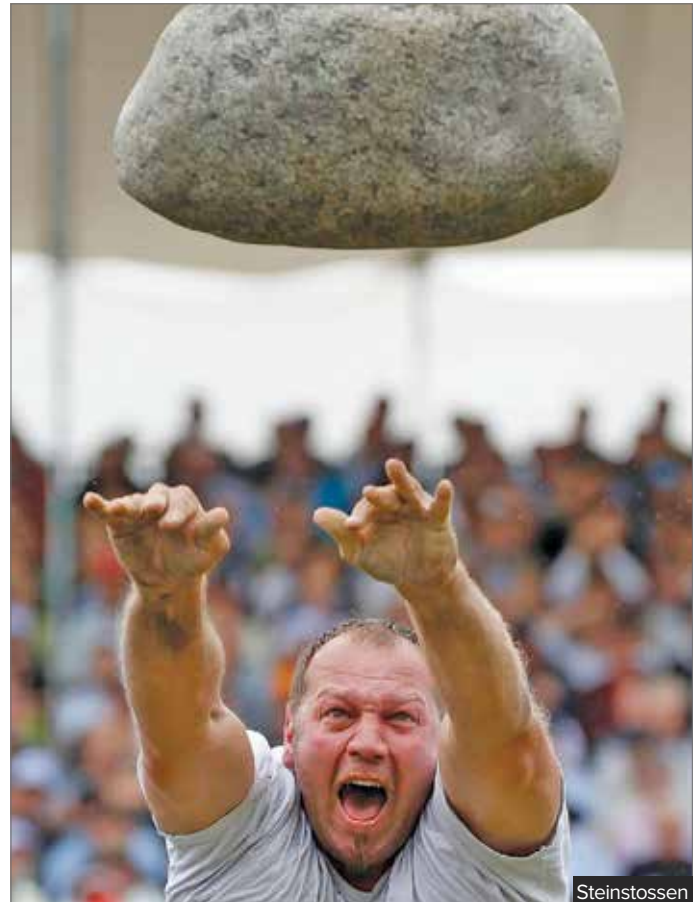
hornussen is a launcher, which is used as a flake appliance and a guiding track for the pole. The launcher is made out of two chrome tracks, making it easy for both right and left handed players. The hornuss is placed on the front end of the launcher with a piece of clay. The diameter of the pole, wind conditions and batting technique determine the positioning of the nouss. The placer must have exact knowledge about the batter, the batter's technique and equipment.

A screen is set up in front of the launcher to catch hornusses that are “badly” batted. The screen is to protect the opponent from difficulty in seeing low flying hornusses. Behind the launcher is a green cloth to protect spectators, as well as to give opponents a better view of the batter.

Obviously, a bat of sorts is needed to hit the hornuss. This bat is called a pole and can be made out of plastic, aluminium, fibreglass and/or carbon. The pole is two to three metres long and flexible. Each batter chooses his

pole according to his height, batting technique, strength and the weight of the “racquet”. This is made out of maple or beech wood and is used to transfer the power to the hornuss. It is only by hitting the hornuss at a right angle, with great acceleration and good batting technique, that the hornuss can be batted far into the opposing team's field.

The goal of the game is to bat the hornuss as far into the field as possible. If the hornuss flies 100 metres, a point is awarded; for every 10 metres more, another point is awarded. The points are awarded to the batter and the team.



Contestants begin on a six-metre runway, hurling the rock into a six-centimetre deep sand pit. The winners of each session win prizes. Practised among the alpine population since prehistoric times, it is recorded as having been played in Basel in the 13th century

For the sake of fairness, teams alternate between defending and batting. Per inning, each player bats two assessment attempts, with a maximum of four tries.

Despite being an age old game, hornussen is still very popular in Switzerland. At first glance, it appears to be a cross between baseball and golf.

Long ago this sport was probably played by single young farmers. Today many Swiss of every age are passionate players; the game is especially popular in the Swiss Plateau cantons of Berne, Aargau and Solothurn. The game does not cost much money to play and players don't have to be in peak physical fitness. Each player can play to their own performance capability.



Hornussen

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STEINSTOSSEN

The Steinstossen is a centuries-old Swiss stone throwing contest. In this competition, men and women throw large stones (62.6 kilograms for men and 34 kilograms for women) into a designated sand pit, with the winner throwing his or her stone the longest distance. Prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, in both men's and women's categories.

Contestants begin on a six-metre runway, hurling the rock into a six-centimetre deep sand pit. The winners of each session win prizes.

Practised among the alpine population since prehistoric times, it is recorded as having been played in Basel in the 13th century. During the 15th century it is recorded as having frequently been practised alongside Schützenfeste (shooting festivals) of the Old Swiss Confederacy. It is also central to the Unspunnenfest near Interlaken, first held in 1805, with its symbol being the 167 pound Unspunnenstein.

In 1860, Steinstossen was introduced as a track-and-field discipline in Germany, retaining the name in spite of the stone being replaced by a 15kg block of iron.



Today stones used at festivals in Switzerland are of varying sizes and weights, but usually are not much over 45 kilograms. The largest stone used is the famed Unspunnen stone, weighing 62 kilograms.

COW BATTLING

The Herens cows are an ancient, traditional Valais breed with a highly combative temperament. Every spring, on the journey up to the high mountain pastures, they lock horns. The winning 'queen' becomes leader of the herd for the summer. This led to the development of the tradition of cow fighting, drawing many breeders and a large audience.

The Battle of the Queens is nothing like the bloody bull fights organised in Spain. Here, farmers take great care of their prized "queens", making sure they don't suffer any serious injuries. Plus, there really isn't much fighting going on, either. The territorial cows mostly lock horns and push each other with their foreheads, until one of them turns around and walks away, accepting defeat. Some of the fighters have lost horns or gained battle scars in the event, but no serious injuries were recorded in recent events. Herens cows, named after Val d'Herens in Valais, have an aggressive instinct that makes them fight among themselves for leadership of the herd. These so-called queens then take part in regional and national rounds of traditional

Swiss cow-fighting, with participation in the final Battle of the Queens as their ultimate goal. The event draws in hundreds of cattle farmers from across Switzerland, eager to test their champions in horned combat, as well as a crowd of spectators.

The bovine queens scheduled to take



Cow Battling

part in the Combats de Reines are divided into five or six categories, based on their weight, from 550 kilograms, to 750 kilograms and over. Combatants must be between three and 11 years old to enter. Finalists in each category are determined by the process of elimination, and the top cows in each weight class are finally released into the arena, all at once. According to the official rules of the competition, a queen loses if she turns away from her opponent.

Although the crowd likes a good fight, whenever the queens get riled up to the point where they might actually injure themselves or other cattle, the rabatturs (which literally means "one who breaks up") and their owners step in to break up the fight. The Battle of the Queens isn't about violence, it's just a centuries-old tradition that allows Swiss farmers to socialize and exchange ideas, as well as a fun event for spectators. ■

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