

National Day of Switzerland

PUBLICITY

Switzerland proactively expanding its footprint in Japan

By Dr. Andreas Baum
Ambassador of Switzerland to Japan

Warm greetings to the readers of The Japan News on the occasion of Switzerland's National Day! As we approach the 160th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year, we witness a period of an expanding Swiss footprint in Japan. Be it in person-to-person interactions, geographically or thematically, the two countries have become closer and more significant to each other.



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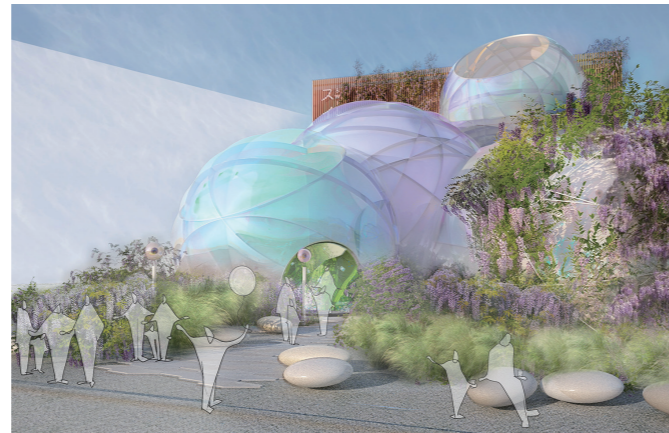
Dr. Andreas Baum

Private as well as official exchanges have resumed in full force. Following a visit of the Swiss president last year with a large multisector delegation, the Foreign Policy Committee of the lower house of our Parliament followed suit later in the year. Expert-level bilateral dialogues are underway again, for example the Financial Dialogue, as well as Joint Committee Meetings under the frameworks of our Science and Free-trade agreements.

The Swiss official network is also expanding beyond Tokyo. On Sept. 30, our Consulate in Osaka will finally enter its new location in Umeda, which will be quite spectacular. At the end of 2022, we inaugurated our Honorary Consulate in Fukuoka, and we hope to reach Hokkaido before the end of this year.

The return of war to Europe has reinforced the partnership in principles and values between Switzerland and Japan. I think of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, multilateralism and solving disputes peacefully, through dialogue. Both Switzerland and Japan are serving as non-permanent members of the U.N. Security Council in 2023 and 2024.

Economic ties remain at the core of our relations. Japan was the strongest driver of Swiss exports to Asia last year. Switzerland is the eighth largest investor in Japan. We are back with pavilions at important trade fairs in fields such as machine tools, hydrogen and biotech. Our Business Hub is receiving a record number of requests for collaborations in trade and investments.



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An architect's conception of the Swiss Pavilion at the 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo

There is new dynamism in our relationship in research and innovation, including in fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum and cleantech. This is due in no small part to the opening of our Consulate in Osaka, which focuses on the promotion of innovation and startups. The 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo, with its sights set on future society, is mobilizing our resources and energy. Switzerland wants to be there with a pavilion that is

extra light and extra sustainable. Since its unveiling in February, a model of the pavilion has been on display to visitors to the Embassy.

Currently, however, we are worried about the construction situation. Many countries are struggling to secure local contractors for their pavilions. We are thankful for the support which the Expo Association and Japanese ministries have offered, but there seems to be no significant breakthrough at this point. The success of a World Expo depends largely on the quality, innovation and design of in-

ternational pavilions. We hope for a quick resolution.

Our commitment to a shared success in 2025 is also encapsulated in Vitality.Swiss, our program on the road to the Expo. Innovation, sustainability and health, the core themes of the program, allow Swiss and Japanese stakeholders to interact and co-create in fields such as sustainable nutrition, product design, digital, art, robotics and energy. The program already has collected some 50,000 participants in the last 10 months. See you at one of our events!



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Congratulations
to the People
of
Switzerland
on the Occasion
of
Their National Day



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