

National Day of Switzerland

PUBLICITY

Joining forces towards healthy, vitalized future

By Dr. Andreas Baum
Ambassador of Switzerland

It is an honor and pleasure for me to address the readers of The Japan News on the occasion of Switzerland's National Day.

What does vitality mean to us? How can we foster vitality at the individual and societal levels? How can Switzerland and Japan join forces to tackle some of our most pressing common challenges — climate change, global health and ageing societies? Today we celebrate the 731st birthday of the Swiss Confederation, but also the first event of Vitality.Swiss. It is a brand-new public diplomacy program, driven by my embassy on the road to Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, where Switzerland will be present with a national pavilion.

The purpose of Vitality.Swiss? Exploring together solutions and scenarios for a prosperous and vitalized future along three main themes: a healthy life, human-centered innovation and a sustainable planet. Our inaugural project opens today at Aichi Triennale, with a focus on the future of architecture: Collaborative Constructions (Kizuki-au in Japanese) consists of timber installations, built by robots and designed by two top Swiss and Japanese institutions, ETH Zurich and the University of Tokyo. The project explores digital fabrication, circularity and human-robot interactions, while also contributing to the livelihood of the beautiful Tokoname area.

Switzerland and Japan are both innovation champions with almost no natural resources. Ingenuity and trade are key to our prosperity. Our long-standing friendship — nearly 160 years — is rooted in common values: democracy, multilateralism and a rules-based international order. These close bonds were highlighted once again last April, when Swiss President Ignazio Cassis visited Japan and met with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Security and the war in Ukraine were high on the agenda, along with the subsequent election of both Switzerland and Japan to the U.N. Security Council for



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the 2023/24 period. In this context, too, we look forward to increased cooperation. Digitalization, science and bilateral trade were other focal points of President Cassis' visit. Japan is our largest Asian investor and ranks eighth as an export market for Switzerland, while Switzerland is the sixth-largest foreign investor in Japan.

On the science front, President Cassis broke ground in Osaka for a newly established consulate of Switzerland, dedicated to research and education. The consulate will become a key instrument for boosting cooperation in R&D and academic relations, including in the buildup to Expo 2025.

What's next? The autumn will see the return to Japan of Swiss parliamentarians, members of the Foreign Policy Commission of the National Council, for exchanges with their Japanese counterparts. A positive sign that people-to-people encounters are — hopefully — back on track after the long COVID-19 hiatus.

Following the kick-starting of the Vitality.Swiss program and the launch of a new website next month, we will explore the key themes of a healthy life, human-centered innovation and a sustainable planet through a wide range of initiatives and angles: management, economics, food and cuisine, medtech, cleantech, performing arts, regional revitalization and much more.

And you, what does vitality mean to you? Join us and let us know!



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Kizuki-au 築き合う — Collaborative Constructions: a Vitality.Swiss project that focuses on the future of architecture



**Kellerhals
Carrard**

オクスネール外国法事務弁護士事務所
スイス法

Tel: 03-3288-3251
Email: charles.ochsner@kellerhals-carrard.ch

www.kellerhals-carrard.ch



“Your Business Support in Japan”

CH Projects Management, Ltd.

2-6-1 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan

Tel: 03-3288-3255 Fax: 03-3288-3284

www.chpm.co.jp



UBP Investments Co., Ltd.

Hibiya Sankei Bldg. 11F, 1-9-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0006

Tel: +81-3-5220-2111 Fax: +81-3-5220-2574

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



JAPAN TOBACCO INC.

Kamiyacho Trust Tower, 1-1, Toranomon 4-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-6927 JAPAN
Phone: (03) 6636-2914 FAX: (03) 6772-0495 URL: <http://www.jt.com>