

# Switzerland National Day Special

## Road to 2020 sees new doors opened

**JEAN-FRANCOIS PAROZ**  
AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND



At the beginning of the Reiwa Era, Japan is at the center of international attention with the G20 presidency in 2019 and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Japan is a major economic partner for Switzerland. While Switzerland is the seventh-largest investor in Japan, Japan is likewise Switzerland's seventh most important trading partner. A significant network of cooperation agreements links our two nations. Joint committees review the developments of our 2009 free trade and economic partnership and our 2007 science and technology cooperation agreement. A parliamentary friendship group, excellent Swiss-Japanese chambers of commerce and many others deepen the bilateral exchanges.

Our ties are reflected in the breadth of high-level talks. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, this year while President of the Swiss Confederation Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer met with Abe in Tokyo in June. Additionally, Swiss Minister for Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin visited Japan in July with a high-level economic and scientific delegation from my country.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games are a unique opportunity to further strengthen the bilateral relations in light of Switzerland's special role in the modern Olympic movement. Lausanne hosts the International Olympic Committee's headquarters and the upcoming Youth Winter Olympic Games in January 2020. From Lausanne to Tokyo, we will be celebrating our special relationship.

Next summer, the House of Switzerland will open on Cat Street in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward, free of charge to the public during the entire Olympic and Paralympic Games period. The house is an invitation to discover our commitment to excellence in innovation, culture, tourism, gastronomy, as well as social inclusion.

To promote the house, our program

"Doors to Switzerland" is opening many new Swiss perspectives in Japan, with emphasis on technology, creative industries, people-to-people relations and diversity. In October, participation by Swiss startups at the SwissTech Pavilion within the CEATEC (Combined Exhibition of Advanced Technologies) fair and the exhibition "Swiss Design / Made in Japan" at Omotesando B-Side during DesignArt Tokyo will highlight Swiss competitiveness and creativity.

I invite the broader public to discover the many links between the two countries in the digital map "Grand Tour of Switzerland in Japan." This mobile website provides insights about historic sites, railway and city partnerships, as well as our host towns for the games (Fuji, Fukushima, Oita, Oyamazaki and Tsukuba).

With the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 100th anniversary of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the issues of rehabilitation and social inclusion will be of great interest worldwide. They also resonate with the priorities of the government of Japan toward the Olympics. We have thus established fruitful partnerships with the Japanese



**President of the Swiss Confederation Ueli Maurer and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands in Tokyo on June 10.** AYAKO SUZUKI

Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Japanese nongovernmental organization Support Our Kids.

In May, 40 alphorn musicians performed at a commemorative concert in honor of the new embassy and of the Japanese Red Cross Society on the occasion of its recognition ceremony. It was with no doubt a highlight of my time in Japan.

Join us in opening many new doors to Switzerland in Japan!

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*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*

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



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