



**Address by the
President of the Swiss Confederation
Mr. Didier Burkhalter**

**Head of the Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs**

to the Swiss Abroad

to mark the Swiss National Day 2014

**“Switzerland is in your hearts. You
too have a place in Switzerland’s
heart”**

Check against delivery

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear fellow Swiss around the world,

The First of August is an opportunity to gather together, whether we are in Switzerland or abroad, out of love for our country, and for the men, women, and children who make it what it is. It is also an opportunity to wholeheartedly reaffirm the cohesion of our regions, languages, and cultures.

On the “Swiss Path”, which wends its way through the heart of our country, there is a section dedicated to each canton. And at the start, or the end, depending on where you begin, there is the “Square of the Swiss living abroad”. This square stands for a lasting part of Switzerland, in a world where challenges have taken on a global dimension: climate change, security, the environment, energy, resources, human rights, and not least peace...

You, the citizens of the “Fifth Switzerland”, strengthen our country. You lend it a voice, a face, and a presence around the world. You are growing in number too: in 2014 there are almost 750,000 of you. You really do constitute a Switzerland in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Switzerland succeeds because it holds onto its values: freedom coupled with responsibility, dialogue, a taste for hard work, combined with modesty.

Switzerland is also successful because it is open. We have always traded with Europe and the world. Our nation was shaped by the major trade routes that run through it, which carried Swiss wool and salt from Africa. The Swiss have been travelling and settling around the globe for centuries.

The Swiss National Day is an opportunity to prepare our country for tomorrow. We do so, not just for ourselves, but above all to provide a better world for our children. Young people and their future prospects must be at the heart of our actions.

The Federal Council works to ensure Switzerland's security and prosperity in a safe and developing world. It is a long and often rocky path but a path to which we are committed through our constitution.

Switzerland has also undertaken various commitments through its increasing international assistance, its humanitarian efforts, new trade agreements, its ambition to consolidate and pursue the bilateral path with the European Union, its contribution to dialogue despite the crises, by chairing the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe this year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You are clearly part of this Switzerland which succeeds by drawing on its values. Your ties to the country make it stronger. The federal authorities are aware of that: parliament is currently drafting a new law on the Swiss Abroad, which will build on its existing strengths and be oriented towards the future. Our network of embassies and representations is there to support you, by offering modern services such as the *helpline* or the *guichet unique*.

A new piece of legislation on Swiss education abroad has just been adopted to safeguard the future of Swiss schools. Young people travel, they are eager to explore, but they remain in our hearts ...

One of Switzerland's key strengths is its education system, its blend of outstanding academic achievement and dual-track apprenticeships. Our country offers young people employment and further prospects; they are integrated through their work. The Federal Council wishes to share this experience with other countries and is equipping itself for one of the most rewarding fights: the fight to provide young people with jobs.

On this First of August I will be meeting young Swiss Abroad in central Switzerland. They are spending part of their summer here in Switzerland, and I look forward to seeing their smiles as they tell me about their ties to our country and their dreams for the future of our world.

More and more, young Swiss living abroad are taking part in federal votes. That is an important sign, because voting means building the future together as responsible citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Fellow citizens of all generations, wherever you may be,

I hope you all enjoy this National Day, a day that we spend together ...

...because you can see it in your children's eyes and smiles: Switzerland is in your heart. And I assure you that you too have a place in Switzerland's heart.

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