



Auslandschweizer-Organisation
Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
Organizzazione degli Svizzeri all'estero
Organisaziun dals Svizzers a l'ester

12.07.10 Speech by President Doris Leuthard - 1st August 2010

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Fellow countrymen and women
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let us take a moment on our Swiss National Day to look back and reflect on Switzerland's values and qualities. On the first of August, Swiss nationals celebrate traditions and customs, and they feel the bond with their country whether they are at home or abroad. All this makes our Swiss National Day a special occasion.

Dear Swiss Abroad, you have come together today because of the close and genuine ties you have to your homeland. You, the 700,000 or so Swiss citizens abroad, work hard for the good of our country. In your host country, you represent the virtues to which Switzerland owes its good reputation. You embody the open mindset that has always served Switzerland well. You are an important calling card for our country. You also hold a mirror up to us. You have the necessary distance to be able to provide us with direct and honest feedback about our actions. You are our eyes and ears, because many things look different or better from the outside or from a distance.

The last few months have been difficult for many countries, Switzerland included. The financial and economic crisis has forced us all to adopt extraordinary measures. By maintaining a sense of proportion and a certain calm, we have weathered this crisis. We have positioned ourselves well. Today Switzerland is well placed, even very well placed when compared internationally. Unemployment figures are also falling. This is encouraging and offers hope for the future. It is nonetheless better to err on the side of caution as it is still too early to speak of a turnaround. And events in recent months have shown that pressure from abroad is unlikely to diminish. We must therefore stand firm, yet at the same time be prepared to be more flexible in areas in which we can improve our position. It is all the more important to foster good international relations, which makes you all the more important as ambassadors for our country. This is where you support us directly.

I can promise you this: even when the pressure intensifies and we have to be hard but fair to stand up for our interests abroad, Switzerland will, as always, remain true to its values of openness, solidarity, reliability and freedom. With qualities and virtues such as these, we will also be well equipped to overcome future crises!

On behalf of the Federal Council, I wish you a very happy first of August.

DEUTSCH

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