



Invest in Switzerland

Jean-François Paroz
Ambassador of Switzerland to Japan



H.E. Mr. Jean-François Paroz, born in Moutier in the Canton of Bern, started his mission in Japan in September 2016. Since entering the diplomatic service, he has taken various important posts, among others as Head of the United Nations Coordination Unit in Bern and as Ambassador of Switzerland to Senegal and to five other African countries. Before taking the present post, he was the Ambassador of Switzerland to Hungary.

Japan and Switzerland: Basic Figures

While Japan and Switzerland are both advanced and highly developed countries, they differ remarkably in size: Japan's territory is nine times larger than Switzerland, which is about the size of Kyushu. Also, the Japanese population is fifteen times bigger than the Swiss one. However, regarding economic indicators, while Japan's GDP is six times higher than Switzerland's, the GDP per capita is twice as high in Switzerland compared to Japan. With an average of about USD 80,000, Switzerland's GDP capita is the second largest in the world.

In 2014, Japan and Switzerland celebrated the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations. The Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Switzerland was signed on 6 February in 1864. During the anniversary year, Crown Prince Naruhito, the patron for the Japanese side of the anniversary, visited Switzerland, while Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, then President of the Swiss

Confederation and patron for the Swiss side, came to Japan.

Since 1864, economic exchanges between the two countries have steadily grown stronger, intensified by their bilateral cooperation in the field of politics as well as in science and technology. Switzerland and Japan share a long history of developing together, based on a complimentary and cooperative relationship. Today, Switzerland is the sixth largest foreign investor in Japan, a position it holds since 2013.

International Switzerland

Switzerland, located in the heart of Europe, is politically independent from but economically highly integrated into the European Union. Companies based in Switzerland – including Japanese ones – can freely export to the EU and benefit from a consumer market of 500 million people.

As free trade is under pressure globally and Japan strives to realize a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU, Switzerland is the first – and still is the only – European country to conclude a FTA with Japan. The Japan and Switzerland Free Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement entered into force in 2009 and has produced good results for both countries.

Switzerland's presence in Japan is strengthened by several highly active and well-connected Swiss stakeholders. The Swiss Chamber of Commerce and



2017年3月、ネスレ姫路工場を訪問（中央がパロ大使）

Industry in Japan, founded in 1981, supports Swiss companies in Japan as well as Japanese companies interested in conducting business in Switzerland, and organizes various and frequent events to facilitate the establishment of new business contacts. The Japan-Swiss Economic Council, founded in 2014, consists mainly of Japanese companies active in Switzerland and promotes economic and cultural relations between the two countries. Furthermore, the World Economic Forum, where Japan traditionally is present with a strong delegation, operates a secretariat in Japan.

Switzerland as an Attractive Business Location

Switzerland regularly occupies the top spots in international rankings. In 2016, it topped the Global Competitiveness Report by the World Economic Forum for the eighth consecutive year, and it also took the first place in the Global Innovation Index for the sixth year in a row.

As a small country with scant natural resources, continuous innovation and a highly trained workforce are essential for Switzerland. Education and research are therefore key topics in Swiss politics. Besides the excellently educated workforce and its high capacity for innovation, Switzerland is also an attractive location for foreign companies thanks to its business-friendly climate as well as a first-class infrastructure and a high quality of living. Also, Switzerland features a dense network of Free Trade Agreements, with 30 already established and more under negotiation.

Traditionally, Switzerland is very competitive in industries such as financial services, precision engineering and pharmaceuticals. However, foreign companies operations in Switzerland cover a widely diversified range, including global/regional headquarters and R&D.

Japanese Companies in Switzerland

Among the over 10,000 foreign companies with presence in Switzerland, about 200 are from Japan, currently employing more than 9,000 people. Japan Tobacco, Nissan, and Sunstar are good examples of companies with international headquarters in Switzerland, and several impressive investments have also been made by Japanese companies in the past few years:

- Santen Pharmaceuticals established their European headquarters in Geneva in 2014. In their global strategy, it was an important step for them to open this subsidiary in Switzerland as Santen aims to strengthen its presence in Europe. Santen covers approx. 50 countries in Europe, Middle East and Africa from the Geneva Headquarters.
- Idemitsu Kosan registered their new R&D center in Basel in the beginning of 2017. Idemitsu had originally operated a joint research with a German company to develop OLED materials in Switzerland, and decided to open their own R&D facility.

Japanese companies have also been active regarding M&A deals. Panasonic Healthcare acquired Diabetes Care business from Bayer AG, and started operating it as a stand-alone company in Basel in 2016. Tanaka Kikinzo acquired the Swiss company Metalor Technologies in Neuchatel in order to develop their business opportunities within Europe. Tanaka and Metalor both enjoy a strong reputation in their respective market, and this acquisition is beneficial for Tanaka Kikinzo as it allows them to extend their operations more globally.

The Japan-Swiss economic relations are mutually beneficiary and an important pillar of the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries.

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在日スイス大使館 スイス外国企業誘致局
TEL: 0120-844-313 Email: inquiry.jp@s-ge.com