

# **Invest in Switzerland**

**Urs Bucher**  
**Ambassador of Switzerland to Japan**



H.E. Mr. Urs Bucher was appointed as Ambassador to Japan in August 2010. He was born in Solothurn in the north-central part of Switzerland. After entering the diplomatic service, he took various important posts. Before taking the present post, he led the European Integration Office of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs, with the rank of an Ambassador.

## **Switzerland**

Switzerland has a population of 8.1 million people for a territory of 41,000 km<sup>2</sup> (size of Kyushu Island). The country lies in Central Western Europe with the Alps forming a natural boundary between its northern and southern parts where European cultures and languages overlap. With four official languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh), Switzerland is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe.

Switzerland has a very robust economy which is based on a social market economy model. Swiss GDP per capita is over USD 80,000, and it is among the highest in the world. As in all modern societies, the tertiary sector dominates the Swiss economy. Important industries include financial services and tourism. As for the secondary sector, Switzerland's lack of raw materials has led to the development of specialized manufacturing industries such as the machinery, life sciences and watchmaking.

Foreign trade is extremely important to the Swiss economy; the value of total imports and exports per capita as well as the share of imports and exports to GDP are among the highest in the world. In addition to a member of World Trade Organisation and European Free Trade Association, Switzerland shares a network of free trade agreements with

more than 70 countries.

## **150 Years: Japan and Switzerland**

2014 marks the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Japan. The Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Switzerland was signed on 6 February in 1864. During the year, the Crown Prince of Japan, patron for the Japanese side of the anniversary, visited Switzerland, while Didier Burkhalter, President of Swiss Confederation and patron for the Swiss side, came to Japan to kick off the celebrations.

Since the treaty, economic exchanges between the two countries have steadily grown stronger, intensified by their bilateral cooperation in the political and international fields as well as in science and technology. We have a long history of developing together, based on complementary and cooperative relationship. The two countries share universal values such as market economy, democracy, and freedom.

In the past few years, the two countries signed a series of very important agreements,

- Free Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (2009)
- Double Taxation Agreement (2011 revised)
- Social Security Agreement (2012)
- Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement (2007)
- Open Skies Agreement (2014)

## **Switzerland as an Attractive Business Location**

Switzerland is regarded as one of the most competitive country in the world, as shown by the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report that Switzerland topped for six consecutive years. According to various country rankings, it is also regarded as the most innovative country.

Among the over 10,000 foreign companies with pres-



Zurich, the centre of finance and economy in Switzerland



Swissdays held at Ropping Hills Arena in February 2014 to celebrate 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Japan. Friendship ambassadors with the President and the Ambassador of Switzerland, from left to right;

Mr. Kazuki Yamada, Mr. Isamu Tatsuno, Ms. Haruka Christine, Mrs. Burkhalter, President Burkhalter, Ambassador Bucher, Mrs. Bucher, Mr. Kiyomi Mikuni and Mr. Takaji Kunitatsu

ence in Switzerland, around 200 are from Japan. Japanese companies currently employ more than 9,000 people in Switzerland. Traditionally, our country is very competitive in industries such as financial services, precision engineering, and pharmaceuticals. However, foreign companies operating in Switzerland cover a widely diversified range. Typical functions of Swiss subsidiaries of multinational companies are highly value added such as global/regional headquarters and R&D. Major reasons why Switzerland is chosen as a location for such functions are,

- Stable economy and politics
- Availability of high skilled labours
- Centrally located in Europe
- First-class infrastructure
- Favourable tax regime
- Dense network of Free Trade Agreements (FTA)

## Japanese Companies in Switzerland

Some good examples of Japanese companies with headquarters (HQ) function in Switzerland include Japan Tobacco's International HQ in Geneva, Nissan's European HQ in Rolle, and Sunstar's international HQ in Etay. In the past few years there have been several impressive greenfield investments by Japanese companies,

- DMG MORI SEIKI is projecting to build one of its two global headquarters in Winterthur, near Zurich (the other one is in Tokyo). The facility is due to open in December 2014, with plans to hire 150-200 staffs for both the global headquarters and a technical centre.

- Nitto Denko established a European Technical Centre at EPFL in Lausanne, one of the best technical universities in Europe. It focuses on research and development of bio-materials for biomedical and environmental applications. Switzerland was selected because of its great international research networks, excellent education system, and attractive incentives for research activities.

Recently, Japanese companies have played big roles at M&A deals in Switzerland. Takeda Pharmaceutical spent over JPY 1 trillion to acquire the third biggest Swiss pharmaceutical company, Nycomed to increase its international presence, particularly in Europe and emerging countries. Toshiba acquired Swiss electricity metering company Landis+Gyr, a global leader of smart meters with a local presence in over 30 countries.

Last but not least, some Japanese startup companies recently invested in Switzerland. One good example is Midokura, ICT startup specializing in network virtualization, which relocated its global HQ in Lausanne.



Nitto Denko established a European Technical Centre at EPFL in Lausanne

## JOI 特別会員

### 『スイス大使館 スイス外国企業誘致局』のご紹介

スイス大使館 スイス外国企業誘致局では、スイスへの進出を検討する日本企業に対し、総合的できめ細かいサポートをワンストップにて提供しています。今後進出を検討する企業だけでなく、すでにスイスに拠点をもつ企業に対しても、スイスからの事業展開などについての支援を継続しています。日本語によるウェブサイト ([www.s-ge.com/invest](http://www.s-ge.com/invest)) や年数回開催のスイス事業投資セミナーなどでも最新の情報を提供しています。

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