

**Speech of the President of the Confederation
Alain Berset**

**Recording of the 1st of August address
to the Swiss Abroad**

Berne, June 19th, 2018

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Dear Swiss Abroad

I am delighted that you have gathered today for our national holiday.

Wherever you live:

- You are an important and an indispensable part of our country.

The Swiss abroad – if all seven hundred and fifty two thousand (752,000) of you were in one canton – would represent the third largest in Switzerland, after Zurich and Bern and ahead of Vaud.

This most diverse of all cantons stretches

- from Ireland to India,
- from Korea to Kyrgyzstan,
- from Greenland to Ghana.

But what unites you all is your very special view of Switzerland.

- It is a perspective of intimate distance.
- An eye for the essentials.

You know how much Switzerland stands for international stability - which can also be seen in the strength of the Swiss franc.

And you know that our country is seen as open-minded, which is also thanks to you

- the unofficial ambassadors of our country.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Dear Swiss Abroad

Switzerland is committed to fairness and mutual respect in our international relations.

States are not only our competitors, but also our partners.

- That is sometimes questioned today.
- However, we can't allow this to mislead us.
- Because Switzerland, as a small country, is dependent on rules-based international relations.
- Our country stands by these rules.
- Not least because of International Geneva, where the UN has its European headquarters as well as the World Trade Organization.

EU - EUROPE

Dear Swiss Abroad,

Relations with the EU are particularly important. The EU is our most important trading partner.

Indeed, it is in the interest of both sides to have good relations.

- That is of course important for everyone
- Who lives in an EU country.

We live on a continent at peace.

Despite all the problems with the euro and migration we must not forget: Europe is doing better than ever before.

In this regard, European integration played a decisive role.

We must do everything we can for a political commitment to peace and security and regulated trade relations.

Because such a commitment also strengthens Switzerland.

- A country of stability,
- Which is dependent on stable international relations.

You, too, dear Swiss Abroad, strengthen our country,

- by making self-assured and energetic contributions
- with your experience, knowledge and ideas.

I wish you all a happy First of August.