

# SCCT NEWSLETTER

Bimontly Newsletter of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey

March 2020



## PLATINUM



## GOLD



## SILVER



## EVENT PATRON





**Ariane Tinner**

Counsellor for Economic and Cultural Affairs at the Swiss Embassy

## **Dear Members of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey,**

As the new Counsellor for Economic and Cultural Affairs at the Swiss Embassy in Ankara, it is an honour for me to share with you a few thoughts and give you a brief update on our activities in the field of economy and culture at the Swiss Embassy. In my view long-lasting success can only be achieved by fruitful cooperation. Therefore sharing information and ideas with you at the board meetings of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and other networking occasions in Istanbul or Ankara is essential to me.

The Swiss Embassy is working on a wide range of areas to support and promote Swiss businesses and culture in Turkey. Regarding economic and commercial issues, we act as a door opener and facilitator for Swiss businesses by putting them in contact with the competent authorities and decision makers and accompanying them when needed. The macro-economic developments in Turkey are in our daily focus. Moreover, as the Swiss Embassy we act as a bridge builder at the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) meetings, which take place annually either in Turkey or Switzerland. The last one took place in 2019 on the 4th of December in Bern. I believe, the JEC is a very useful platform to discuss the concerns of both parties, to solve problems and to further strengthen bilateral economic relations. In addition to the JEC meetings, the economic section of the Embassy also supports several other official activities such as ministerial visits and consultations between the authorities of both countries.

In addition to official interactions, we are very much involved in organizing networking events in cooperation with the local business chambers, including the Swiss Chamber of Commerce, professional associations, the country representation of international institutions and the economic divisions of other embassies. The monthly "3-Country Business Lunches", which are jointly organized by the Embassies of the German-speaking countries, are good examples of a fruitful cooperation between like-minded countries. They provide an attractive networking environment to companies and business people wishing to interact and develop relations with the Swiss business community in Turkey. The last one took place on the 4th of March 2020, this time in collaboration with the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey. A series of briefings with experts from academia, financial institutions and professional organisations, organised and hosted also by the Swiss Embassy, help the participants to understand better the dynamics of the Turkish economy.





**Ariane Tinner**

Counsellor for Economic and Cultural Affairs at the Swiss Embassy

The Cultural Affairs are our other main area of focus. In close cooperation with the Consulate General in Istanbul, we organise events on Swiss education, music, arts and filmmaking in order to reinforce cultural relations between Switzerland and Turkey. The Swiss National Day celebrations, supported by the generous contributions of the Swiss companies operating in Turkey, have become a popular event, in Ankara, and also in Istanbul. I would like to use this opportunity to thank our sponsors for their valuable support which provides us with the necessary means to make the Swiss National Day receptions the event of the year!

I would like to mention briefly that the modernized EFTA-Turkey Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which governs the bilateral economic relations between Switzerland and Turkey, has been ratified by the Swiss parliament. Turkey is still in the ratifying process. We hope that a modernized FTA with an expanded scope to new areas such as services, intellectual property rights and public procurement will be of advantage for all parties.

I would like to thank you, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and its members, for the warm welcome and the support that you have given me since my arrival last summer. I am looking forward to strengthen our cooperation in the future even further.

**Ariane Tinner,**

Counsellor for Economic and Cultural Affairs at the Swiss Embassy





**BUILDING TRUST**



## Turgay Özkun

General Manager of Sika Turkey

### **Mr Turgay Özkun, tell us a little bit about your background.**

I was born in Istanbul in 1975. I graduated from Yıldız Teknik University, Department of Civil Engineering. After that, I completed my master's degree in Marketing at Yeditepe University. I started my career at Sika Turkey in 2004, where I have been the General Manager in the past 2 years. During this period, I was very happy to take part in all levels and positions of sales and marketing organizations. I've seen the great benefits of coming from the field for my current position.

### **What is your impression of Turkey and the Turkish market so far?**

Turkey is a country with high economic and sociological development potential, especially with its young population. Despite some geopolitical disadvantages and a periodically fragile economy, Turkey is promising with this potential.

### **Name us three extraordinary things about Sika Turkey?**

Sika founded in 1910 and has been operating in 101 companies in the world. Sika Turkey is always among all these Top 15 Sika companies as production, sales, profitability, R&D and human resources at the point where it comes with its 30 years history in Turkey.

### **What is the biggest challenge Sika Turkey is facing in Turkey?**

We are facing with same difficulties such as unfair competition conditions in some sectors economic fluctuations in certain periods, dependence on certain raw materials.

### **What are the gains?**

As a manufacturer of construction chemicals and industrial adhesives, construction and industrial development in the period until 2019 has been the main engine of our growth. This situation has contributed to the company's appetite for further investment.

### **What future plans does Sika Turkey hold and what are the upcoming projects?**

Sika Turkey's successful performance for 30 years has riveted our head office's trust in our formation. As so far, our Sika's group management will continue its investments, especially in R&D and production, and will continue the opportunities for inorganic growth with acquisitions as it has done in recent years. Other main topics such as market penetration, innovation, operational efficiency are the basis of our growth strategy.

### **What role does the Chamber of Commerce play in your business life?**

We are very pleased to be a member of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey association. Especially, I would like to point out that we will continue to make all kinds of contributions as a company in order to increase trade cooperation between the two countries. I believe that organizations strengthened by social and cultural activities are very useful in increasing the volume of trade between Switzerland and Turkey.





## Ceren Satılmış

Digital Analytics Specialist at Bank Cler

School: **University of Zurich**

### **Ms Satılmış , during which time period have you gone to school in Switzerland?**

I have completed my bachelor's and master's studies at the University of Zurich between 2009 and 2017. I have studied finance and data science.

### **How come you went to Switzerland? Whose influence was behind this idea?**

I have always wanted to study abroad. Since I was a student at the German high school in Istanbul, I decided to pursue the "Abitur" high school degree, instead of going for the Turkish university exam. I was considering Germany and Switzerland for my higher education. Because of the higher rankings of Swiss universities and low student fees, I decided to study in Switzerland.

### **Do you have any special memories?**

Since I have completed my high school education in German and hold an Abitur degree, I already had a pretty high level in German language. I was told that Swiss German was quite different but I didn't expect it to be this different. Until I arrived in Switzerland I didn't hear anyone speaking Swiss German before and upon my arrival, everyone I contacted spoke "High German (Hochdeutsch) with me. On my first day at the university I met a Swiss girl during the orientation day, with whom I became friends afterwards. We were told that the language of the education is high German, so I wouldn't have any problems understanding it. In the first lecture, the professor was speaking Swiss German and I was having hard times understanding him. I asked my friend, why he is talking Swiss German although they told us the education language was in high German. Turns out, he was indeed speaking high German, but with a very strong accent. On that day, I realized that I need to understand and get used to the Swiss dialect very fast. In my first year, understanding the dialect was a big challenge but

after being exposed to the language, it became easier to understand. I recommend highly to listen as much as possible to get used to it. Even Germans don't understand the Swiss, until they get used to it, which can take couple of months.

### **Please give us a brief insight on your personal experiences during that time.**

Studying and living in Switzerland had direct impact on my world view and who am I today. Growing up in Istanbul, as a child or teenager, you don't get to have much exposure to nature. Here I got to know how to respect and enjoy the nature. Here free time and hobbies are taken seriously and people engage in many sports and outdoor activities. In Switzerland, I have learned how important they are for a healthy life and I have started integrating them into my life and enjoy them.

Moreover, I have learned that people who speak different languages and different cultures can relate themselves to the one same country. I have learned to respect and understand everyone no matter what they do, where they are from and what they believe in. Living in such a multilingual and multicultural country surely widens your horizons and you get to know a lot more about the world. International experiences are very important in the younger ages and impacts strongly one's personality and the point of view.



## **Describe briefly the Swiss education system in comparison to the Turkish one.**

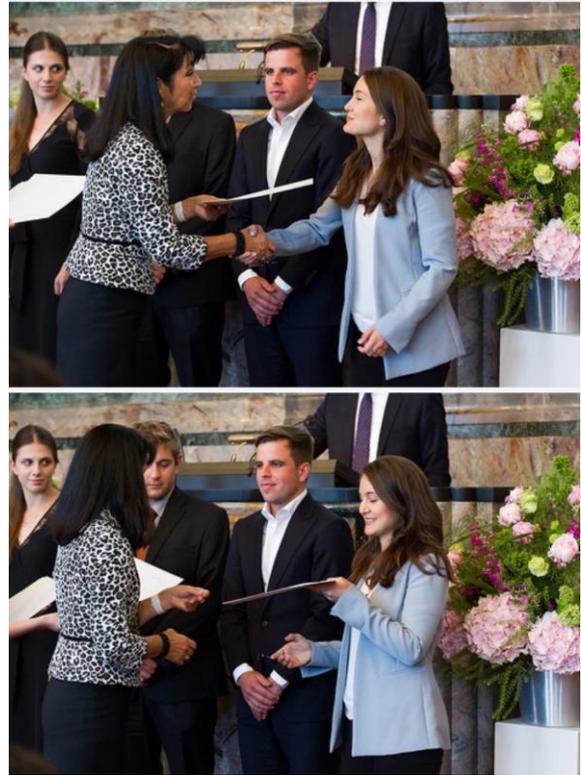
Swiss universities are very research oriented and there are a wide range of different lectures compared to the same faculties in Turkey. Already in bachelor studies the students can specialize in very specific areas, according to their interests. In Swiss universities students need to write a scientific research thesis in order to complete the bachelor studies. This thesis requires advanced research methods and require multiple months of full dedication but at the end it generates very valuable insights on the research topic. Already when I was 24, I have published my first research, thanks to my specialized bachelor's thesis. Further, in the Swiss universities repeating exams or failing exams are handled differently than in Turkey. In many courses or universities there are no repetition exams. The lectures should be selected again the next year and the whole lecture must be repeated. In some universities, courses are bundled in blocks, which should be passed altogether. There are also limits in repetitions (at ETH max 2. Repetitions per exam, failing twice leads to getting expelled from the university; University of Zurich Finance department allows having maximum 8 failed exams in the whole bachelor's studies, which is 180 ECTS that would make around 40 courses). Other main difference in the Swiss universities is the entrance requirements. In Turkey students are already elected in the university entrance exam, which leads students to choose universities rather than subjects. In Switzerland, every high school graduate can choose freely what to study and where to study but therefore the election of the students is made during the first year of the studies. The first and even the second year of the bachelors can be quite stressful and should be taken seriously.

Regarding to the quality of education, Switzerland has high budgets for education and is a very attractive country for academics. As a result, students get to have lectures from internationally accepted academics and can follow most recent research from the first hand. As students, they can even get involved in these research as assistants even in the bachelor studies. Swiss way of teaching is different than the Turkish system, which follows more the American style. It is more individual, theoretical and research oriented. Swiss education system may appear very challenging but it is also very rewarding.

## **What is so special about Swiss education? What do you appreciate most having studied in Switzerland?**

At the university, I have learned how to learn individually. We had a large selection of lectures and were able to design our studies according to our own interests. The universities here are very flexible, you don't have any attendance requirements and can plan your schedule freely (this applies for the most universities – there can

be exceptions). This also allows students to work part-time and gain work experience already during the studies, which is very valuable. Further, at Swiss universities, it is very important to choose the subject that interests the student the most. The education system here requires long hours of studies and high level of dedication. Therefore, I owe the Swiss education system big thanks because through my experience and my education here, I choose the right study subject for me. If I would have stayed in Turkey I would have chosen a subject which wouldn't suit me the best and which I wouldn't enjoy in the long term. The challenging education here led me to find my real interest and pursue it. Thanks to my education, I was able to position myself successfully in the labour market and get a satisfying job, professionally and financially. Thanks to the quality of the education, my degree is well accepted locally as well as internationally.



## **What would you recommend Turkish parents who want to send their children to a Swiss boarding school?**

I would recommend Turkish parents that they should only send their children abroad for their education, if they are also willing to gain this experience. It is surely a challenging but a rewarding experience and since the children will be affected by this decision, they should be informed and involved in this decision. It is also important that they should have some ideas on what they want to do after high school, where they want to study and decision should be made accordingly. Parents and their children should do their research, know more about the school, its systems and make a well-informed decision.



# EVENTS



## 05 February 2020, Swissôtel The Bosphorus, Istanbul Welcome Luncheon for Consul General

The Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey hosted a Welcome Luncheon in honor of the newly appointed Consul General of Switzerland to Istanbul, Mr. Julien Thöni. The Luncheon was kindly sponsored by Swissôtel The Bosphorus Istanbul. SCCT Board Members, Swiss Business Hub Turkey and Executives of some Swiss companies attended the Luncheon.



# EVENTS

## #swissdays istanbul

13-22 February 2020, Switzerland  
Swiss Days Road Show

Swiss Days 2020 is already waiting in the wings. Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and Swiss Business Hub Turkey visited several Swiss Companies, Institutions and Schools in Switzerland from 13 to 21 February 2020 to promote this year's Swiss Days Istanbul.



# EVENTS

# CHAMBER CORNER

27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 // 19:00

**RadissonBlu Hotel**  
ŞİŞLİ, İSTANBUL

27 February 2020, RadissonBlu Hotel Şişli, Istanbul  
**Chamber Corner**

The Swiss Chamber of Commerce participated in the Final Chamber Corner Event for 2019, a joint organization with the International Chambers of Commerce and Trade Offices in Turkey.

The evening event took place at RadissonBlu Hotel Şişli Istanbul with approx. 200 people attending. It was a great opportunity to meet the members of the other Chambers.

As a part of this event, guests had the opportunity to listen to Mr. Murat Yeşildere's speech with the title "Oh, gosh, the CEO is pregnant"



# EVENTS



## 04 March 2020, Mövenpick Hotel, Ankara 3-Country Business Luncheon



mageba



### “Earthquake: Seismic Risk and Seismic Protection”

In cooperation with the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and mageba Turkey, the Heads of the Economic and Commercial Sections of the Embassy of Switzerland, Mrs. Ariane Tinner, German Embassy, Mr. Friedo Sielemann and Austrian Embassy, Mr. Christian Maier, jointly invited the members of the Swiss, German and Austrian business communities to a 3-Country Business Lunch, with honored Guest Speaker Mr. Hakan Geyik, General Manager at mageba Turkey, on «Earthquake: Seismic Risk and Seismic Protection».





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## Swiss Education & Swiss Investment

On the initiative of the Swiss Business Hub Turkey and York Education Solutions, the Consul General of Switzerland, Mr. Julien Thöni, invited to an information event on Swiss Private Schools and Swiss Investment. Awarded as the leading schools in Switzerland and best schools worldwide, Institut auf dem Rosenberg, College Du Lemman and Brillanmont International School presented themselves.

Mehmet Yıldirimli, Head of Swiss Business Hub Turkey, gave a short overview about the investment opportunities in Switzerland. At this, Mehmet Yıldirimli underlined that education is also a very important investment. Burçin Önal, founder of York Education Solutions, emphasized that the reason why Swiss schools are among the best in the world, lies in the ambitious education system the country offers. Students from 80 different countries enjoy Swiss education. Demet Sabancı Çetindoğan, who was among the guests, met with the Swiss school representatives to talk about her "Democracy Education" project in order to offer such lessons in these schools at an early age.





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Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Consulate General of Switzerland in Istanbul

## NEW CORONAVIRUS 2019-nCoV

The corona virus is currently treated in all media. We would therefore like to give you some links here, which give you more information about the virus and the current status.

We also point out that the Turkish authorities are responsible for all matters in regard with the virus in Turkey.

World Health Organization [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)  
Turkish Ministry of Health [www.saglik.gov.tr](http://www.saglik.gov.tr)  
Turkish Medical Association [www.ttb.org.tr](http://www.ttb.org.tr)

The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) is monitoring developments in Switzerland. It has the medical expertise and can therefore provide competent advice on health issues. It keeps a close eye on developments and regularly publishes current information: <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/de/home.html>.

The FOPH gives travelers the following recommendations:

- Good personal hygiene measures
- Avoid contact with people with respiratory symptoms if possible
- Avoid larger crowds
- Observe local instructions and recommendations
- Return travelers who develop breathing difficulties or fever within 14 days after returning should - after contacting us by telephone - consult a doctor and point out their trip

## ETH Zürich remains the best university in the world to study Earth & Marine Sciences according to this year's QS World University Rankings by Subject 2020!



Graphic: [Presence Switzerland, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs \(FDFA\)](#)

ETH Zurich is one of the world's leading universities in science and technology and is known for its cutting-edge research and innovation. It was established in 1855 as the Swiss Federal Polytechnic School, and a century and a half later the university can count 21 Nobel laureates, 2 Fields Medalists, 2 Pritzker Prize winners, and 1 Turing Award winner as alumni, including the great Albert Einstein himself.

The university, referred to in English as the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, has 16 departments that offer academic education and conduct scientific research in subjects ranging from engineering and architecture to chemistry and physics.

Education at ETH Zurich combines solid theory with practical application, and most degree programs build on strong mathematical foundations. For undergraduates the main teaching language is German, while most master's programs and doctoral studies are in English.

Located in Zurich, Switzerland's largest city, ETH Zurich is largely based on a modern main campus built on a hill in the outskirts of the town. Students at ETH have twice as many lectures as those at other Swiss institutions, but can still attend regular exhibitions, plays and concerts, as well as take advantage of the regular symposia and conferences on campus, where some of the best minds in science come to speak.

[Read more](#)

Source: <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2020/earth-marine-sciences>



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## Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey/Türkiye'de İsviçre Ticaret Odası Derneği

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