

e-Newsletter
July 2017

Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey



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“From refugees to employees”



John Ruhoff

Acting Consul General of Switzerland

Dear Readers,

In my function as Interim Consul General in Istanbul for the last weeks before my own departure, I have been asked to contribute to this newsletter with an editorial. Whilst doing so with pleasure, I realized that such an input was a chance to make reference to a possible interface between the local business world and a social responsibility project for refugees.

This all the more because Switzerland is committed internationally at several levels to protecting and finding sustainable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants which also includes implementing vocational training projects and creating jobs.

It is common knowledge that Turkey is home to over 3 million Syrians of which only 10% are settled in official facilities, with the remaining 90% living amongst the country's citizens. Maybe your business activities have been influenced by this crisis in some way or maybe you have asked yourself if these migrants can or should be integrated into the local labour market. Because most of them are willing to work in their new host country, but face all kind of problems. And that last consideration leads to the question of the extent to which international business stakeholders in Turkey can help to alleviate this symptom of the humanitarian crisis.

Well, a Dutch government funded initiative called “United Work” has come up with a solution to promote refugees' ability and willingness to learn in order to stimulate their integration into the local labour market.

Across the country “United Work” has succeeded in establishing a learning, training and work platform for unemployed Syrian refugees to become legal employees. One major difference between “United Work” and other organizations is however that it offers job seeking, placement and training as a package all under one umbrella.

With the backing of the Netherlands' Consulate General in Istanbul, “United Work” has approached several like-minded foreign Consular representations in Istanbul, such as Switzerland, enquiring if their respective business communities would be interested in participating in the programme. The international response has been overwhelming. The Consulate General of Switzerland is hence delighted that SCCT has shown awareness and is keen to endorse this praiseworthy initiative amongst its members. Although these endeavours are of course only a small step for the moment, they are a move in the right direction, helping to get Syrians off the informal and into the legal labour market.

If you would like to find out more about “United Work”; please scroll further down in this issue of the newsletter.

And to end on a personal note: As I am leaving Istanbul for a new challenge at our Embassy in Algiers at the end of August, I would like with these lines to also bid farewell to SCCT and its members and thank you for four utmost rewarding years of fruitful and competent cooperation. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

John Ruhoff
Acting Consul General



Batuhan Besler

Georg Fischer Hakan Plastik Head of Middle East and Turkey

Mr Besler, tell us a little bit about your background.

After graduating from Dokuz Eylül University Mechanical Engineering, i have completed MBA in Marketing & Finance in Middle East Technical University.

Since 1996, i have been in senior positions in international brands like De Laval, 3M, Nokia, British American Tobacco, Hilti and Baunit. Before GFPS, i was in Baunit Turkey as General Manager. As of November 2014 i have joined Georg Fischer Company as Head of Region Middle East & Turkey.

What does GF Hakan Plastik offer?

GFPS acquired Hakan Plastik in 2013 with the purchase agreement. Hakan Plastik is one of the most important producers of plastic pipes and fittings in Turkey took an important step for changing by joined forces with the brand an expert about the piping system in the World. Founded in 1965 Hakan Plastik has achieved great success as the first company producer of silent pipes in Turkey and since its foundation as a result of caring about development and evolution it was reflected on products and services. We produce plastic pipes and fittings for building technology and utility and agricultural irrigation products in plastic pipes industry as GF Hakan Plastik brand. We have 200.000 tons production capacity in 2 factories located in Çerkezköy and Şanlıurfa. GF Hakan Plastik has 730 employees in 2 plants, 7 domestic sales regions, and a training & technology center which we opened as of August 2016.

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

Turkey and Turkish market have a very dynamic structure. Turkey and Turkish people are very flexible, adaptive and find quick solutions even under the toughest condition. Managing a company in such a structure also requires a different dynamism and energy.

Name us three extraordinary things about GF Hakan Plastik?

GF Hakan Plastik is the first company that produces the acoustic pipes. This product development has been a work that gives a different direction to both the company and the market/sector. market/sector.

Another special work is GF Hakan Plastik Training & Technology Center. The quality of product is much more affected when combined with proper and appropriate application and technical knowledge. For this reason both technical and practical trainings are very important to increase the level of knowledge and awareness in the sector. We "GF Hakan Plastik" have taken an important step in this regard and have provided Training & Technology Center. GF Hakan Plastik will be able to reach many different target groups such as customers, professional service providers, university students and plumbers with this center. For each stakeholder, different training and seminar programs will give information about both GF Hakan Plastik products and correct application techniques of products.



Batuhan Besler

Georg Fischer Hakan Plastik Head of Middle East and Turkey

As a third special value, I can say our human resource. We have a very energetic, dynamic, and willing to create added value team. Our most important value is human. For this reason we do a lot of work in the human resources department.

What is the biggest challenge GF Hakan Plastik is facing in Turkey?

GF Hakan Plastik is a local producer but a global player. We have no problem reaching the market, connecting/communicating with our customers or creating synergy. However the increase in exchange rates is affecting our sector deeply. High increases in the rates are affecting our costs especially because of the heavy use raw materials which depend the currencies. Even if we try to manage these increases within ourselves as a producer, after a while we have to reflect this to market prices. In 2017 we will try to keep our costs under the control as far as possible but our expectations are not really optimistic/hopeful about the currencies.

Another problem in our sector is the companies which do not use proper raw materials or produce below certain standards. Looking for certain standards to choose correct products and asking producers for these standards will be the first step to overcome whether in the tenders of infrastructure/utility, new project constructions and renovation works of existing buildings.

What are the gains?

Construction sector is one of the most important sectors in Turkey. We are in a sector which has always growth potential and business volume with

the new projects, urban transformation and renovations. This offers us opportunities to develop both the market and integrate the quality products in our product range.

What future plans does your company hold and what are your upcoming projects?

We would like to add value through differentiation for all our business and solution partners, our employees and country resources. First of all, we will be very closed to our customers and specified their needs correctly in the future like today. We are now improving our processes and integrating innovation into our processes according to customer needs. We aim to produce value-added products and services for all of our partners.

Is there anything else you would like to add that would be of interest to our SCCT newsletter readers?

I wish all readers of SCCT newsletter, our country and the entire World have more quiet and peaceful year in 2017. We have already completed almost first half of the year. I hope that 2017 will end up with good results, beneficent and good works for our country and our industry.

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

It is able to find many shares under favor of Swiss Chamber of Commerce's network. The sharing of experiences in the different sectors contributes to transfer ideas to the business line that we manage.



09 May 2017, Gide Loyrette Nouel Breakfast Seminar on Performance-Related Termination of the Labour Contract

The Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and Gide Loyrette Nouel jointly organized a Breakfast seminar on the

"Performance-Related Termination of the Labour Contract"

Özdirekcan Dündar Şenocak Attorney Partner, Ali Osman Ak presented the following topic:

Determining the performance criteria and preparing the documentation during the performance evaluation process in light of the most recent decisions of the Court of Cassation: procedures and principles for terminating the labour contract of underperforming employees.



EVENTS



12-13 May 2017, Hasköy MIMARŞIV Selection 2017

SCCT participated in this year's Mimarşiv Selection Exhibition.

Mimarşiv is the one and only platform in Turkey that brings together business people and companies from the construction, architecture, design and art industries to provide valuable networking opportunities and to encourage business cooperation in these fields.

Swiss exhibitors such as V-Zug and Swisspearl were also present at this two-day event.



EVENTS



23rd May 2017, Swissotel Chalet Restaurant Summer Welcoming Reception



The Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and the Swiss Business Hub Turkey jointly organized the Summer Welcoming Reception at the Swissotel Chalet Restaurant.

SCCT President Mr Arpat Şenocak and Head of the Swiss Business Hub Turkey Mr Mehmet Yıldırımılı hosted the successful event with more than 120 guests.

Besides good food and a live performance of the TEViTOL acapella choir, participants had the chance to win high quality presents from lucky draw tickets. All revenues have been donated to the Turkish Education Foundation.



The Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey took this opportunity to surprise Consulate General of Switzerland, Ms Monika Schmutz Kirgöz with an honoring fare well video, who moved in the beginning of July to Beirut as the new Swiss Ambassador of Lebanon.

We would like to thank our Sponsors:
Swissotel The Bosphorus, Nespresso, Atlasglobal, Delmore, La Prairie, Vavana, Absinthe, Swiss Centerdent, Nestlé, Swatch Group and DDF.

EVENTS



13 June 2017, Köksal Attorney Partnership Breakfast Seminar on Restruction of Taxing and current improvements



The Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and Köksal Attorney Partnership jointly organized a workshop on **"Restruction of Taxing and current improvements"** .

Our Speaker Prof. Dr. Hakan Üzeltürk from Köksal Attorney Partnership shared useful and important information with the participants during breakfast.

EVENTS



21 June 2017, BTS & Partners Breakfast Seminar on Data Protection

BTS & Partners and the SCCT organized a joint seminar on Data Protection Law with the presentation of Att. Yücel Hamzaoğlu and Att. Batu Kinikoğlu. During a delicious breakfast, participants had the chance to ask all their questions to the experts.





Smiles and dreams
for our children in hospitals

“For the children in hospitals and institutions we have at heart to contribute to their well being by offering visits from professional artists trained to work in a medical environment”

Since 1998, Theodora Sevgi Doktorları continue to perform thousands of regular weekly visits to children by offering smiles and moments of joy.

Today our programme is active in 8 hospitals and 1 specialist care centre for children with disabilities. In 2016, our 10 “Sevgi Doktorları” spread smiles and moments of happiness to more than 25,000 children.

Funding the visits of Sevgi Doktorları to children, is entirely based on the kind support of donors and partners. If you consider becoming a partner with us, we would be glad to work collaboratively in order to support hospitalized children in Turkey.

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United Work Reintegration and Placement Services; is an NGO that is running a social responsibility project funded by the Dutch Government aiming to support Syrian refugees being employed in Turkey.

In 2016, a survey has been carried out amongst Dutch companies in Turkey, as an initiative from the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Trade and Development to employ Syrian refugees at companies in Turkey. In regards to the results of the survey; **United Work** has been founded with the motto "from Refugee to Employee" by the fund granted.

According to the latest data announced by Turkish Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency Office, there are slightly over 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey by February 2017. Figures include ca. 1.1 million work force potential and only a quarter of the stated potential is registered workforce. Hence the 75% of the potential workforce is actively seeking for jobs.

United Work functions as a non-profit organization offering complimentary search and selection services based on job descriptions companies provide, organizing interviews, along with pre-job trainings focusing on enhancing soft skills, on improving cultural learning and on social and work life adaptation.

According to UNHCR data published on November 2016, there are over 400 Educational centers providing Social Adaptation, Turkish Language, and Vocational Training within Turkey targeting the refugees. Along with that, there are over 60 community centers providing refugees with social assistance. However, **United Work** is the one and only organization that is offering job seeking, placement and training as a package under one roof.





Since its foundation on January 2017, **United Work's** field efforts for contacting companies for their vacancies revealed that the Textile, Production, Call Centers, Tourism, Service Industry, Metal Industry, Retail, Healthcare, and Catering Industries are highly responsive being part of the programme and to employing refugee. Intercalarily, now by the first 6 months of field efforts, **United Work** figures are as below:

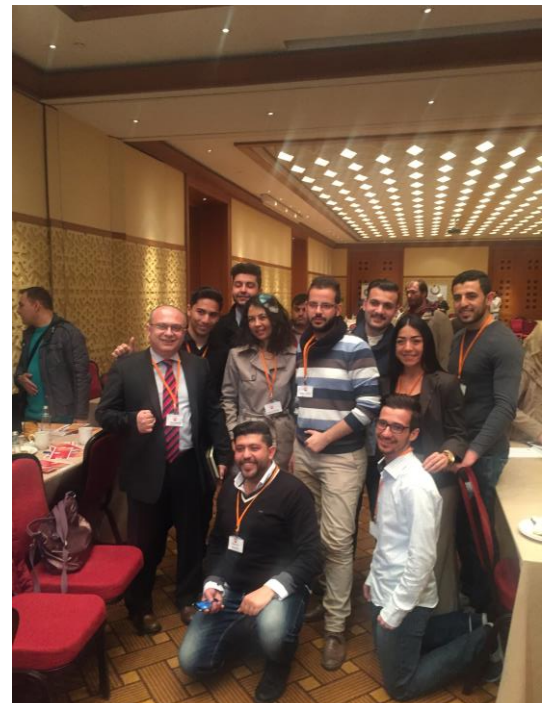
Supported 114 refugees to find a job,
We have more than 354 positions,
We share 562 candidates with companies,
There are more than 600 CV's in our database,
We trained 141 Refugees,
72 White Collar and 69 Blue Collar.

Through these services, companies may disburden their HR Team, increase diversity in the workplace and be part of a social responsibility project complimentary creating a financial impact on the market both materially and spiritually.

United Work would like to meet you in person in order to explain more about the **"From Refugee to Employee"** project and further inform you of this social responsibility project along the complimentary services. Please kindly contact Mr. Enis Kösem for a meeting.

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Exchange of fintech know-how planned with China

Swiss banking representatives joined Finance Minister Ueli Maurer in a tour across Asia this past week, which included visits to ministries and authorities, state institutions as well as financial players.

Maurer's talks in China notably centred on the best frameworks and conditions to support innovation in the financial sector for bilateral investments as well as financial services.

In an interview with the China Global Television Network (CGTN), Maurer said that Switzerland aims to strengthen financial links with China by expanding financial markets and the exchange of fintech (financial technology) expertise.

"Over the past three years, we have had a regular financial dialogue with China and we will continue this exchange with concrete projects related to financing and investment, such as One Belt One Road. We are interested in cooperation with China in the areas of fintech and banking supervision," said Maurer.

According to the Chinese paper Global Times, which is under the auspices of the People's Daily Newspaper, Switzerland and China agreed to promote entry into each other's financial markets. However, Swiss finance officials expressed hope that China's financial sector will open up to a greater degree.

"Switzerland is willing to take part in pilot programmes in China's opening up process, as the country has a good reputation in the financial sector and sound risk management measures," said Maurer.

Full article: http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/finance-minister-tours-asia_exchange-of-fintech-know-how-planned-with-china/43117650

POWDAIR – Startup Airline to Swiss Ski Resorts

A new start-up airline called Powdair plans to connect Bristol, Edinburgh, Luton, Manchester, Southampton and Southend with the small airport of Sion in south-west Switzerland. Sion is capital of the canton of Valais, and is also convenient for the ski resorts of Verbier and Nendaz.

Powdair is based in Dublin, set up by "a group of successful businessmen and savvy investors, who also happen to love skiing".

The type of plane has not yet been finalised, with Powdair saying: "We are using either the Embraer 170, a 76 seat regional jet or Embraer 190 seating 106 passengers depending on demand."

Powdair addresses concerns that prospective travellers may have about the viability of the start-up, conceding "The world is littered with failed travel companies and airlines". It says ticket funds are retained by a payment merchant, adding: "In the event of a cessation of flights, your money will be refunded back to you."

Full article: <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/powdair-airline-skiing-season-passes-flights-switzerland-ski-resorts-luton-valis-manchester-sion-a7790146.html>

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Sunparadise is part of the WinGroup. In 2007, the Sunparadise group merged with the Scandinavian Windoor group under the new roof of Wingroup AG in Switzerland. The company now occurring as a unit complement each other well, both in terms of their products as well as to the regional expansion. Thus arose from the merger a strong European supplier of high-quality glass in residential and balcony area. The WinGroup today has 300 employees and a turnover of over 60 million CHF.

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Tetra Pak is one of three companies in the Tetra Laval Group – a private group that started in Sweden. Tetra Laval is headquartered in Switzerland.

Tetra Pak is the world's leading food processing and packaging solutions company. Since the start in 1951, we are working closely with our customers and suppliers to provide safe, innovative and environmentally sound products that each day meet the needs of hundreds of millions of people in more than 170 countries. With more than 24,000 employees around the world, we believe in responsible industry leadership and a sustainable approach to business. Our motto, "PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD™," reflects our vision to make food safe and available, everywhere.