



The speaker  
CH-3003 Bern

**Swiss National Day Celebration,**

Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine,  
Kyiv, 07.07.2025

*Check against delivery*

Honorable Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,  
dear Ruslan,  
Mr Ambassador,  
Excellencies,  
Dear Guests,

At the World Economic Forum in Davos this January, I had the opportunity to visit the Ukraine House. There, I met Ukrainian medical officers who had just returned from the battlefield. They spoke of the wounded, of the bravery of their fellow soldiers — but also of pain, of loss, and of the constant threat that shadows every moment.

On that occasion, Christina, a paramedic, gave me a bracelet, made by her brother, who is also serving on the frontline. I am wearing it today.

These encounters moved me deeply. Their determination, their humanity in the face of the sad reality of war — I will never forget it.



Half a year later, I stand here in Kyiv, in the beautiful garden of Saint Sophia's Cathedral — a place that radiates history, dignity and hope. I am deeply impressed. By the city. By the people. And by the almost surreal coexistence of beauty and destruction, of everyday life and emergency.

Mr Ambassador, I must be honest with you: I asked myself whether it is appropriate to commemorate a national day in a country at war. Can one do so while drones attack civil buildings on a nearly everyday basis? While families are torn apart? When lives are in danger every single day?

Well, being here now, I agree with you: Yes, we can. And indeed, we must.

Our National Day, which we celebrate in Switzerland on the first of August, reminds us of what we stand for — in Switzerland, and as a part of Europe: for freedom, for self-determination, for (direct) democracy, and for the rule of law. These are the founding values of the pact between the original Swiss cantons, which joined forces more than seven centuries. These values cannot be taken for granted. In Ukraine, they are defended every single day.



This, I believe, is the meaning of this evening – tonight we pay tribute to our shared values and the friendship between our nations in these difficult times.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Switzerland stands with Ukraine — for almost thirty years we have been supporting Ukraine in a spirit of partnership, in many different fields. Just a few examples:

- We have been supporting the decentralization reform from the very beginning. This contributed to the resilience of the country at the start of the full-scale military aggression.
- We have contributed to the development of the e-government “**Diia**” **app** – a real Ukrainian success story.
- Swiss Trams run in Vinnytsia and Lviv, contributing to efficient and inclusive public transport.

Amid the devastation of war, we have renewed and multiplied our efforts: we provide emergency relief to the most vulnerable communities close to the frontline. We provide humanitarian demining machines. We have approved important budgets for the reconstruction effort.



And, beyond our concrete action in the country, we remain ready to contribute to the efforts for a just and lasting peace for Ukraine, as we did last year by organizing the Peace Summit on Bürgenstock.

Switzerland's engagement is the expression of a clear conviction: that Ukraine cannot be left alone to face Russia's aggression. That Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty must be respected. That international law applies to all.

Dear Ruslan, I clearly remember our conversation last summer in Bern. You told me: "You must come to Kyiv." – Well, here I am. And it is an honour.

An honour and a responsibility. I firmly believe that a neutral country like Switzerland has a special role and responsibility in the face of what is happening. Neutrality does not mean indifference. It must go together with engagement — for dialogue, for justice, and for peace. That is also why I am here today.

Dear Ukrainian friends,



Today, we are not only marking Switzerland's National Day — we are sharing this moment with you, the people shaping Ukraine's future. You live here. You work, raise families, support neighbours, and carry on — despite the hardship. This resilience is what makes your country carry on.

And dear fellow Swiss citizens, also dear staff of the Embassy, dear Mr Ambassador,

I also want to pay tribute to your perseverance. My presence here today is also a gesture of solidarity — with you, the Swiss community in Ukraine: our companies, our official representatives, and all those Swiss who contribute every day to our bilateral relations and to Ukraine's recovery.

Today, I have had the honour to meet with you, Mr Chairman, with other representatives of the Verkhovna Rada and with President Zelenskyi. Over the coming days, I will travel to eastern and central Ukraine to visit humanitarian and cooperation projects supported by Switzerland — to witness, listen, and learn from those who work on the field. I am sure that these first-hand accounts will be very valuable in view of the debates in our Parliament over Switzerland's engagement for and in Ukraine.



And then I will return home. But I will not return unchanged.

Perhaps I will carry back other bracelets or mementos. For sure, I will carry back with me your strength, your humanity, and your unwavering belief in a better future.

And I hope that my brief visit here will leave behind the conviction that Switzerland listens, and stands by your side — not only in words, but through action and long-term, reliable commitment.

To conclude, dear Ruslan, dear guests, let me share a hope close to my heart:

It is my wish that I may return to Ukraine one day, to visit you and your country again — when peace has returned, and when your homeland has been rebuilt and is flourishing once more.

This is my heartfelt wish for all of you, for your children, for Ukraine, and for Europe.

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