

Bundesversammlung

Assemblée fédérale

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Swiss Delegation to the OSCE PA  
The President

### **Third International Parliamentary Conference of the OSCE PA Silk Road Support Group (SRG)**

#### **“THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) AS A DRIVER FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)”**

*Welcome Speech of National Councillor Margareta Kiener Nellen,*

*Head of Delegation of the Swiss Federal Assembly with the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE*

*Andermatt, 5 September 2019 – 17:00*

Dear Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

Mr. President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr. President of the Silk Road Support Group

Dear Colleagues, members of parliament

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It's a great honour for me to welcome you to the Third International Parliamentary Conference of the OSCE PA Silk Road Support Group.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the high-level participants who have come here to exchange experiences and work together on the theme of “The Belt and Road Initiative as a driver for the sustainable developments goals”.

I also welcome all Swiss business representatives gathered here for the “Andermatt Dialogue”. Thank you for sharing this great evening with our distinguished guests!

We have the privilege of holding our conference in this fascinating place of Andermatt, located in the heart of the Alps and at the crossroads of ancient transit routes. Given its mountainous topography, Switzerland has always been obliged to be innovative in order to find adequate sustainable solutions. Right now, we are directly above the world's longest railway tunnel – the 57-kilometre-long Gotthard Base Tunnel inaugurated in 2016. This huge infrastructure project was built on the strongest democratic principles. The Swiss people approved it and it was carried out under strict parliamentary oversight.

Our aim, over the next few days, is to follow the principles that underlined the construction of the Gotthard Base Tunnel: democracy, transparency, good governance and sustainability. Organised under the auspices of the Swiss Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, we will also place particular emphasis on the commitments of the OSCE, which include human rights as a basic commitment for all OSCE participating States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While some build walls and raise customs duties, we are meeting here in an atmosphere of friendship and constructive dialogue on issues related to the Belt and Road Initiative. This Initiative has the potential to bring Europe, China and the countries along the routes closer together. It can also expand the flow of goods and ideas, and multiply peaceful people-to-people relations. The Belt and Road Initiative is a visionary and courageous “open economic platform” that provides a framework for greater international cooperation.

To ensure the success of this initiative, also from a development perspective, it is essential that it benefits everyone. That is why the goals, as defined by the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, should serve as a reference for the projects led under the Initiative. As you know, the 2030 Agenda was adopted by all UN-members. It is also in total accordance with OSCE commitments. The 2030 Agenda represents an unprecedented consensus to transform the world towards a more social, ecologically sound and prosperous future for all.

The Andermatt Conference aims to provide participants with a platform to discuss all the main challenges, exchange best practices and enable a sustainable approach to the Belt and Road initiative.

We will work in a *results-oriented manner*, so that we come out on Saturday with a strong “Andermatt Declaration”, which will highlight the importance of strong parliamentary oversight to ensure sustainable, inclusive and effective infrastructures.

Before concluding, let me express our thanks to our institutional partners and co-sponsors: on the public side, the Swiss Parliament and our OSCE-PA delegation, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Canton of Uri, and the Commune of Andermatt. I would also like to thank our private co-sponsors UBS, Fidinam and Andermatt Swiss Alps – and: to be transparent: they all support the concept and themes of the Andermatt Conference!

Our special thanks go to the World Economic Forum for its programme support, and to the Alpine Arena for Friendship for the local organisation work here in Andermatt.

Mr. Moderator, caro Filippo – the floor is yours.