



SWISS TRACES IN BUDAPEST

DISCOVERING SWISS FOOTPRINTS IN THE HUNGARIAN CAPITAL

The Embassy of Switzerland in Budapest, in cooperation with the Budapest City Administration, Swisscham Hungary, Budapest Global Association and other partners, has launched the "Switzerland in Budapest 2025" program. This project aims to highlight the deep historical, cultural, and economic ties between Switzerland and Hungary by showcasing the many Swiss traces that can be discovered in Budapest. The latest in the series of programs that include various cultural events was the opening of the poster exhibition 'Swiss Traces in Budapest' by the Swiss Ambassador to Hungary, Jean-François Paroz and Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony in the park in front of the City Hall this May.

» In his speech, Ambassador Paroz thanked the municipality "for the valuable cooperation without which this exhibition would not have been possible. A special word of thanks also goes to the Swisscham for incorporating this event in the 'Swiss Footsteps in Budapest' series of events and to Vincent Baumgartner for taking these fantastic photographs that document the historic, cultural, and economic traces of Switzerland in Budapest." He highlighted that the materials on display show just how closely intertwined Switzerland and Budapest

have been for centuries. "Already in the 19th century, Swiss citizens such as Emile Gerbeaud, Abraham Ganz, Henrik Haggenmacher and Roger Ray came to Hungary in search of a better future and new opportunities. Many of them made a lasting impact on local communities and the economy." He also noted that "later, especially during the horrors of the Second World War, the direction of movement reversed: many Hungarians fled or tried to flee to Switzerland in search of refuge. In 1956, following the brutal suppression of the revolution against Soviet rule, Switzerland welcomed over 12,000

Hungarian refugees. The exhibition also commemorates Jean-Pierre Pedrazzini, the Swiss journalist who died from injuries sustained during the uprising."

A laboratory of pluralistic democracy

Speaking of the present, he stated that "we appreciate Budapest as a laboratory of pluralistic democracy. Here, in the City Council, debates are lively, and decision-making is often complex - clear signs of democratic engagement. Budapest exemplifies a modern, diverse, and welcoming society. If you open our interactive map of Swiss traces in Budapest, you'll learn more about companies such as Arioso, Alpiq Csepel, Stadler and Ungaro Swiss, which have their headquarters or shops in this city." The Ambassador quoted the President of Swisscham, István Béres who once pointed out the following scenario that

illustrates Switzerland's presence in Budapest quite nicely: "On a typical working day, Hungarians commuting to work in Budapest might be travelling on a Stadler Rail, sipping a Nespresso coffee and reading Blikk, a newspaper published by the Swiss media company Ringier. They might pass through Kálvin Square or drive along Carl Lutz Quay in Pest or along Friedrich Born Quay in Buda, both named in honor of Swiss citizens recognized by Yad Vashem as 'Righteous Among the Nations'. After work, they might buy flowers from the Swiss florist Arioso, pick up a pastry from the Swiss-founded Café Gerbeaud, or chocolate from a Lindt shop to take home as a token of appreciation for their loved ones. When they feel unwell, they might take one of the latest medications from the Swiss pharmaceutical companies Roche, Novartis, or Sandoz in order to recover quickly. On their

Sunday stroll, Budapesters might enjoy crossing the famous Chain Bridge, an icon of Budapest's architecture which was built using steel produced by Abraham Ganz, a Swiss-born iron manufacturer and industrialist."

Many layers of history

In his address the public that gathered for the opening of the poster exhibition Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony pointed out that "we are honored to have been the partners who could make this exhibition happen." He also spoke highly of the past and present relations between the Hungarian capital and Switzerland. He shared some thoughts with Diplomacy&Trade as well about the event. He stated that "Budapest owes a lot to the cooperation between Switzerland and Hungary. The capital's most beautiful historical periods are marked by people who came from Switzerland, be it the Café Gerbeaud, the Ganz factory or the Swiss diplomats who rescued Hungarian citizens during the Holocaust. Economic relations are still very active today, because very important Swiss companies contribute to the economic performance of Budapest and Hungary. I think it's surprising to everyone how many traces there are in the city that are worth looking at and exploring, and realizing how many layers of history there are here with us in Budapest today." **D&T**

