

F

**VERSION DÉFINITIVE
Réd. CHE**

Check against delivery

**Thanks to you, Switzerland is an
infinitely large country.**

Video message from

Mr Guy Parmelin

President of the Swiss Confederation

Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research (EAER)

to mark

Swiss National Day for the Swiss Abroad

To be recorded on 16 June 2021

Dear Swiss Abroad,
Dear fellow citizens,

I am addressing this message to you from Bern. It is a bit like a postcard. They too sometimes travel long distances to bring news from family and friends.

Switzerland is thinking of you, my dear fellow citizens, and it is natural that we should want to renew our special bond with you on this our national day. A celebration of unity, sharing and close affinity.

The Swiss Abroad almost constitute a mini Switzerland in their own right. What this does not reveal is that most of the

Swiss citizens living abroad are in fact women.

Demographically, if all the Swiss Abroad were to gather in one place, it would be the fourth most populous canton after Zurich, Bern and Vaud. In other words, your presence counts, even if you are spread over five continents, far – in many cases – very far from Switzerland's idyllic scenery.

On behalf of the Federal Council, it is very important for me to tell you how much we care about the Swiss community abroad and how important it is for us to be in contact with you.

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad is dedicated to that task. Our diplomatic and consular network also has the task of maintaining ties with our fellow citizens. That link is all the more valuable at present in view of the coronavirus pandemic. As education minister, I am also aware of the role played by the eighteen Swiss schools recognised and supported by the Confederation.

I mentioned the pandemic. Given that no country has escaped the consequences of this, I know that you too, wherever you may be, have experienced moments of uncertainty, worry, and maybe even suffering. So my message is also one of support on the part of Switzerland.

For a Swiss citizen, whether they live just across the border or twelve time zones away from the banks of the Aare, their Alpine homeland is often an image, an impression, or a sentiment rather than anything tangible. Generally speaking, it does not take much to feel a sense of patriotism: the Swiss flag, a photo of the Matterhorn, a fondue – and we are already on board. But you have the opportunity to be more than just a citizen who carries a picture with them. Above all, you also have the opportunity to express your political will with the help of the political rights that you are also entitled to exercise abroad. Your democratic life as a Swiss citizen does not end at customs. It knows no borders.

That is why, thanks to you, small Switzerland is, if you will, an infinitely large country.

In these uncertain times, which continue to be difficult here and elsewhere, I would like to encourage you to remain strong. But above all, I would like to thank you for proudly embodying the Switzerland we love around the world. I am grateful for the role you play, and so on behalf of our country, I extend to you our warmest greetings.