

## Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.

### India-Switzerland Bilateral Relation

#### A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Profile Report depicting the Embassy of Switzerland.
2. India and Switzerland have had cordial and friendly relations since India's Independence, based on shared values of democracy and rule of law. India's policy of non-alignment and Switzerland's traditional policy of neutrality led to a close understanding between the two countries. The year 2023 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the India-Switzerland Friendship Treaty.
3. The two countries execute their bilateral relations through Foreign office consultations, Joint Economic Commission, Joint Commissions on S&T and Consular Dialogue. The latest[6<sup>th</sup>] round of the India-Switzerland Consular Dialogue was held on February 24, 2023.

#### B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

4. Commercial contacts between India and Switzerland date back to the early 19th century when in 1851 the Volkart Trading Co. established its offices in Basel and Mumbai. Trade between the two nations has since evolved over time. The major items of Indian exports to Switzerland are organic chemicals, pearls, precious stones & jewellery, textiles and garments, electrical machinery and parts there of, etc. Some of the major import items from Switzerland are gold (including gold plated with platinum), silver (including silver plated with gold or platinum), wrist watches, uncoated paper and paper board etc.
5. India has emerged as one of Switzerland's prime trading partner country in Asia. The bilateral trade volume between two nations as per latest compiled and available statistics with DGCI&S, India's exports to Switzerland during 2023-24 have been recorded at 1.53 billion US Dollar and India's imports from Switzerland during the same reference period stands at 21.25 billion US Dollar with a resultant trade balance deficit of 19.72 billion US Dollar.

**The export-import statistics for the last seven years as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank are as follows :**

**The Export-Import statistics from 2019-2020 to 2023-24.**

(US Dollar Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	18099.97	16899.89	1200.08
2020-21	19492.76	18230.95	1261.81
2021-22	24741.60	23392.32	1349.28
2022-23	17141.95	15793.95	1348.00
2023-24	22774.97	21248.02	1526.95

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

6. Foreign Direct Investments from Switzerland to India for the duration from April 2000-March 2023 was USD 9.77 billion. Overseas Direct Investment from India to Switzerland for the duration for April 2020 –November 2022 was USD 7.2 billion.

7. Major Indian IT companies including TCS, Infosys, HCL, Tech Mahindra, etc. have their offices in Switzerland and regularly provide services to major Swiss pharma companies, banking institutions, etc.

8. The Swiss SMEs are well integrated in the European Assembly Line and makes up around 99% of the Swiss companies. Therefore, in order to introduce Swiss SMEs to explore, enter, and expand in the Indian market, the Embassy of India, Berne, launched the 'Momentum in India: Swiss SMEs Programme' (MISSP). As of date, the MISSP programme has on boarded 151 nos. of Swiss companies which represent various sectors i.e. Defence, Pharma, Food & beverages, Machine Tools, Railways, Chemicals, AI, Space Tech and others.

### **C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :**

- Several Agreements/ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been signed between India and Switzerland for cooperation in the fields of defence, economic and commercial links, technical cooperation and culture.
- To oversee and coordinate S&T Cooperation a Joint Committee on Science and Technology has been set up between the two nations coupled with India-Switzerland Science & Innovation Alliance.
- India and Switzerland have joint working groups on technical cooperation in rail sector and there also exists an Air Services Agreement last amended in March, 2020.
- India and Switzerland have MOUs on technical cooperation in the field of climate change & Environment and bilateral Health cooperation and social initiations have also been taken by both the Governments in recent times in these fields.
- During the last few years, Indian Mission has taken measures to promote various cultural activities including Yoga, Ayurveda, Spiritualism, Indian Classical Dance & Music, Indian Festivals & Cuisine, Bollywood Films, Indian Literature and Indian Paintings etc. in Switzerland.
- Switzerland is an important cultural destination for projection of our soft power. During the last few years, Mission has accelerated its cultural outreach to promote various cultural activities including Yoga, Ayurveda, Spiritualism, Indian Classical Dance and Music, Indian Festivals and Cuisine, Bollywood Films, Indian Literature and Indian Paintings etc.
- 'India in the Alps' - an Indian cultural festival showcasing music, dance, exhibition, cuisine, crafts, Bollywood & yoga in Switzerland was organized in 2022 at Berne, Zurich & Geneva as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. The events were well received by diaspora as well as Swiss populace..
- Indian films are regularly shot in Switzerland. The first Indian film to be shot in Switzerland, Sangam was shot in 1964 in the famous alpine region of Grindelwald-Jungfrau. Since then many Indian movies, including Bollywood blockbuster movies have been shot in the Swiss Alps.
- To celebrate 75 years of India's independence and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India- Switzerland diplomatic relations, photo exhibitions of great Indian personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel & Swami Vivekananda were organized in various cantons across Switzerland during 2022- 2023.

- Yoga is very popular in Switzerland. Many private yoga studios/resorts/retreats offer yoga classes/ sessions in almost all cantons of the country. About a quarter of a million residents are yoga practitioners and women make up the bulk of the yoga-practicing population.
  
- In its efforts to further the reach of Yoga in Switzerland, Embassy of India, Berne organizes Yoga sessions at various cities in Switzerland throughout the year. The main event of 9th International Day celebrations was held on 21 June 2023 at the iconic Bundesplatz in front of the Swiss Parliament.
  
- The Indian Diaspora in Switzerland comprises approximately 27,300 Indians including over 8,750 persons of Indian origin. Most of them are professionals in Engineering, IT, pharmaceuticals and paramedical fields. Few are deployed in the International Organizations like UN, UPU and other prestigious Swiss institutes like Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich and EPFL, Lausanne.
  
- The Diaspora also includes Member of Federal Parliament, a member of Cantonal Parliament, Mayor, CEOs and senior executives of several companies, senior Government officials, professors, doctors, engineers and students.
  
- The Indian community is concentrated in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Baden, Berne and Lausanne. About 750 Indian students are studying in Switzerland. Diaspora in Switzerland is now nurturing the second and third generations. A number of Indian associations actively organize cultural activities and celebrate Indian Festivals and national days.

**Source:** [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)