

State Secretary Yves Rossier
Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs
EDA –STS/EDA
Bundeshaus West, Raum 158
3003 Bern
Switzerland

Dear Mr. State Secretary,

Chicago, June 10th, 2012

On behalf of the members of the Swiss-American Business Council (SABC), the leading non-profit business association for the Swiss-American business community that represents tens of thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars in investment, and significant business ties in the U.S. Midwest and Switzerland centered in Chicago, **we strongly urge you not to close the Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago that provides official representation of Switzerland in this economic center. For economic efforts, the Consul General and his office is our strongest partner here in Chicago.**

The Swiss-American relationship in the Midwest is of strategic importance both in terms of business and cultural ties, and the Consulate General of Switzerland provides crucial support to this vibrant community to maintain a strategically vital footprint in the region for the following reasons:

A Strong Swiss-Chicago Business Relationship is key to the Strategic Partnership

- Over 100 Swiss companies have more than 450 locations in the Chicago area;
- Chicago is currently the Midwest corporate headquarters for 17 of the Top 45 Largest Swiss companies in the world as well as numerous small and medium sized companies. Some of these companies with the largest presence in the Chicago area include: Zurich Financial, Novartis, Nestlé, Geberit, Schmolz & Bickenbach, and Roche Holdings;
- More than 40 Chicago-area Fortune 100 companies have a significant presence in Switzerland, including Kraft, Boeing, McDonald's, Caterpillar, UL International, Motorola, Baxter International, Abbott Laboratories, Wm Wrigley Jr. Co., Sirva, Inc. and Nalco Holding Company;
- Many of these Fortune 100 Chicago area companies have recently re-located their European headquarters to Switzerland, including McDonald's (Geneva), Parker Hannifin (Etoy), Archer Daniel Midlands (Rolle), CF Industries Holdings, Inc. (Zurich), Grant Thornton International (Zurich), Takeda Pharmaceuticals (Lachen), Dover Corporation (Geneva), and Amsted Industries Incorporated (via Polyscience AG in Zug and Polygap in Geneva);
- 2011 total trade between Switzerland and the U.S. Customs District in Chicago amounts to US\$4.22 billion primarily in the manufacturing industries;
- 35,000 Swiss-Americans in Illinois (based on the official 2010 Census);
- The Chicago area includes some of the prominent American universities, such as the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, and top research institutions, such as Argonne National Laboratory and Fermilab, and remains a key destination for the Swiss research community that has built strong partnerships in the Midwest region, all of which provide an important path for maintaining innovation in Swiss industry.
- The Lucerne-Chicago Sister City Partnership, celebrating 14 years, provides a rich and diverse platform for business, cultural institutions, and artists to interact and develop more robust the transatlantic ties with tremendous support from the Consulate General of Switzerland. This relationship will become a main business platform for the City of Chicago under World Chicago

The Strong Swiss-Midwest business relationship

- Switzerland is the second largest investor in the U.S. manufacturing sector, with a large portion within the Swiss Consular district of Chicago, including Illinois, Michigan and Ohio;
- Swiss companies are the fourth largest foreign employer in the Midwest, an important center of manufacturing, assembly and sales/distribution of Swiss companies and their local partners;

By coordinating Swiss community initiatives, by providing a strong platform for exchanges, and by building and maintaining crucial relationships in political, business and cultural circles, the Consul General of Switzerland remains vital to the vibrancy of the 3rd largest city in the US. Chicago is one of the (if not the) major meeting points of Swiss and U.S. manufacturing, the most important element of both economies, and the Consul General has been a central figure in the efforts to "connect the dots" on many levels. The loss of the Consulate General would be detrimental to Switzerland's footprint in the region and weaken the strong, strategic bonds that have been built over decades.

For these reasons, it is our strong opinion that the Consul General of Switzerland in Chicago plays a critical supporting role in officially representing Swiss interests in the Chicago area and throughout the Midwest. The Swiss American Business Council, along with the Consulate General of Switzerland has solely, without support from any other entity, forged numerous economic relationships beneficial to Swiss business interest and the loss of the Consulate General may impair continued Swiss business support from these relationships in the future.

Furthermore, from a political perspective, a closure of the Consulate General would have severe implications. Chicago is home to President Barak Obama, Senator Dick Durbin, Governor Pat Quinn and Mayor Rahm Emanuel, all of whom have been supportive of Swiss causes, and these intangibles are critical to productive relationships from local, regional and transatlantic perspectives.

We urge you to reconsider the decision to close the Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago and find an alternate arrangement that would allow an official representation led by a Consul General to remain in place in order to continue to forge, strengthen, and grow the critical relationships for the Swiss-American partnership for the benefit of Switzerland and the US Midwest.

Sincerely and on behalf of the SABC Board of Directors,



David Kouidri
SABC Executive Director

SABC Board of Directors:

Andre Frieden, Asst. Gen. Counsel, Wolters Kluwer
Philipp Bohren, Partner, Adam Street Partners
Natacha Doyle, Director Bus. Dev., American Express
Andrea Luehmann, President, A. Luehmann Ltd
Angie Kappel, Nat. Acct. Mgr, Cambridge Merchantile

Camille Julmy, Vice Chair US Equities
Thomas Soseman, Soseman Law Firm PC
Paul Karlin, VP, Harris Bank
Albert Lacher, Principal, William Blair
Lisa Foran, Swiss International Airlines

Cc: Ambassador Manuel Sager, Embassy of Switzerland, Washington DC
Minister Martin von Walterskirchen, Director, Swiss Business Hub USA
Consul General Martin Bienz, Consulate General of Switzerland, Chicago



CH-3003 Bern, EDA, ROY

Swiss-American Business Council
Executive Director
Mr. David Koudri
P.O. Box 64975
Chicago, Illinois 60601
USA

Berne, 07.08.2012

Dear Mr. Koudri,

Many thanks for your letter of 10 June 2012. It was with great interest that I took note of your arguments, and I can well understand your concerns. The economic ties between Switzerland and the US Midwest are indeed impressive.

The imminent closing of the Swiss Consulate General in Chicago is a result of the substantial budget cuts imposed by the Swiss Parliament. Within the scope of these requirements, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA was mandated to reduce the budget earmarked for its network of foreign representations by CHF 30 million. Subsequently, our Department worked out a good number of cost-saving measures that took into account a certain geographic repartition, thus obliging us to include our network of representations in North America.

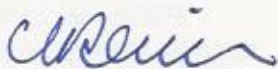
In the USA, these measures concern the Consulate General in Chicago in particular. For one thing, this decision takes into consideration the fact that the Northeastern USA will continue to be well covered with its needs being met by our other representations in Washington and New York, along with the Swiss House for Advanced Research and Education/swissnex office in Boston. Furthermore, it takes into account the comparatively smaller number of registered Swiss living abroad in the area, as well as the equally lower number of consular items of business and visa applications.

The Federal Council approved the series of budget-cut measures formulated by the FDFA at the end of April 2012 and disposes of no leeway to come back on this decision. The FDFA is naturally making every effort to design the implementation of this decision in such a way as to reduce to the degree possible the consequential impact it will have locally. Hence, in the future, our representations in Washington and New York will be making every endeavor to ensure an adequate official representation of Swiss interests and the maintenance of contact with economic actors from the Midwest. In addition, the FDFA is seeking a solution to the problem of issuing Schengen visas in the

region through the offices of a third-party State. Here too, in the future a Swiss Honorary Consul should be able to provide local support.

Austerity measures always represent a decision that involves weighing pros and cons, making trade-offs in order to make the best possible use of limited resources. I am well aware of the fact that closing a representation is a radical step, replete with consequences for all involved; however, I do hope that this decision will be easier for you to understand on the basis of these explanations.

Sincerely yours,



Yves Rossier

Cc: Ambassador Manuel Sager, Embassy Washington
Ambassador Philippe Guex, Americas Division
Minister Martin von Walterskirchen, Swiss Business Hub Chicago
Consul General Martin Bienz, Consulate General Chicago
Mr. Félix Baumann, Directorate of Corporate Resources DCR

Sent by:
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Executive Director
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Mr. Hannes Germann
President aus dem Staenderat
Aussenpolitische Kommission (APK)
Parlamentsdienste
Sekretariat APK
3003 Bern
Switzerland

Dear Mr. President,

Chicago, Oct. 30th, 2012

On behalf of the members of the Swiss-American Business Council (SABC), the leading non-profit business association for the Swiss-American business community in the US Midwest, **we strongly urge you not to close the Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago that provides official representation of Switzerland in this global economic center. For economic relations efforts, the Consul General and his office are our strongest partner in Chicago.**

The SABC, through its membership, represents tens of thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions of Swiss Francs in investment, and significant business ties in the U.S. Midwest and Switzerland centered in Chicago. We have sent a letter opposing the closure to the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2012, which is attached, and have received a reply stating that the decision to close the Consulate General still stands.

Despite the unfavorable reply, we feel very strongly that this decision has not been thoroughly considered and will likely cause irreparable harm to our business community and could substantially impair future growth of Swiss-American business ties both in Switzerland and in this important region. As stated in the Swiss Foreign Policy statement and of the Swiss Constitution, the promotion and safeguarding the interests of the Swiss economic interest abroad is a major mission of Swiss Embassies and Swiss Consulates General abroad. Closing the Swiss Consulate in Chicago, the 3rd largest city in the United States, is a detriment to Switzerland's strategic interests.

U.S. manufacturing is experiencing a renaissance and competes with China for the position of largest manufacturer in the world (Japan is a very distant third). Chicago and the surrounding US Midwest states served by the Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago (total of 14 including Illinois, Ohio and Michigan) remain the hub of U.S. manufacturing, and one of the three largest manufacturing regions in the world. The U.S. Midwest accounts for 16% of total US manufacturing (followed by the West with 12%). The combined GDP of the states in the Great Lakes region (including Ontario, Canada) is the 5th largest economy globally, with a focus on higher value added products.

Most importantly, our region is a critical meeting point for Swiss suppliers to this global center of economic activity. There is no other region in the United States that carries more importance for Swiss manufacturers. The U.S. Midwest is home to numerous U.S. headquarters of Swiss companies who have a vested interest in this important region. Examples include, among others, Feintool, Metler Toledo, Geberit, Wandfluh, Buehler, Roche, Rieter Automotive, Reishauer, Weidmann Plastics and many more (you will find a more complete list in our enclosed directory). We are convinced that if Swiss industry, including our membership, had been

consulted about the possibility of the Consulate's closure, they would have overwhelmingly opposed such a decision and reaffirmed the importance of an official representation in this region to assist Swiss business. We urge a thorough deliberation on this issue, as the consequences to Swiss business interests are serious and long-term.

For these reasons, we are strongly against the closure of the Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago and fear the consequences of this decision on the important Swiss business community in this region. While we understand the cost-cutting pressures that have contributed to the closure decision, we believe there are alternatives to a full closure of the Consulate General, and these alternatives have not been thoroughly examined. We believe the Consulate General would be able to provide the crucial function with a smaller staff and still have the ability to provide a meaningful Swiss presence in this important region of the United States. We would be happy to assist the Swiss Government in finding a solution that adequately satisfies all our respective needs.

I thank you for your consideration,

On Behalf of the SABC Board of Directors



David Kouidri
Executive Director

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Enclosure with hard copy: 2012 – 2013 Swiss – American Business Directory of the US Midwest

Cc By E-mail and without enclosure:

State Secretary Yves Rossier, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Confederation of Switzerland
Ambassador Manuel Sager, Embassy of Switzerland, Washington DC
Consul General Martin Bienz, Consulate General of Switzerland Chicago

Ständerat

Conseil des Etats

Consiglio degli Stati

Council of States



Foreign Affairs Committee
CH-3003 Bern

The President

Mr David Kouidri
Swiss-American Business Council
P.O. Box 64975
Chicago, IL 60601
USA

21 December 2012

Closure of Consulate General in Chicago / your letter of 30 October 2012

Dear Mr Kouidri,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October 2012; your views regarding the closure of the Consulate General in Chicago captured my full attention.

The Council of States Foreign Affairs Committee closely monitors developments in Switzerland's network of representations abroad; it is regularly updated on the opening and closure of Swiss embassies and consulates, as well as on the strategy applied in that area by the Federal Council.

The decision to close the Consulate General in Chicago gave rise to a number of reactions among the Swiss community of Illinois. I would therefore like to inform you that the Council of States Foreign Affairs Committee will, in the next few weeks, study a petition submitted by the Swiss Club of Chicago asking the Federal Council to reconsider its decision to close the Consulate General in Chicago.

The Swiss Club of Chicago is extremely concerned by the Federal Council's decision, and the Committee will study the petition with the attention and care that it deserves. The decision of the Committee will be published on the Parliament website (www.parlement.ch) in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Hannes Germann

President
Council of States Foreign Affairs
Committee

Sent by:
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Mr. Andreas Aebi
President aus dem Nationalrat
Aussenpolitische Kommission (APK)
Parlamentsdienste
Sekretariat APK
3003 Bern
Switzerland

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On Behalf of the SABC Board of Directors



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Executive Director

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State Secretary Yves Rossier, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Confederation of Switzerland
Ambassador Manuel Sager, Embassy of Switzerland, Washington DC
Consul General Martin Bienz, Consulate General of Switzerland Chicago

Sent by:
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Mr. Andreas Aebi
Praesident, Aussenpolitische Kommission (APK) des Nationalrats
Parlamentsdienste, Sekretariat APK
3003 Bern
Switzerland

Dear Mr. President,

Chicago, Feb. 13th, 2013

On behalf of the members of the Swiss-American Business Council (SABC), I thank you and your committee for the diligent consideration of the petitions and for voting on Jan 15, 2013 to reverse the closure order of the Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago. We believe this was a wise decision that will protect Switzerland's important commercial, cultural and consular interests in this key region of the United States.

We understand that there are several more steps ahead in the process to keep the Consulate General open here in Chicago, and we offer our full support to making this happen.

As we have previously stated, the US Midwest is an important economic engine and is the largest manufacturing region in the U.S. (and one of the top regions globally). Many Swiss companies have recognized these facts and have positioned themselves here to benefit from this region. As President Obama stated in the State of the Union address last night, the re-emerging U.S. manufacturer sector is a top priority of his administration's second term, and this is expected to directly benefit Swiss companies positioned in this region and who are themselves experts in manufacturing. As a side note, our organization has been proud to promote the Swiss apprenticeship program as a successful model for manufacturers in the Midwest, and this model forms a key piece of President Obama's initiative to educate students for manufacturing jobs.

With the strong presence that the Consulate General of Switzerland provides in the Midwest, Swiss business will be able to benefit from the new manufacturing efforts and initiatives. It would be a serious mistake for the Government of Switzerland to abandon this region at a time when a major revival of manufacturing is under way, with clear benefits for Swiss business.

We will inform our constituents, including Swiss companies in the Midwest and in Switzerland, about the positive step taken by your committee and await the further outcome of the discussions in the Staenderat later this month.

In the meantime, please accept our deepest appreciation for recognizing the importance of the U.S. Midwest region to Swiss interests.

On Behalf of the SABC Board of Directors, I thank you for your consideration,



David Kouidri, Executive Director

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Cc:

Mr. Hannes Germann, Praesident, Aussenpolitische Kommission des Staenderats, Swiss Parliament
State Secretary Yves Rossier, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Confederation of Switzerland
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Consul General Martin Bienz, Consulate General of Switzerland Chicago