

Beat: Business

## **SWISS CONSULATE GENERAL LOS ANGELES CLOSING THE DOORS AT THE END OF 2018**

**DEPARTURE WILL LEAVE AN EMPTY SPACE**

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**USPA NEWS -**

Well liked and much appreciated Swiss Consulate General Los Angeles is leaving its Southern California home for good. As part of the structural reforms agreed by the con 8 November 2017, the FDFA announced that the closure will take place by 31 December 2018.

Unlike the Swiss Consulate General in San Francisco, the Swiss consulates general in Los Angeles no longer provide consular services, instead focus on promoting Swiss business, trade and tourism. Under Federal Council instructions, the FDFA consulted the Foreign Affairs Committees (FACs) at their respective meetings on 29 January and 12 February 2018, which acknowledged the closures to take place by 31 December 2018.

The Consulate General in San Francisco and the various actors (Swiss Business Hub and Switzerland Tourism) which share its premises at Pier 17 constitute an important hub of Swiss expertise for the entire West Coast, particularly in the areas of science, innovation, business promotion and international communication. The FDFA had taken due note of the request of the Foreign Affairs Committees to consider reopening the consulate general in Chicago, as it would help to further Switzerland's economic interests in the Midwest. The request is currently being considered.

Switzerland's network abroad currently comprises some 170 representations. It is regularly adapted, based on Switzerland's interests, developments in political and economic centers of gravity and the available financial resources. Since 1990, the network has been expanded with the opening of 24 embassies, 12 consulates general have been opened, in particular in major cities in developing countries, and 34 consulates general have been closed, mainly in the United States and Western Europe. These closures are a consequence of easier travel and technical and technological progress in the provision of consular services.

The Swiss Consul General, Mr. Thomas Schneider and his assistant Ms. Susanne Wildhaber, have been tireless promoters of Swiss interests, businesses, technology, cleantech and biopharma in the US. In addition to forming long lasting economic partnerships and representing the Swiss culture, they integrated into the Southern California landscape actively engaging far beyond LA County borders. The Swiss, presence, one of the most active consular representations in Southern California will be thoroughly missed. We hope that you will consider returning at some point in time, therefore I will not say "Good-Bye" but "Auf Wieder Lurja"!

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