

ON A DELICATE MISSION

Tales of Swiss Diplomacy

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GLOSSARY

Diplomat

An official who represents the political, economic, cultural and military interests of the sending state in the host country, or who represents the interests of the native country towards and within international organisations.

Diplomatic corps (DC)

1. The body of officials accredited to a particular state who enjoy diplomatic status there
2. The body of officials of a foreign ministry who have passed the appropriate qualifying examination and can be dispatched.

Embassy

Permanent diplomatic representation of a sending state in the receiving state that maintains official contact with the government of the receiving state.

General consulate / consulate

Official premises of a sending state in the receiving state without diplomatic functions. Its main task consists of aiding its own citizens and issuing visas.

Honorary consul

A citizen of the host country who is familiar with a particular state and who acts as a consul or general consul for this state on a contractual basis and usually without remuneration.

Accreditation

Process in which, before an ambassador is dispatched, a state asks the future receiving state if it agrees with the appointment of the person in question.

Letter of credence

Letter from the head of the sending state to the head of the receiving state formally authorising the activity of a head of mission.

Protocol

1. (Ceremonial) rules and conventions observed by states in their mutual relations.
2. Department in the respective foreign ministry that deals with the above task and provides support for accredited diplomats (including family members).

Nunciature

Representation of the Holy See in a country.

Good Offices

Endeavours by a state to resolve peacefully a conflict between two or more other states.

Swiss Diplomatic Documents (SDD)

Publication of key documents from official sources on Swiss foreign policy. Volumes 1-20 (1848-1958) have been published. Volume 21 is in preparation. An internet database (DoDis) allows virtual access to the documents.