



# Switzerland



## Country Overview:

Location: Central Europe, east of France, north of Italy

Size: 41,277 sq km

Population: 7,996,026 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Bern

Export-commodities: machinery, chemicals, metals, watches, agricultural products

Import-commodities: machinery, chemicals, vehicles, metals; agricultural products, textiles

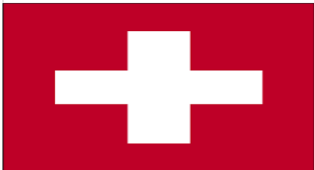
Religion: Roman Catholic 41.8%, Protestant 35.3%, Muslim 4.3%, Orthodox 1.8%, other Christian 0.4%, other 1%, unspecified 4.3%, none 11.1%

Ethnic groups: German 65%, French 18%, Italian 10%, Romansch 1%, other 6%

Government type: formally a confederation but similar in structure to a federal republic

Chief of State and Head of Government of the Swiss Confederation Ueli MAURER (since 1 January 2013);

Language: German (official) 63.7%, French (official) 20.4%, Italian (official) 6.5%, Serbo-Croatian 1.5%, Albanian 1.3%, Portuguese 1.2%, Spanish 1.1%, English 1%, Romansch (official) 0.5%, other 2.8%



## Swiss Confederation

### Meetings and Negotiations

-The Swiss are punctual people; arrive at precisely the appointed time.

-Always address Swiss by their professional title followed by their surname. In **German**-speaking Switzerland use the courtesy titles Herr to address a man and Frau to address a woman; in **French**-speaking areas, Monsieur and Madame; in **Italian**-speaking areas, Signore and Signora.

-Bring plenty of business cards, the Swiss are keen to exchange them, also good to include the founding date of your company.

-**Modesty** and understatement are important virtues and clarity is equated with **sincerity**. Business is regarded with the utmost seriousness; humor has no place in negotiations.

-Reluctance to take risks. The

Swiss will require substantial information and persuasive argument before agreeing to a new plan or procedure.

-The primary goal of the Swiss is an equal partnership and mutual benefit.

### Business Attire

-Men- finely tailored woolen suits, white cotton shirts and plain silk ties, with highly polished black leather shoes.

-Women -suits or skirts of a conservative length. Trouser-suits, in classic styles.

-Dress well, but modestly. The Swiss dislike ostentatious displays of wealth and appreciate clothing that is simply clean, well pressed, and in perfect condition. Jewelry [even a Swiss watch] should be elegant, but simple and understated

### Behavior

-The handshake is the standard greeting.

-Swiss pay close attention to your general demeanor and posture so:

-Keep your hands out of your pockets, especially when talking.

-Do not slap your colleagues' backs

- Do not point with only the index finger, but use your full hand.

### Gift Giving

-Its best to wait until the end of a negotiation to present gifts.

**Appropriate Gifts:** - A coffee-table book about your home region or some representative artifact, a bottle of fine wine, whisky or brandy

- Flowers except for: chrysanthemums, white lilies or red roses, chocolates, also good to send a hand-written thank-you

### Gifts to Avoid:

-Do not give a gift that is obviously expensive. No sharp objects of any kind

## Business Tips continued

### Conversation

- Whether in social or business situations, the Swiss are **polite** conversationalists who prefer to assume an air of detachment. The Swiss are very private people, so do **avoid** asking personal questions.

- The Swiss tend to be **conservative** in their opinions and do not change their minds

easily.

- Business dinners are occasions for formality and fine dining. **Refrain** from discussing business unless the host brings up the subject.

- The toast in German-speaking Switzerland is **prost**; in French-speaking Switzerland, it is **votre santé** or simply **santé**; in Italian-speaking Switzerland, **salute**.

**Topics to Discuss:** - World affairs, your travels in Switzerland, positive aspects of Switzerland, winter sports, questions about the Romansch culture, work

- Although, **avoid** the statement "what do you do?"

### Topics to Avoid:

- Switzerland's role during World Wars I and II, Swiss neutrality and its implications; the Swiss military, money and Swiss banks

