

In the Name of God

Dear Mr. Ignazio Cassis, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,

Dear Mr. Markus Leitner, Swiss ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran

Dear Dr. Sajadpour, the Head of Center for Political and International Studies at the Foreign Ministry

Dear Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the historic Negarestan Museum Garden, part of University of Tehran, on the occasion of opening an exhibition on the history of Swiss-Iranian bilateral relations, marking 100 years of Switzerland's diplomatic presence in Iran.

It seems to me that the selection of the present location for this important event is an ingenious action, a significant historical and cultural site with the background of education belongs to the most prestigious university in Iran. These all express the importance and the role of culture, science and academia on the sustainable bilateral relation of Swiss and Islamic republic of Iran.

Swiss, your beautiful country, is known to us to have a peaceful position in world conflicts and its excellent educational system as well. Swiss has helped flourish many prominent scholars and is a leading country in the areas of science and technology. So far, we have a good number of exchanges of faculty members and students between University of Tehran and Swiss academia centers within the framework of various mobility programs.

In the history of our academic cooperation, we have had a chance to host many eminent high ranking officials and academicians from Swiss in our university such as H.E. Mr. Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, the then President of the Swiss Confederation, who delivered a speech in our university on 28 February, 2016 and academicians such as Mr. Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, the Swiss State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation who visited University of Tehran in May 2017. He and his accompanying delegation paid a visit to our Science and Technology Park and got familiar with the activities of the knowledge-based companies located at Park. They also visited specialized laboratories at College of Engineering.

We have had close cooperation with famous universities and research institutions in Switzerland such as University of Zurich, ETH Zurich, EPFL in Lausanne, Zurich University of Applied Science, EMPA, and other Swiss institutions.

On 15 September, 2017, I also had a chance to visit you some of these universities in person. It is my understanding Swiss hosts leading institutions for technology and good examples of implementing the knowledge into practice.

University of Tehran started some 160 years ago but officially under its current name began in 1932. Here, Negarestan garden, is one of the early places that classes were being held. University of Tehran currently caters about 45000 top students of whom more than 60% are in the graduate level, about 40% female, and who compete in the national exam for a chance to become enrolled at UT where we endeavor to create a memorable and top-notch educational experience for them. It is quite evident that UT has had a unique role in the social, cultural, technical and economic development of this country since its inception.

The most recently, university of Tehran established an innovation area and technological network including incubators, innovation centres and knowledge-based companies at all of our campuses and the knowledge city as well. It should be emphasized that the capacity and ability of University of Tehran in the area of education, research and innovation as a reliable and mighty partner provide a very good opportunity for strengthening and deepen collaboration with academia in swiss for sure.

We believe your visit to our country and University of Tehran will serve as another climax in enhancing, supporting and encouraging more academic cooperation. We, at the University of Tehran are ready to collaborate on scientific themes of mutual interest and help design a new roadmap for higher education after the pandemic.

We look forward for this COVID-19 pandemic to ease down and we would be able to control the situation and make the world safer again from it; so that we could see more often our colleagues and friends from abroad to come visit us. Once again, I welcome you all to University of Tehran and Baghe Negarestan and hope that two countries would celebrate their friendship and continuous collaboration in many years to come.

Enjoy your time here and in Iran.

May God bless you all!