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Swiss-US Energy Innovation Days

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Swiss delegates' profiles

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Editorial



Walter Steinmann

Director Swiss Federal Office of Energy SFOE



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Federal Office of Energy SFOE

The United States of America and Switzerland are currently undergoing a fundamental transformation of the energy sector. The challenges to build a more energy efficient, sustainable economy are huge and are demanding new technological, entrepreneurial and governmental approaches. The success will depend on the ability to put in place the right programs for research and education, economic development schemes and adequate energy infrastructures. Both countries, the USA and Switzerland, possess world class expertise, excellence in research and technological development, renowned Universities and companies, brilliant minds. This mission intends to bring them all together in order to exchange perspectives and to share expertise as well as practical experiences in the emerging new energy world. It is no wonder, that this meeting takes place in Boston, brimming with innovation and potential. We are looking forward to strengthening existing partnerships, and to developing new ones, in many priority areas of mutual interest - from innovative technologies for sustainable and resilient buildings, technologies and services for a more efficient use of energy and natural resources, the integration of renewable energies and intelligent technologies, water management, new energy research policies to new governmental approaches for energy security.



Felix Moesner
CEO of swissnex Boston,
the Science Consulate of Switzerland



The need to fight Climate Change and to build and nurture a Clean Energy Innovation Economy is undoubtedly a top focus of Switzerland and the US. swissnex Boston is proud to facilitate the Swiss-US Energy Innovation Days and the Watt d'Or exhibition – as a world premiere – in Boston, bringing together a remarkable delegation from Switzerland to join with their peers in Massachusetts' public and private sector, namely policy makers, researchers and entrepreneurs. Boston is one of the most active clean energy hubs in North America, and an excellent choice as the first US city to host the Watt d'Or exhibition. Switzerland and Massachusetts share a vision for a more sustainable future and we are thrilled to bring together the finest minds in energy innovation during these days. Following our mission, swissnex Boston connects the dots in education, research and innovation between North America and Switzerland. I am sure that these exchanges will strengthen our cooperation and lead to many concrete projects in the energy sector. Established as the world's first «science consulate», swissnex Boston is part of a global network of six knowledge outposts including Brazil, China, India, San Francisco, and Singapore. Since 2000, swissnex Boston has served as a partner to New England universities, incubators, venture capital firms, and businesses, uncovering Swiss parallels and collaboration opportunities between scientists, entrepreneurs and innovators.



Chris Watts

Regional Director AAA Switzerland Global Enterprise
Member of the International Executive Board



enabling new business

Energy generation, distribution and consumption have become one of the most pressing current issues in Switzerland and in the United States as both countries are intensely focused on determining the best technologies and policy to adopt in securing a sustainable future for our societies. Energy markets are being fundamentally redefined by the unprecedented growth of decentralized and renewable energy solutions and by the profound global impact of anthropogenic carbon emissions. The transformation of cities is defining cleantech markets and Switzerland has much to offer when it comes to advanced know-how in the construction of sustainable and resilient buildings and cities. Switzerland Global Enterprise is proud to actively support the Swiss cleantech sector in developing and supporting these newly arising business opportunities in North America and at home.



Adrian Altenburger

sia Vice President
and President of the sia Energy Committee

sia

schweizerischer ingenieur- und architektenverein
société suisse des ingénieurs et des architectes
società svizzera degli ingegneri e degli architetti
swiss society of engineers and architects

Buildings are a key factor for sustainable energy use. The objective of the sia's «Energy Guidelines for Buildings» is to establish a consistent basis for Switzerland's building stock and encourage intelligent use of the resource energy. The long-term goal is to achieve a sustained primary energy use and emissions of no more than one ton of CO₂ equivalent per person and year. The SIA «Energy Efficiency Path» is the basis for the implementation of an intermediate goal for the year 2050. The US-Swiss Energy Innovation Days will be a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and innovative ideas for sustainable building related energy solutions.

Switzerland – the Power Trading Hub of Europe

In 1958 the high-voltage grids of Germany, France and Switzerland were connected at Laufenburg. This pioneering deed paved the way for Switzerland with its abundant hydropower and interconnectors to become continental Europe's main cross-border electricity hub. Today, Switzerland plays a pivotal role in the emerging single European electricity market with its growing share of volatile renewables. On a national scale, Switzerland is promoting renewables with a feed-in tariff system with a growing number of market features. Furthermore a CO₂ tax on stationary fuels has been raised to meet the nation's emissions target. Part of the tax revenues is earmarked for a massive buildings refurbishment program.

Switzerland's Energy Policy

As early as 1990, Swiss voters enshrined energy efficiency and sustainable energy in the Constitution. Following the Fukushima accident, the Swiss Government, faced with the unlikely approval of new nuclear plants in future referendums, decided to phase out nuclear energy. The five nuclear plants will be decommissioned whenever deemed unsafe by the safety inspectorate or uncommercial by their operator. In the meantime, the Government has set out its long-term objectives in its «Energy Strategy 2050». A legal package, currently being debated in Parliament, will provide the policy instruments to reach the objectives. At the heart of the strategy lies the promotion of energy efficiency as well as in the economically sustainable expansion of the new renewable energies. Today roughly 60 percent of Swiss electricity is based on hydropower, another 35 percent on nuclear energy.

Swiss Research and Innovation funding

Switzerland is actively expanding the funding of research and innovation in the energy sector. In 2013 the Parliament voted a 25% increase in public energy R&D funding. With the addition of substantial private energy R&D funding, Switzerland holds a remarkable position in international energy R&D. Moreover, public research has been streamlined into seven Swiss Competence Centers for Energy Research (SCCER) to boost efficiencies and synergies. These research networks are active both in fundamental and applied research. Also, the Commission for Technology and Innovation CTI supports projects that are close to markets. International cooperation is key for Swiss energy R&D.

Switzerland: A Partner for Energy Efficiency in SMEs and Industry

A basic Swiss policy principle is to let market players deliver policy objectives through self-regulation. State regulation is seen as a last resort in case market players fail to deliver. Thus, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and industry enter into covenants with the Government by which they commit to credible CO₂ emissions cuts in return for a CO₂ tax exemption. A special agency has been assisting SMEs and industries in meeting their objectives since 2001. Swiss enterprises also make use of their traditionally high industrial process know-how by offering innovative environmental and efficiency technologies. In research and development, they can draw on excellent research institutions, such as the polytechnic institutes (EPFL & ETH Zurich), research institutes (PSI & EMPA), universities and universities of applied sciences. Swiss cleantech innovative companies lend themselves as world-class partners for cooperation with US technology suppliers.

Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Switzerland is home to some of the world's most renowned architects. But Swiss architectural know-how also rests on savvy engineering, including for continuously improving energy efficiency of buildings. Thus, Switzerland's new builds pride themselves for featuring very high standards of low-, passive- and net-positive energy houses, certified by the «MINERGIE®» label. Nearly one out of four new residential buildings is certified as «MINERGIE®». Building codes for the refurbishment of the existing building stock are also continuously tightened. Equally important is the continuous training of architects, engineers and craftsmen to ensure that building codes are effectively adhered to.

Energy Efficiency in the Industries and Services

As energy costs rise, energy efficiency is becoming a strategically important competitive factor for every enterprise. With a systematic and effective energy management and the use of up-to-date efficiency solutions, the costs of energy in industries and services can be reduced by more than 30 percent. Swiss technology enterprises are among the world's leading providers of such innovative products, systems, and efficiency solutions.

Short Online Version

Please note that the online version of the complete Swiss delegates' profiles is no longer available. If you wish to receive the paper version of the Swiss delegates' profiles, please contact the following person:

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