

# Government District

175 years of the Federal Constitution • 175 years of the Federal Constitution

## Open Days

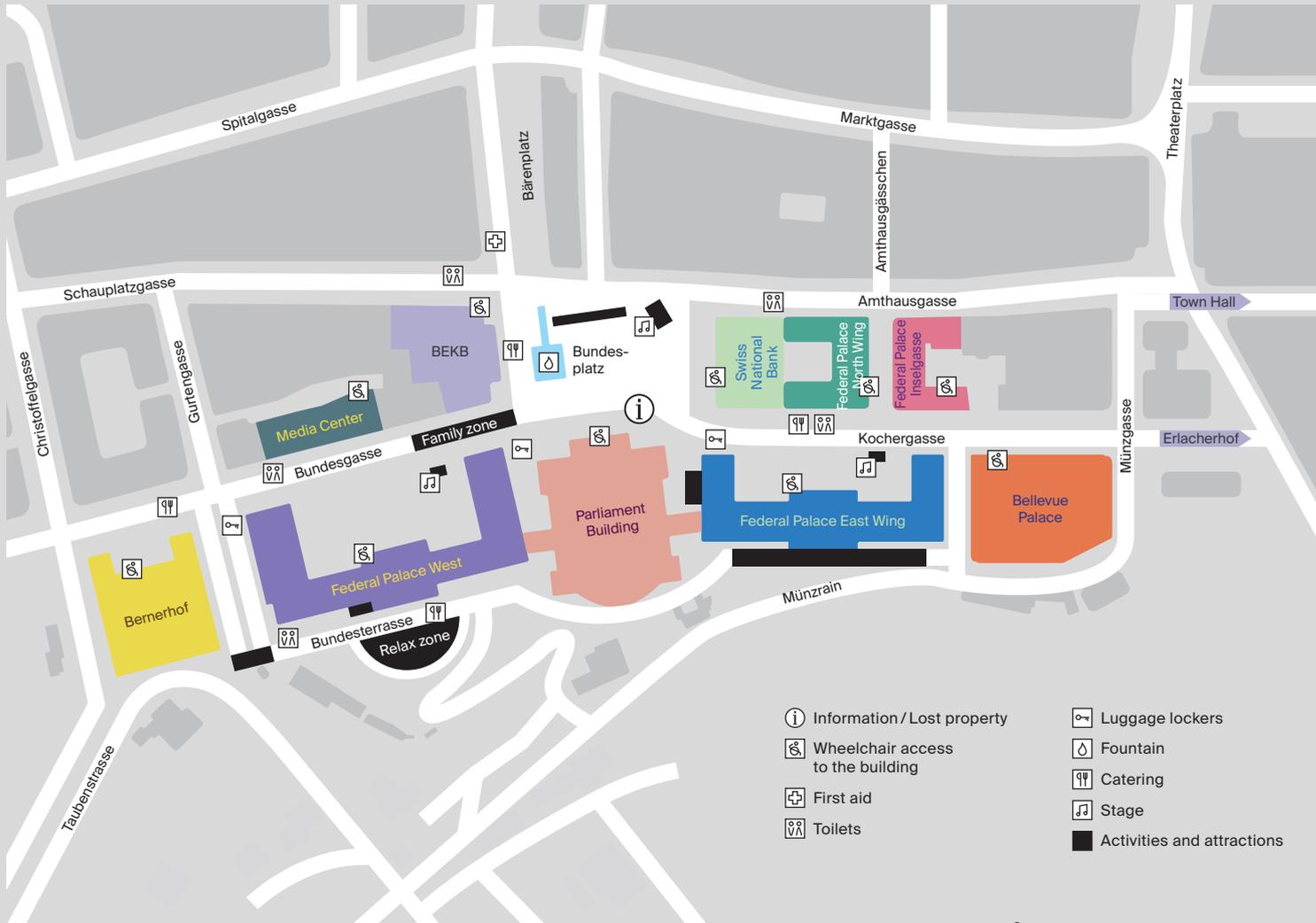
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2

July

2023





-  Information / Lost property
-  Wheelchair access to the building
-  First aid
-  Toilets
-  Luggage lockers
-  Fountain
-  Catering
-  Stage
-  Activities and attractions



# 1848 – an incredible story

Dear visitor

Welcome to the government district open days! I'm glad that you could come along. Our Federal Constitution is 175 years old. We have good reason to celebrate this milestone birthday together. 1848 marks a turning point in our country's history. After a short civil war, the Swiss Confederation became the first stable republic in Europe. The young federal state acquired new powers and assumed a range of previously devolved tasks. It commissioned the construction of buildings to house the administration and parliament in the area between the Kirchenfeld bridge and the Kleine Schanze. Bern became the seat of government and the focus of national politics.

This weekend, we are opening the doors of the historic government buildings for you. There is much to discover: incredible stories from the past, a variety of topics from the present. Talk to the people who work behind the sandstone facades. Take a stroll around the federal government district, let yourself be enchanted by music and cabaret, take a detour to the lower Old Town, where the government and Parliament convened in the federal state's early years.

In 175 years, Switzerland has become a democratic, socially responsible and peaceful state. Let's make sure that continues by working together to lead it into the future.

On behalf of the patronage committee, I hope you enjoy and make the most of your time exploring the federal government district.

Martin Candinas, President of the National Council 2022/2023

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# The colours of the government district open days

The vivid colours serve as an orientation aid: each building has been assigned a colour. The colour concept applies both to this programme booklet and throughout the government district. The coloured signs show you the way to the respective building, where you will then recognise the colour by means of design elements on the building.

Use this key as a guide to find the building you are looking for:

Parliament Building	Media Centre
Swiss National Bank	Federal Palace North Wing
Bernerhof	Federal Palace Inselgasse
Federal Palace West Wing	Other buildings
Federal Palace East Wing	Catering
Bellevue Palace	Information/Activities

# The history of the Federal Constitution of Switzerland

The year was 1848 – and the world was in turmoil. Revolutions in neighbouring countries had failed, but the Swiss were determined to forge a democracy amidst Europe's absolutist monarchies. They aimed to create a constitution that would allow them to realise their vision of a society governed as a democratic republic.

The liberal cantons had been pushing since the 1830s for a revision of the Federal Treaty, the basis of their loose confederation. The Conservative Catholic cantons, on the other hand, were fighting against them with everything they had – including support from the greatest powers in Europe – hoping to maintain the old, aristocratic order. The ongoing conflict escalated in the 1840s until the Sonderbund War broke out in the early days of November 1847, with the liberals securing victory by the end of the month.

Those in favour of revision may have won the war, but the revision process itself nevertheless got off to a rocky start. The committee that had been assembled to work on the Federal Treaty made slow progress, bogged down by disagreements and minutiae. It started to look like risk aversion would bring the project to a complete standstill. But when the French Revolution erupted in Paris, authoritarian monarchies began to wobble and antiliberal forces lost much of their power. The revision committee seized the day: instead of continuing with their attempts to rework the old Federal Treaty, they boldly created an entirely new constitution. This decisive action paved the way for the revolutionary

masterwork that would become Europe's only democratic federal state.

This isn't the end of the story, though – quite the opposite, in fact. The Federal Constitution of 1848 is a living text that continually grows and adapts in line with developments in society, politics and business. This was already evident when the rights to request a referendum or submit an initiative were first enshrined in the text of the Constitution, and again with the introduction of women's right to vote and stand in elections at federal level. The history of the Swiss Federal Constitution is an eventful and exciting story – but even more than that, it's also an ongoing one. New chapters will continue to be written as Switzerland strives to cultivate the ideal environment for democracy and the rule of law to grow and flourish.



# General information about the event

## Opening times

The sites involved in the government district open days can be visited at the following times:  
 Saturday: 1pm–9pm  
 Sunday: 9am–6pm  
 Last entry to the premises is an hour before the official closing time.

## Building entrances

The entrances to the individual buildings and the corresponding queues are indicated in the respective building colours. There is a separate entrance for media representatives, VIPs and helpers. Wheelchair users can access the buildings via barrier-free entrances. These entrances are marked separately on the plan on page 2.

## Security check

All visitors over the age of 16 will be subject to an ID check before entering the buildings and must present an official form of ID to security staff. Accepted forms of photo ID are: passport, ID card (from CH and EU countries), driving licence (from CH and EU countries), CH foreign resident's ID card. Visitors will then be asked to pass through a metal detector and have any personal belongings x-rayed. We would kindly ask all visitors to follow the instructions given by security staff. Expect longer waiting times.



## Information stand ⓘ

There is an information stand on Bundesplatz. Staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

## Toilets ♿

There are five outdoor toilet facilities:  
 Bundesterrasse ♿  
 Media Centre ♿ ⚙️ ⚙️  
 Federal Palace North Wing ♿ ⚙️ ⚙️  
 Schauplatzgasse ♿ ⚙️  
 Amthausgasse ♿ ⚙️

## Lost property

Lost property can be handed in at the information stand on Bundesplatz. Unclaimed items will be handed over to the Lost Property Office Bern at Theatergässchen 2, 3011 Bern, on Monday, 3 July.

## First aid ⚕️

In the event of medical incidents, there is a first aid point on Bärenplatz signposted accordingly. It is staffed by medical professionals for the duration of the event. Do not hesitate to visit them if you feel unwell.

## Luggage lockers ☑️

Three sets of locker facilities will be available for visitors to store valuables. The lockers can be used free of charge. Additional lockers can be found in the railway station.

## Lost children

The meeting point for children who have become separated from their parents/guardians is at the information stand on Bundesplatz.

## Overnight closure of the Bundesterrasse on Saturday

On Saturday the Bundesterrasse will close to the public at 9pm. We would kindly ask you to leave the area at this time.

## Explanation of icons

- 👉 Get involved
- 😊 Suitable for kids

# Outdoor programme: Stages

## Saturday, 1 July • 1pm–2 pm

### Main stage Bundesplatz

#### Official opening

1.30–1.45pm

#### Prisca Saxer

4.30pm • 30 min.

Storyteller

#### Military Bands

6–8pm

*Symphonic Wind Orchestra of the Swiss Army plays with guest conductor Emilie Chabrol*  
Read more:



#### DJ Luca de Grandis

8pm

Chillout music

Subject to change.

### Federal Palace West Wing

#### Iadunna

1pm • 3.15pm • 5.30pm • 30 min.

Musical duo • R E

#### Aero Skiller

1.45pm • 4pm • 6.15pm • 30 min.

*Fusion of freestyle football and capoeira*

#### Nicolas Engel

2.30pm • 4.45pm • 30 min.

*Pianist, improvisation artist, performer and electronic virtuoso*

### Federal Palace East Wing

#### Laura Scaglia – La Gustav Academy

1pm • 3.15pm • 5.30pm • 30 min.

Musical duo • F I E

#### Prisca Saxer

1.45pm • 6.45pm • 30 min.

Storyteller

#### Patrik Zeller

2.30pm • 4pm • 4.45pm • 30 min.

Musician • F

## Sunday, 2 July • 9am–6 pm

### Main stage Bundesplatz

#### Warm Up

9–10am

*Moderated warm-up with top athletes*

Join in!

#### Tächa's Traliwatsch

10.30–11.15am

Children's songs • D

#### Enrico Lenzin

12.45pm • 1.45pm • 30 min.

*Alphorn player and rhythm artist*

#### Take This x Cachita & Romy Wave

3.15–4pm

D E S

#### Take This x Carousel & Caroline Chevin

5.15–6pm

D F E

### Federal Palace West Wing

#### Elijah Levy

10am • 12.15 • 2.30pm • 4.45pm • 30 min.

*Instrumental music on Chapman stick*

#### Aero Skiller

10.45am • 1pm • 3.15pm • 5.30pm

30 min.

*Fusion of freestyle football and capoeira*

#### Iadunna

11.30am • 1.45pm • 4pm • 30 min.

Musical duo • R E

### Federal Palace East Wing

#### Laura Scaglia – La Gustav Academy

11.30am • 12.15am • 2.30pm • 4.45pm

30 min.

Musical duo • F I E

#### Prisca Saxer

10.45am • 1pm • 3.15pm • 5.30pm

30 min.

Storyteller

#### Enrico Lenzin

10am • 4pm • 30 min.

*Alphorn player and rhythm artist*

#### The Covers

1.45pm • 30 min.

Indie-folk band

# Outdoor programme: Activities

## The new pollen monitoring network

Pollen information in real time.

A world's first!

*Continuous • D F E*

*Federal Palace West Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk* 🗣️

## Swiss Customs service dogs on duty

Swiss Customs' four-legged specialists show off their skills.

*Saturday 2pm • 4pm • 5pm*

*Sunday 11am • 1pm • 3pm*

*15 min. • D F*

*Bernerhof • In front of*

*the Marzili funicular*

*Show*

## Military Bands

Small ensemble performances

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Various locations in the*

*Federal Government District*

*Music*

## Federal Office of Sport (FOSPO)

Sportive break: Let's move!

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Bundesplatz • Mobile stage*

## Sports and elite sports promotion in the Armed Forces

Armed Forces sport and its promotion

of elite sports / Plank competition /

Laser Biathlon / Autographs and inter-

views with elite athletes / CISM Military

World Winter Games Lucerne 2025

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## SWISSINT: Promoting peace – our mission

International peace support

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## Feeding an army

From the mess tin to the field

kitchen – feeding an army

in all locations and situations.

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## armasuisse: An insight into science and technology

Drones and robots, virtual reality,

and firing and explosion trials

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## Federal Office for Civil Protection (FOCP): Disasters

What do you do?

What does the FOCP do?

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## National Cyber Security Centre: Staying safe online.

Get cyber tips – report cyber

incidents – test your cyber knowledge

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## Army opportunities

Get a fascinating insight into the benefits of military service

*Saturday 1pm–8pm*

*Sunday 9am–5pm*

*Federal Palace East Wing*

*Bundesterrasse*

*Exhibition • Talk*

## Free short city tours

Bern Welcome offers free tours between Bundesplatz and Erlacherhof.

You can find more information here:

[bern.com/1848-angebot](http://bern.com/1848-angebot)





# Parliament Building

## Quarrelling over the right architectural style

Bundesplatz 3

In the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was not only a political schism between liberals, radicals, the new left and the old conservatives. Designers were arguing about the planned style of the new Parliament Building. The jury was unable to choose between the plans submitted by Hans Wilhelm Auer and Alfred Friedrich Bluntschli, and so left the decision to the government. In the end Bluntschli lost out. While Auer, the Art Commission and other designers involved were agonising over the iconographic representations, Federal Councillor Adrien Lachenal awarded a prestigious commission to Charles Giron, an artist from his home canton of Geneva. Lachenal felt that French-speaking Switzerland was underrepresented in the construction of this national monument. Giron's controversial panoramic mural in the National Council chamber entitled 'The Cradle of the Confederation' is now one of Switzerland's most famous works of art.

Over the past 120 years, the interior of the Parliament Building has moved with the times. The most extensive renovation and refurbishment took place between 2006 and 2008, when many of its original features were restored. To mark the 175th anniversary of modern Switzerland, the façade will gain a new feature. A new work of art is to adorn the empty triangular space (tympanum) above the main entrance marking a new chapter in the building's history.

# Programme

## Switzerland celebrates – Discussion with ...

... Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider and National Council president Martin Candinas.  
Host: Michael Elsener  
*Saturday 3 pm • 45 min. • D F I*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • National Council chamber*

... President Alain Berset and Council of States president Brigitte Häberli-Koller.  
Host: Michael Elsener, satirist and political commentator  
*Sunday 12 pm • 45 min. • D F I*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • National Council chamber*

## The National Council comedy show

with satirist Michael Elsener  
*Saturday 5 pm • 7 pm*  
*Sunday 2 pm • 3.30 pm • 20 min. • D F I*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • National Council chamber*

## Switzerland in 1848

Historical figures tell their stories  
*Saturday 1.30 pm • 2.30 pm • 4.30 pm*  
*5.30 pm 6.30 pm • 7.30 pm • 8.30 pm*  
*20 min. • D F I*  
*Sunday 9.30 am • 10.30 am • 11.30 am*  
*1.30 pm • 2.30 pm • 4.30 pm • 5.30 pm*  
*20 min. • D F I*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • National Council chamber*

## Incredible stories

Anecdotes from when modern Switzerland was founded  
*Saturday*  
*3.45 pm • 6.45 pm • 8.45 pm*  
*20 min. • D*  
*1.45 pm • 4.45 pm • 7.45 pm*  
*20 min. • F*  
*2.45 pm • 5.45 pm • 20 min. • I*  
*Sunday*  
*10.45 am • 2.45 pm • 4.45 pm*  
*20 min. • D*  
*9.45 am • 12.45 pm • 3.45 pm*  
*20 min. • F*  
*11.45 am • 1.45 pm • 20 min. • I*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Council of States chamber*

## 1848 or 1291?

Quiz about the Parliament Building  
*Continuous • D F I R E*  
*In front of the three Confederates*  
*Raffle 🎟️*

## Parliament Building audio guide



## Office visit to ...

... Martin Candinas, President of the National Council  
*Saturday & Sunday, Registration outside Central Secretariat on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor • 20 min.*

... Brigitte Häberli-Koller, President of the Council of States  
*Saturday & Sunday, Registration outside Central Secretariat on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor • 20 min.*

... Philippe Schwab, Secretary General of the Federal Assembly  
*Saturday & Sunday, Registration outside Central Secretariat on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor • 20 min.*

... Claudio Fischer, Parliamentary representative  
*Saturday & Sunday, Registration outside Central Secretariat on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor • 20 min.*

## Do you know ...

... how the legislative process works?  
*Continuous • D F*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> floor • Room 250 and 286*  
*Film*

... how Parliament oversees the Federal Council and the Federal Administration?  
*Continuous • D F*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> floor • Room 250 and 286*  
*Exhibition • Film*

... how written texts arise from parliamentary debates?  
*Continuous • D F*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> floor • Room 287*  
*Exhibition*

... how the Parliamentary Services work?  
*Continuous • D F*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Room 3*  
*Exhibition • Film*

## The colourful house for children

Paint, play and win  
*Continuous • D F I*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Room 4 and 5*  
*Raffle 🎟️ 😊*

## Catering

Appetisers and beverages  
*Continuous*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Reading room café ☕*

# Swiss National Bank

## Prime site on Switzerland's most famous square

Bundesplatz 1

The Federal Constitution of 1848 did not provide for a centralised national bank. It took many discussions and parliamentary requests before an article was finally included in the Federal Constitution in 1891 paving the way for the federal government to issue banknotes and other forms of money. It was not until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the National Bank was founded. One of the most controversial points in its history was its location: Berne and Zurich were in the running, ultimately Parliament decided on two headquarters, one in Zurich and one in Berne. The National Bank Act of 1905 stipulated that the Swiss National Bank was to be entirely separate from the federal treasury. After a long search for building land in the centre of Bern, the building designed by Bernese architect Eduard Joos in the neo-Baroque style was inaugurated on 20 January 1912. The lion medallion above the main entrance has become the symbol of the SNB. Many hundreds of thousands of jobs depend on its decisions. And so the address of the Bern headquarters does not seem to be mere coincidence: Bundesplatz 1; Parliament is at number 3.

## Programme

### Money in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The history of means of payment in Switzerland from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the founding of the SNB.

*Continuous • D F I*

*Exterior  
Exhibition*

### Foundation, constitutional mandate and head office

Learn more about the SNB's constitutional mandate, the architecture of the head office in Bern and discover exhibits from the SNB's early years.

*Continuous • 5 min. • D F I*

*Ground floor • Foyer and counter hall  
Exhibition • Film • Visit*

### Monetary and exchange rate policy

What is the SNB's mandate? Definition of inflation and price stability and insight into monetary policy decisions.

*Continuous • 10 min. • D F I*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Salon Bleu  
Exhibition • Film • Visit*

### Banknotes and gold

The life of banknotes from design to production and processing to destruction. How important is gold?

*Continuous • 10 min. • D F I*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Offices and corridors  
Exhibition • Film • Visit* 🖱️

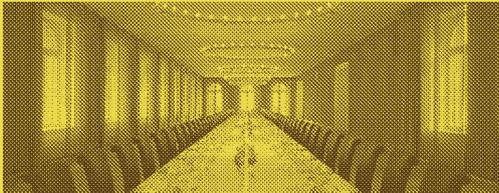


# Bernerhof

## The prestigious hotel with a politically correct name

Bundesgasse 3

On 1 January 1859, a new hotel run by the Bernese hotelier Jean Kraft opened its doors right next to the building that served as the seat of the federal government (now the west wing of the Federal Palace). He saw an opportunity for brisk trade with the wealthy and influential guests dealing with the government, parliament and administration next door. The establishment was originally to be known as the Hôtel de la Couronne. But the idea of a crown did not sit well with the barely ten-year-old fledgling democratic state, and so the hotel was given a more fitting name – the Bernerhof. The business initially thrived, but with the outbreak of the First World War, guests stayed away and the hotel experienced financial difficulties. It was never to recover, especially as it had been competing for some years with the Hotel Bellevue Palace built to the east of the Federal Palace complex. Kraft died in 1923 and his widow sold the building at Bundesgasse 3 to the Confederation. It has been the seat of the Federal Department of Finance since 1924. However, the crown remains to this day: it is carved into the sandstone above the main entrance.



## Programme

### Finance? Yes, but much more than that!

The surprising range of the Federal Department of Finance's tasks.

*Continuous* • 2–3 min. • *D F I E*

*Ground floor* • *Chandelier hall*

*Film*

### The history of federal finances

How the Confederation collects and spends money.

*Continuous* • 5–10 min. • *D F I E*

*Ground floor* • *Chandelier hall*

*Exhibition* • *Raffle*

### Customs: Everything declared?

Smuggled goods, endangered species, counterfeit brands – Customs is a multi-faceted world

*Continuous* • 5–10 min. • *D F I E*

*Ground floor* • *Salon 1 & 2*

*Exhibition* • *Talk* 🗣️ 😊

### In search of our digital identity

From quill to eID – the digitalisation of public administration over time

*Continuous* • 5–10 min. • *D F I*

*Ground floor* • *Salon 3*

*Film* • *Exhibition*

### 175 years of the Federal Constitution on a coin

Experience the fascination of coins as we commemorate 175 years of the Federal Constitution.

*Continuous* • 5–15 min. • *D F I E*

*Ground floor* • *Banqueting hall*

*Exhibition*

### High-ranking visitors – State receptions at the Bernerhof

Experience the unique atmosphere of a State banquet at the Bernerhof.

*Continuous* • 5–10 min. • *D F I E*

*Ground floor* • *Banqueting hall*

*Exhibition*

### Do you want to work for Switzerland?

Discover the diverse nature of the Federal Administration as an employer.

*Continuous* • 5–10 min. • *D F I*

*1st floor*

*Exhibition* • *Talk* • *Raffle*



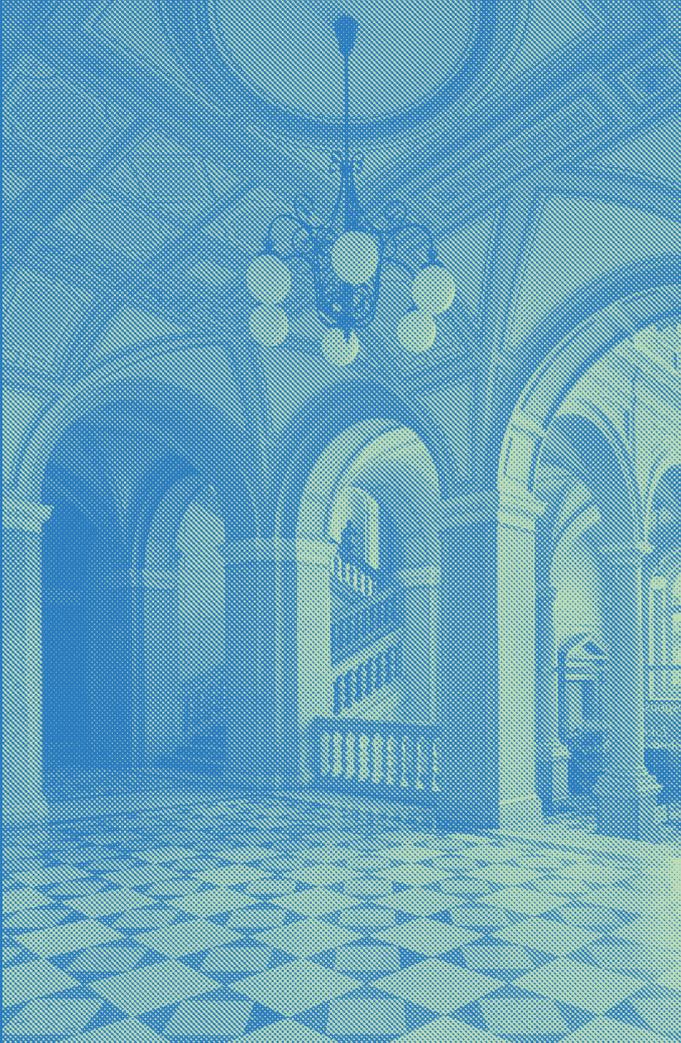
# Federal Palace West Wing

## A 'chalet' for the federal government

Bundesgasse 1

The west wing of the Federal Palace is the oldest section of the three-building complex. After the federal state was founded in 1848, Parliament and government were initially installed in various buildings around Bern. However, in 1857 the federal government was granted its own building, the Bundes-Rathaus, which is now known as Bundeshaus West – the Federal Palace West Wing. The National Council met at the west end of the building, while the Council of States met at the other. To this day, the Federal Council holds its weekly meetings here in the 'chalet fédéral', the nickname given to the cabinet room because of the wood panelling and furniture installed in 1889. The stucco ceiling and one of the oldest existing gas chandeliers in Bern are still original. The west wing is also home to the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP).





# Federal Palace East Wing

## Throwing stones has consequences

Kochergasse 9

The total revision of the Federal Constitution in 1874 gave the federal government far greater powers than before. The new tasks could no longer be accomplished without a larger administrative apparatus, so additional space was needed. The first administrative building, now known as the Federal Palace West Wing, was bursting at the seams: it already housed the Federal Council, Parliament and the administration. The new east wing was completed in 1892 and was designed by the architect Hans Wilhelm Auer, who also designed the Parliament Building. In October 1948, the east wing was the scene of a notorious stone-throwing incident. Enraged because the National Council did not table one of his motions on the last day of the session, Migros founder Gottlieb Duttweiler, then a member of the National Council, went into the usher's office in the east wing and threw two stones through a window into the courtyard below. The incident caused CHF 182.90 worth of damage and made the headlines.

Today, the east wing is the seat of the Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) and the Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS).

# Programme

## Swiss inventions that changed the world

Use a QR code to take part in a quiz on Swiss inventions

*Continuous • D F I E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Room 3.05*

*Exhibition*

## Turning old T-shirts into socks or soil

What do old T-shirts and socks feel like once they've been recycled?

*Continuous • D F I E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Room 3.001*

*Exhibition*

## Heading for the future with Swiss innovations

See your own ideas take off in Virtual Reality

*Continuous • D F I E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Room 3.001*

*Exhibition*

## Switzerland's compulsory stocks system

A fun way of getting to know Switzerland's compulsory stocks system

*Continuous • D F I E*

*South Terrace*

*Exhibition*

## Selfie studio with agricultural innovations

Getting to grips with Switzerland's agriculture policy in the selfie studio

*Continuous • D F I E*

*Ground Floor • Room 0.047*

*Exhibition*

## Research for good food and a healthy environment

Discovering robust fruit varieties

*Continuous • D F I E*

*South Terrace*

*Exhibition*

## How innovative projects boost prosperity

Find out about innovative projects that boost Switzerland's prosperity

*Continuous • D F I E*

*South Terrace*

*Exhibition*

## The hows and whats of housing

A fun approach to finding out about housing

*Continuous • D F I E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Room 3.05*

*Exhibition*

## Refurbishment of the Federal Palace East Wing 2012–2016

Discover architectural features that inspired the renovation.

*Continuous*

*Corridors*

*Visit*

## Library am Guisanplatz

Special exhibits from the valuable collections

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*2<sup>nd</sup> floor • Room 245*

*Exhibition*

## The Federal Intelligence Service

The FIS yesterday and today: Development of intelligence gathering methods

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*2<sup>nd</sup> floor • Room 245*

*Exhibition*

## Women in the Federal Administration

Selection of portraits

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*2<sup>nd</sup> floor • Corridor*

*Exhibition*

## swisstopo: In the service of Switzerland since 1838

The diverse tasks of topography for society and the administration.

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Corridor*

*Exhibition*

## armasuisse: New F-35A combat aircraft

From evaluation to entry into service.

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Room 3.008*

*Exhibition*

## Mitholz Project

Information on the clearing of the former munitions depot at Mitholz

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*3<sup>rd</sup> floor • Room 3.043*

*Exhibition*

## Switzerland and the European Union

Facts and figures on the relationship between Switzerland and the European Union

*Continuous • D F I*

*Ground Floor • Corridor 00.093*

*Exhibition*

# Bellevue Palace

## The Confederation enters the hotel business

Kochergasse 3–5

The history of the Grand Hotel Bellevue Palace began in 1865 just a few metres east of the Federal Palace. It was the second luxury hotel after the Bernerhof to open in the capital. Between 1911 and 1913, an impressive new building was constructed from the rubble of the old Bellevue. Countless stories and myths surround the hotel. The most elegant building on in town has always drawn heads of state, artists, actors, and generals. With the onset of the First World War, guest numbers plummeted, but the Bellevue was able to hold its own, unlike the 'Bernerhof'. During the Second World War and the Cold War, Bern became a hub of international espionage. During this time, secret agents, diplomats and politicians regularly stayed at the Bellevue, the hotel bar was world renowned as a hub of information. From 1939, the American military attaché Barnwell Rhett Legge led the American intelligence service against Nazi Germany from Bern, but then fell into the net of German counter-espionage. And in 1981, the Bellevue served as a set for the filming of John le Carré's spy thriller 'Smiley's People', starring Sir Alec Guinness. In 1994, the Swiss National Bank (SNB) gifted the Grand Hotel to the Confederation.

## Programme

### State banquet

The Salon Royal is often used to hold state banquets.

*Continuous*

*Ground Floor • Salon Royal*

*Visit*



# Media Centre

A building dedicated to the 'fourth estate'

Bundesgasse 8-12

Up until 2004, political correspondents were able to work from within the Parliament Building. TV and radio Programmes were produced on the top floor and the press wrote their articles in a windowless room known as the bunker where the bar of the parliamentary restaurant, the Galerie des Alpes, is located today. But members of Parliament complained that they needed more space: workrooms, meeting rooms, parliamentary group offices. And so the journalists had to vacate the premises. The forced eviction did not go down well. Journalists saw it as a deliberate move against the media. But in exchange, they got their own premises not 100 metres away. The Confederation converted Bundesgasse 8-12 into a media centre and dug deep to create an additional three floors underground to house TV studios, control rooms and a conference hall for press briefings. It is there, in front of a stylised mountain backdrop, that members of the Federal Council explain the decisions taken by the government every week.

## Programme

### How does the federal government communicate?

The Federal Council spokesperson explains the structure and processes of government communication.

*Saturday 2 pm • 5 pm*

*Sunday 11.30 am • 3.30 pm • 30 min.*

*Multilingual*

*Lower floor • Large media conference room*

*Lecture*

### Adopting over 200 items of business in a single session?

Vice Chancellor Viktor Rossi explains how the Federal Council gets through so many decisions.

*Saturday 3.30 pm • 6.30 pm*

*Sunday 10 am • 2 pm • 30 min.*

*Multilingual*

*Lower floor • Large media conference room*

*Lecture*



# Federal Palace North Wing

The federal government needs more space

Kochergasse 10

Up until 1898 the state pharmacy was located at the former Inselgasse (Kochergasse 10 today) opposite the Inselehospital. But both had to free up the site and were relocated to the west of Bern. The cantonal office for laboratory examinations, the Masonic lodge and the stables dating from 1578 housing the government's official coaches also had to make way. Shortly afterwards the old buildings were demolished. Once the Swiss National Bank (SNB) was completed, architect Eduard Joos was again commissioned to build for the Confederation: to the rear of the SNB, the Federal Palace North Wing sprung up between 1912 and 1915 to accommodate the administration for the rapidly growing railway and postal network. The Postal and Railways Department – today's Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) – set up shop in it. Joos designed the building at Kochergasse 10 as an office block. However, there are subtle differences from floor to floor: the ceiling height decreases the higher you go and the furnishings are more modest. There is a clear distinction in hierarchy.

## Programme

### Sustainability of the national highways

Energy production, rapid charging stations and materials management

*Continuous • D F I*

*Ground Floor • Room 0.001*

*Film*

### Road safety

Tunnel safety and heavy traffic control centres

*Continuous • D F I*

*Ground Floor • Room 0.001*

*Film*

### Digitisation of buildings with BIM

Construction projects exemplify the added value of digital twins.

*Continuous • D F I*

*Ground Floor • Room 0.001*

*Film*

### With renewable energies into a sustainable future

How can we supply ourselves

safely with clean energy?

And what can I do myself?

*Continuous • D F I*

*Ground Floor • Room 0.028*

*Exhibition*

### Climate change: How cities defy the heat

Cities are specifically affected by climate change – how can they adapt?

*Continuous • D F I*

*Ground Floor • Room 0.028*

*Exhibition*

### FDFA: International law in everyday life

How international law supports facilitates our lives

*Continuous • D F I*

*4<sup>th</sup> floor • Room 04.020*

*Exhibition*



# Federal Palace Inselgasse

## A modest home for the Federal Department of Home affairs

Inselgasse 1

The administration began to grow rapidly and so the new authorities needed more office space. Around 1900, the federal government bought up many buildings in the vicinity of the Federal Palace. Across the road from the old hospital (Inselspital), the federal government bought up a number of smaller buildings. Inselgässchen became Inselgasse, which in turn was renamed Kochergasse in honour of Theodor Kocher, a renowned surgeon. The building at Inselgasse was built on plot 799 in 1961. At first glance, it is the least impressive of the federal government buildings. The plans were drawn up by the Zurich architect Hans Marti. The building reflects the sober, modest tendencies of modernist design. However, thanks to some refinements incorporated during the renovations undertaken between 2007 and 2009, such as the use of architectural bronze instead of aluminium sheet, its function as the seat of the Department of Home Affairs was taken into account.

## Programme

### Silver vase, dagger, woollen pullover

Exhibition of diplomatic gifts

*Continuous*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Meeting room*

*Exhibition*

### Switzerland 175 years ago

Pictures and newspapers from 1848 from the Swiss National Library

*Continuous*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Entrance*

*Exhibition*

### From ivory to snakeskin

Exhibition of species protection in international trade

*Continuous*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Cafeteria*

*Exhibition*

### Dangerous medication bought online

Medication bought online can pose a threat to health

*Continuous*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Cafeteria*

*Exhibition*

### Working safely with highly contagious viruses

Glimpse behind the scenes of the Institute of Virology and Immunology

*Continuous*

*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Corridor*

*Exhibition* 🙌 😊

### Health, racism and the weather

Stage with presentations on FDHA-related topics

*Every 30 minutes • 15 min. • D F*

*Ground floor • Courtyard*

*Lecture*



# Erlacherhof

## The first seat of the federal government

Junkerngasse 47

The Erlacherhof is an elegant palais in Bern's old town that is unique in the town founded by the Zähringer. It is squeezed in between a tower and a residential building and is the only building in the city to feature a grand courtyard. It was originally the residence of a family with a history stretching back 800 years. The most illustrious member of that family was Hieronymus von Erlach, Imperial Count and Schultheiss (mayor) of Bern. In 1745, he took over the plot of land on the southern slope overlooking the Aare from the von Bubenberg family. He took the liberty of breaking with Bern's urban planning tradition by affording the palace a grand courtyard. The von Erlachs' history in the palais ended in 1795 after which it had a range of uses: when the Napoleonic troops entered Bern, it served as headquarters for the French general, later it was a school for children from the Matte quarter, and lastly it housed the French embassy. When Switzerland became a federal state in 1848, the first national government moved into the late Baroque building, from where it governed the young state until 1857. Today, the Erlacherhof is the seat of the mayor's office, the city administration and chancellery, and is where the council holds its weekly meetings.

## Programme

### 1848 – Special case Switzerland

The first Federal President Jonas Furrer, representing the Liberals, and Federal Councillor Ulrich Ochsenbein, representing the Radicals, meet at the Erlacherhof for an extraordinary meeting.  
*On the hour • 30 min. • D*  
*Ground Floor • Council Chamber*  
*Play*

### 1848 – an incredible story

Introduction of the Federal Constitution and the events surrounding 1848 that made Switzerland what it is today.  
*Continous • D*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Vestibule*  
*Film*

### 175 years of Bern as the seat of the federal government

Find out more about the election of Bern as the seat of the federal government and test your knowledge in a quiz.  
*Continous • D*  
*1<sup>st</sup> floor • Ballroom*  
*Exhibition • Quiz*



# Bern Town Hall

## Older than the Confederation itself

Rathausplatz 2

The Town Hall has been the focus of political life in the canton and city of Bern for 600 years. The cantonal parliament holds its sessions here four times a year. It is also where the parliamentary committees hold their preliminary deliberations and where the parliamentary groups of the various political parties gather. The Cantonal Council (executive) meets weekly in the Town Hall to discuss and decide on government business. It is also the meeting place of Bern's city parliament and the youth parliaments of the Canton and City of Bern. The Town Hall also receives international guests. In the autumn of 1946, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited Bern delivering a speech to the enthusiastic Bernese population from the Town Hall's grand exterior staircase in which he expressed his hope for a "peacefully united Europe".

## Programme

### No Federal Constitution without Bern?

How Bern and Switzerland reinvented themselves between 1798 and 1848.

*Continuous • D F*

*Ground Floor • Town hall*

*Exhibition*

### #GoVote2023!

Discover new ways of taking part in political life via modern channels.

*Continuous • D*

*First floor • Lobby*

*Information desk*

### Debates and speeches in the cantonal parliament chamber

Should the people of Bern approve the federal constitution? Play the role of a cantonal parliamentarian in 1848!

*Every 30 mins. • D F*

*First floor • Cantonal Parliament chamber*

*Talk*

### Refreshments

You will find tasty snacks at the bistro bar.

*Continuous*

*Ground Floor • Town hall ☞*

More information can be found at [be.ch/1848](http://be.ch/1848)





# Bern Cantonal Bank

## From cultural venue to bank

Bundesplatz 8

Anyone entering the head office of the Bern Cantonal Bank (BEKB) on Bundesplatz today finds themselves in a modern and open reception area – without the traditional row of counters. A lot has changed since the building was constructed around 150 years ago. Construction work on the building on Bundesplatz originally designed as a museum by Johann Caspar Wolff began in 1867, and it was officially inaugurated two years later. Until 1903, the ground floor served as a reading room for journals and periodicals with a concert hall on the first floor, where lectures, parties and balls were held.

The adoption of Bern's cantonal constitution on 31 July 1831 brought political rights and freedoms to its citizens. These included freedom of trade and commerce. In order for business-minded people to engage in trade and commerce, a bank was needed to secure funding. And so the Cantonal Bank of Bern was founded in 1834, Switzerland's first cantonal bank.

The building was repurposed in 1906 and the bank opened for business. In 1988, Bern's cantonal parliament took the decision to merge the cantonal bank with the Hypothekarkasse des Kantons Bern. Bern Cantonal Bank, or BEKB for short, which emerged from the merger, commenced operations in 1991.

During the Government District Open Days, the NEXPO association ([nexpo.ch](http://nexpo.ch)) is a guest at the BEKB.

# Programme

## The Swiss National Exhibitions: Review and Outlook

The themes of the six past national exhibitions and a look at 2032.

Modern Switzerland has shaped contemporary history with the national exhibitions of 1883, 1896, 1914, 1939, 1964 and 2002.

Get to know the ideas for the NEXPO.

*Continuous • D F I R E*

*Ground Floor • Hall*

*Exhibition* 

## Are national exhibitions still relevant?

175 years of modern Switzerland – why do we need the NEXPO?

Hans Stöckli (Council of States BE), Alec von Graffenried (Mayor of Bern) and others.

Moderator: Pascal Krauthammer

*Saturday 3.30 pm • 60 min. • D*

*Ground Floor • atelier am bundesplatz*

*Panel discussion*

## schweiz debattiert: Switzerland of the future

How to deal with parking in Switzerland's ten largest towns?

Erich Fehr (Mayor of Biel), Sami Kanaan (Executive Council Member of the City of Geneva), Yorick Corbat (Gymnasium Hofwil) and Zoe Krebs (Gymnasium Kirchenfeld).

Moderators: Ursula Naef, Ava Senften (schweiz debattiert)

*Saturday 2 pm • 45 min. • D*

*Ground Floor • atelier am bundesplatz*

*Debate*

Should an unconditional basic income be introduced in Switzerland?

Tanja Blume (JUSO), Benjamin Bratschi (FDP), Niels Bärtschi (Gymnasium Kirchenfeld) and Tim Toeppen (Gymnasium Thun).

Moderators: Ursula Naef, Ava Senften (schweiz debattiert)

*Saturday 5 pm • 45 min. • D*

*Ground Floor • atelier am bundesplatz*

*Debate*

Should there be a compulsory social year for all 18–22-year-olds?

Valentina Achermann, Tom Berger (both members of Bern City Parliament), Ava Leuenberger (Gymnasium Hofwil) and Darleen Pfister (Gymnasium Thun).

Moderator: Lukas Hupfer (Polit-Forum Bern).

*Sunday 11 am • 45 min. • D*

*Ground Floor • atelier am bundesplatz*

*Debate*

Should Switzerland no longer be allowed to supply weapons abroad?

Simone Richner (Member of Bern City Parliament), Céline Widmer (Member of the National Council ZH), Charlotte Günther and Sasche Weaver (Gymnasium Kirchenfeld). Moderator: Lukas Hupfer (Polit-Forum Bern).

*Sunday 3 pm • 45 min. • D*

*Ground Floor • atelier am bundesplatz*

*Debate*

# Catering

There are four catering stands at various sites around the event area offering dishes at reasonable prices:

## Bundesterrasse

*White wine risotto • Cheese  
(vegan option available)  
Water • Beer • Wine • Coffee*

## Bundesplatz

*Bratwurst • French fries  
Ketchup • Mayonnaise • Bread  
Water • Beer • Wine • Coffee*

## Bundesgasse

*Gnocchi • Tomato sauce • Cheese  
(vegan option available)  
Water • Beer • Wine • Coffee*

## Kochergasse

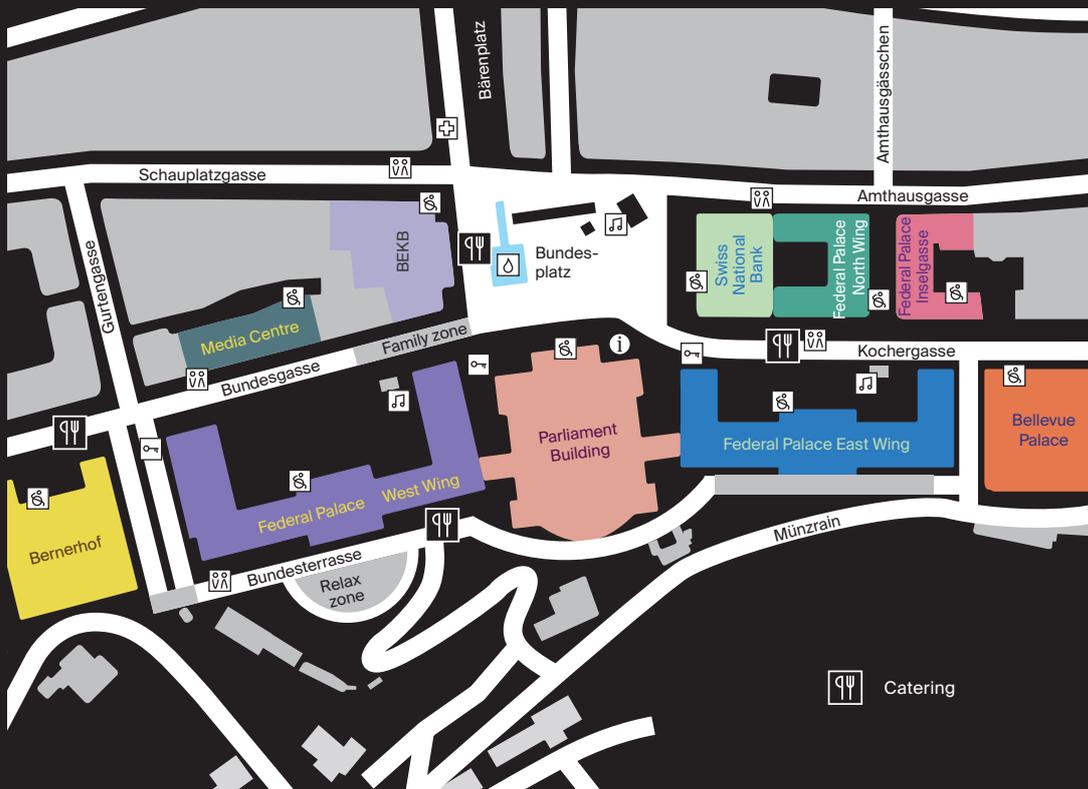
*Raclette • Potatoes  
Pickled silverskin onions  
Water • Beer • Wine • Coffee*

## General information

Catering stand opening times are the same as those for the buildings they are situated in: Saturday, 1pm until 9pm; Sunday, 9 am until 6pm.

There is a deposit of CHF 2.- on all crockery. Dishes can be returned to any of the catering stands.

Accepted forms of payment:  
Cash, TWINT, credit and debit cards.



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## Audio guide

Discover the Swiss Parliament  
building and its surrounding institutions  
with the official audio tour.



App Store



12th September 2023  
Unveiling of the Tympanon



No ID  
No Entry



[1848-parl.ch](https://1848-parl.ch)