



Maja Riniker
Postfach
5034 Suhr

**Rede von Nationalrätin Maja Riniker
anlässlich des 108. Finnischen Unabhängigkeitstages**

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

12. Dezember 2025

Hyvää itsenäisyyspäivää!

On suuri kunnia juhlia tätä päivää kanssanne.

Sehr geehrter Herr Botschafter,
sehr geehrte Frau Tiitola-Salmimies,
Exzellenzen,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honour to celebrate Finland's Independence Day with you today — here in the historic Rathaus of Bern, a house of democracy that reflects many of the values Finland holds dear: resilience, responsibility, and dignity.

Vor wenigen Wochen durfte ich Finnland als Präsidentin des Nationalrats besuchen — und dieser Besuch hat mich stärker geprägt, als ich erwartet hätte. Finland leaves an impression — subtle, but lasting. The very first moment, when we entered the Merihaka Civil Defence Shelter, set the tone. What Finland builds under the ground says as much about the country as what Switzerland builds on top of mountains. Both nations understand security not as a theory but as a responsibility to their people.

Später im Parlament, when Speaker Jussi Halla-aho greeted me, I felt something deeply familiar — a culture of political clarity and institutional respect. Our discussion was calm, direct, with no unnecessary embellishment. That is something Finns and Swiss both appreciate: a sentence that means exactly what it says.

Der Applaus im Plenum, als meine Anwesenheit angekündigt wurde, war ein Moment echter Freundschaft. It showed sincerity — something you cannot script.

Next year, Switzerland and Finland celebrate 100 years of diplomatic relations — a century of cooperation built not on noise, but on trust.

Our countries share a rare symmetry:

- a deep respect for nature,
- a culture of precision,
- democratic modesty paired with strong institutions,
- and a sense of humour that delivers maximum effect with minimum words.

Both our nations have learned to thrive quietly — without loudness, without drama, with long-term confidence. And in this spirit of continuity and friendship, I had the pleasure of extending an official invitation to Speaker Jussi Halla-aho to visit the Swiss Parliament.

A visit that will allow us to deepen our parliamentary dialogue, strengthen institutional ties, and mark the beginning of the next century of our relations.

Finnland hat sicherheitspolitisch historische Schritte gemacht. Your accession to NATO strengthened Europe. It sent a clear message — to Europe, to Russia, and to every democracy under pressure. Finland is one of the strongest supporters of Ukraine worldwide — per capita and in conviction. Thirty defence packages, long-term cooperation, and moral clarity: this is leadership.



Switzerland, while neutral, is not passive. Neutrality means responsibility — to international law, sovereignty, and human dignity. We are proud to join Finland in the Shelter Coalition, protecting civilians from Russian attacks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are entering a decade in which global stability can no longer be taken for granted. Hybrid threats, disinformation, cyberattacks, energy insecurity and pressure on democratic institutions concern both Finland and Switzerland. During my discussions with Minister Antti Häkkinen, I was struck by Finland's strategic clarity: security is no longer a sector — it is a mindset.

Switzerland shares this understanding. We are strengthening our civil protection, modernising our armed forces and investing in preparedness. But there is one area where Finland truly inspires: the culture of readiness. Every Finn knows what to do in crisis. In Switzerland, we also prepare — mostly for winter sports.

Switzerland and Finland consistently rank among the world's most innovative nations. This is no coincidence. Innovation thrives where education, reliability, trust and silence are taken seriously. Unsere Länder sind wirtschaftlich klein, aber technologisch gross. Whether in clean energy, AI ethics, pharmaceuticals, cybersecurity or sustainable design — Finland and Switzerland often approach challenges from similar angles.

Culturally, our nations share an aesthetic of clarity. Aalto and our Swiss modernists would have had much to discuss. Sibelius could have composed for the Alps. And Moomins and Heidi would certainly have been friends.

Diplomatie darf lächeln — besonders heute.

In Switzerland, we discuss snow. (-) In Finland, snow has the final word.

In ice hockey, Finland is a world power. (-) Switzerland tries hard — and compensates with chocolate. Both countries value silence. (-) But when a Finn breaks the silence, you should listen. When a Swiss breaks it, someone is opening a fondue pot. And punctuality? Both nations treasure it — but only one has trains running on time at minus 25 degrees. Not us.

The visit to the patrol boat Turva was unforgettable. For someone from a landlocked country, standing on a maritime high-tech vessel was enlightening. Finland guards not only its borders, but Europe's northern horizon. Beim Abendessen im Restaurant Savoy — geprägt von Aaltos Geist — wurde mir bewusst: Diplomatie entsteht nicht nur in Sitzungssälen. Sie entsteht beim Zuhören, beim Essen, beim Lachen — und manchmal beim Dessert.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world needs partnerships that are principled, reliable and forward-looking. Switzerland and Finland are such partners.

Together, we strengthen democratic resilience.

Together, we support Ukraine.

Together, we innovate and protect what matters.

And together, we can write the next century of our relations with the same trust that shaped the last.

Hyvää itsenäisyyspäivää ja kiitos!

Thank you very much for the invitation. It is an honour to celebrate this day with you.

Let us raise our glasses — to the friendship between our countries, to our precious cooperation and to our common effort in defending our democratic values and freedom.

Kippis!