

## Inside this issue

“I select my suppliers with great care and personal commitment” 1 + 2

Federal Councilor Ignazio Cassis Visits Japan 3

Switzerland and the US Conduct Trade Talks in Geneva 3

NEC Corporation to Relocate Digital Government and Digital Finance Headquarters to Zurich 4

会見

INTERVIEW

## “I select my suppliers with great care and personal commitment”

Interview with Anika Rosen, founder and owner of *Kamiya*

*Kamiya* is a Zurich-based store offering handcrafted Japanese paper and stationery. Known for products such as authentic Washi paper, calligraphy supplies, and carefully curated gift items, *Kamiya* showcases traditional Japanese craftsmanship in Switzerland. In this edition of our newsletter, we had the opportunity to talk to **Anika Rosen**, the founder and owner of *Kamiya*.



Anika Rosen in her shop in Zurich © *Kamiya*

**What inspired you to found *Kamiya*, and how did your background in design influence the concept of your store?**

*Kamiya* was born from a long-held desire to run my own creative studio shop after finishing graphic design studies. Instead of working in an anonymous office, I wanted a space to sell my own creations and products that personally fascinated me. Over time, I developed small projects like postcards featuring Japanese photos, handmade paper goods, a Japanese ginger drink, and a timeless, simple backpack. In late 2022, while searching for a new studio with my life partner Ken, we found a shop, turning my dream into reality. Initially focused on joint projects, I soon showcased my postcards and paper goods in the windows. I intuitively felt that more Japanese products, like pens and special papers, had to be included—things I had collected over years of travel and that perfectly matched my vision. My graphic design

background influences the product selection, color schemes, and presentation. Ultimately, *Kamiya* is a passion project fueled by curiosity and creativity that continues to grow.

**What is your personal or professional connection to Japan, and how has it shaped *Kamiya's* philosophy and product selection?**

My connection to Japan began with a solo trip years ago, sparking a lasting fascination with its culture and craftsmanship. I return almost annually to deepen this bond, inspired by simple, well-crafted objects like pencils and packaging. Meaningful friendships, such as with Arika and her mother in Gifu Prefecture, have enriched my appreciation of Japanese artisanship. My master's thesis linked Western fascination with Japanese objects, blending my academic background with my passion. Learning Japanese led me to meet my partner, Ken, who is half Japanese. These experiences shape

*Kamiya's* philosophy and product selection. For me, *Kamiya* is about sharing and honoring Japanese culture and craftsmanship, not just selling products.

***Kamiya* offers a unique range of handpicked Japanese paper goods and writing instruments. Could you share how you select your Japanese suppliers and what you look for in their products?**

My selection of Japanese paper goods and writing instruments is personal and eclectic. Instead of using large trade fairs, I find suppliers through authentic encounters during my travels across Japan—in everyday shops, markets, and hardware stores. I seek products that showcase exceptional craftsmanship, thoughtful design, and cultural significance. Sometimes it's simple, clear design; other times, unique materials or colors that reflect Japanese daily life. I've built close partnerships with small family-

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# 会見

INTERVIEW

run workshops, like a paper factory near Mount Fuji, where trust allows me to import rare items. For me, the value lies not only in quality but in honoring artisanal traditions. I select my suppliers with great care and personal commitment.

Are there specific Japanese companies or traditional manufacturers you regularly collaborate with or source products from?

Yes, I regularly collaborate with several Japanese companies, including smaller factories and traditional family businesses. For example, I source natural-dyed paper cords from Gift, washi paper from Yamanashi and Shikoku, and traditional scissors from Tanegashima. I also travel to Japan frequently, visiting workshops and meeting suppliers personally. Direct contact can be challenging due to language barriers and the reserved nature of many small and medium-sized manufacturers. Fortunately, I have support from a Japanese colleague based in Switzerland who assists with importing high-quality brushes and traditional stamps from brands like *Akashiya* and *Genro*. I hope for more open channels to facilitate collaboration, but for now, thorough research and personal visits remain essential to building these valuable relationships.

Many of your products, such as washi paper, calligraphy materials, and handmade notebooks, are deeply rooted in Japanese craft traditions. How do you communicate the cultural significance of these items to your Swiss customers?



An arrangement of products available at *Kamiya* © *Kamiya*

I communicate the cultural significance mainly through personal conversations. Instead of a traditional online shop, I create a space where customers can ask questions and learn about the history, materials, and techniques behind the products. This direct exchange deepens their appreciation and allows me to share authentic knowledge. At *Kamiya*, the focus is on the connection between craftsmanship, culture, and personal communication – and I am always happy when I can share this fascination for Japanese traditions with our Swiss customers.

How do you see the appreciation for Japanese stationery and craftsmanship evolving in Switzerland, and what role does *Kamiya* hope to play in this development?

I have the impression that interest in Japan in Switzerland is currently growing rapidly – significantly more than before. On the one hand, there are people who have long had a passion for Japan and Japanese crafts-

manship, especially paper and stationery, but there are also many who have only recently discovered it. Overall, I experience great fascination from my customers: They find the products beautiful, unique and special – products they have never seen before, and they ask lots of questions. With *Kamiya*, I want to help ensure that the appreciation for Japanese design and craftsmanship does not remain superficial, but that people can develop a deeper understanding and an authentic connection. For example, by making the store a place for exchange rather than an online shop to click through. And also through workshops, for example.

*Thank you for the interview!*

## Federal Councilor Ignazio Cassis Visits Japan

*From 22 to 23 April 2025, Federal Councilor and Foreign Affairs Minister Ignazio Cassis undertook an official visit to Japan, aiming to further strengthen the bilateral ties between Switzerland and Japan. The visit highlighted Switzerland's commitment to enhancing cooperation in various fields, including diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange.*

During his stay, Federal Councilor Cassis participated in Switzerland's National Day for the Osaka World Expo 2025, where he highlighted Switzerland's prominent role as a pioneer in innovation and advanced technologies. In his speech, he expressed pride in Switzerland's participation through its own pavilion, which serves as a unique platform where innovation, sustainability, and collaborative efforts converge. He emphasized that true progress can only be achieved through joint commitment and cooperation. Cassis also reflected on the longstanding and close relationship between both countries and noted that Japan was Switzerland's first Asian partner in the realms of science and technology, a foundation that has since blossomed into over 70 active

collaborations. Furthermore, he underscored the intrinsic connection between innovation, human well-being, and sustainability, stating that Switzerland's contributions extend beyond scientific advancements to embrace deeply human values.

The following day, Mr. Cassis met his Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya, with whom he discussed current geopolitical challenges, both in terms of trade and regional politics in the Asia-Pacific region. His visit also included meetings at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology, where discussions focused on strengthening bilateral relations and exploring new avenues for economic and technological collaboration, as well as in innovation and digital trade. Federal Councilor Cassis reaffirmed Switzerland's interest in deepening partnerships in strategic areas such as quantum technology, where both countries have significant expertise and shared goals.

Sources: [admin.ch](https://www.admin.ch); [swissinfo](https://www.swissinfo.ch)

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SITUATION

## Switzerland and the US Conduct Trade Talks in Geneva

*On Friday, 9 May 2025, in Geneva, Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter and Vice President of the Federal Council Guy Parmelin held discussions with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.*

Earlier, on 24 April 2025, during the Bretton Woods Institutions' Spring meetings in Washington, Keller-Sutter and Parmelin had engaged with their American counterparts. At that time, Bessent and Greer identified Switzerland as one of 15 to 18 priority nations with which the US aims to reach a resolution. They also assured that the US would hold off on raising customs tariffs on Switzerland while talks continue. The Geneva meeting on 9 May focused on

outlining the framework for resolving the customs tariff issue. This session followed the Washington meetings at the end of April and a phone call between President Keller-Sutter and US President Donald Trump on 9 April 2025.

President Keller-Sutter highlighted that both sides are committed to finding a swift solution and accelerating the process, noting that this determination has been clearly expressed by the American delegation. She expressed hope that, following Great Britain, Switzerland would be the next country to finalize a joint declaration of intent.

Vice President Parmelin reinforced this by stating that they have been clearly

told the aim is to speed things up. To advance these efforts, State Secretaries Helene Budliger Artieda and Daniela Stoffel will be tasked with presenting a declaration of intent to Washington, expected within "one to two weeks," according to Keller-Sutter.

However, Parmelin pointed out that the discussions have not yet reached the core of the concessions that may be required from Switzerland, emphasizing, "We're not there yet."

Sources: [admin.ch](https://www.admin.ch); [swissinfo](https://www.swissinfo.ch); [Tribune de Genève](https://www.tribune.ch)

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TREND

## NEC Corporation to Relocate Digital Government and Digital Finance Headquarters to Zurich

### 革新

INNOVATION

During his official visit to Japan, Federal Councilor and Foreign Affairs Minister Ignazio Cassis also met with Takayuki Morita, CEO of [NEC Corporation](#). In this meeting, it was announced that the Japanese IT group has plans to set up the global headquarters for its digital government and digital finance growth area in Zurich in August of this year.

Mr. Cassis described NEC's choice as "testament to the quality of the Swiss ecosystem". He emphasized that it "reflects the trust and future-oriented cooperation between Switzerland and Japan". Japan remains one of Switzerland's most important partners in Asia, particularly in economic, scientific, and technological fields.

Takayuki Morita, President and CEO of NEC, stated that setting up the global headquarters for digital finance and digital government in Zurich "positions Switzerland as a key player in expanding the NEC Group's value proposition to society through digital technology". He also highlighted advancing initiatives between Switzerland and NEC in telecommunications

and pharmaceutical development, leveraging AI technologies. Morita added that NEC was committed to deepening the Japan-Switzerland relationship while continuing to foster innovation. The new global headquarters will be led by NEC Executive Vice President Tomoki Kubo as CEO.

In October 2020, NEC acquired Avaloq Group AG, a Swiss financial software company specializing in digital banking and wealth management solutions, for CHF 2.05 billion. Prior to this, NEC had partnered with Swiss research institutions like the Swiss Center for Scientific Computing (CSCS), reflecting a strong collaborative foundation in scientific computing and technology advancement. The acquisition of Avaloq marked NEC's major step into the global digital finance and digital government sectors.

Sources: [NEC website](#); [admin.ch](#); [swisstrade](#); [SCCIJ website](#)

## Agenda

### 日程

AGENDA

- ✓ EXPO 2025 in Osaka
- Dates: 13 April – 13 October 2025
- Theme: *Designing Future Society for Our Lives*
- Find more information [here](#)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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