

Press Release

Prix Suisse 2026: Vocational Education in the Spotlight and Kamala D. Harris as International Guest Speaker

- Initiative Switzerland places vocational education at the center of attention.
- Kamala D. Harris to attend Prix Suisse 2026 in Bern as guest of honor.



Suhr, 16 June 2026 – The Prix Suisse will be awarded for the sixth time on 7 November 2026 at the Kursaal Bern. Each year, the award is presented to an outstanding personality from the world of business, science, sport or culture. The Prix Suisse 2026 is awarded to Prof. Dr. Thomas H. Zurbuchen, astrophysicist, former NASA Science Director, and current Head of Space at ETH Zurich. This year's edition is also dedicated to vocational education, one of Switzerland's key success factors. With this thematic focus, Initiative Switzerland underscores the important contribution of the country's dual education system to competitiveness, innovation and social cohesion. Kamala D. Harris, former Vice President of the United States (2021–2025), is expected to attend the event in Bern as Guest of Honor and keynote speaker.

Vocational Education: The Foundation of Switzerland's Competitiveness

Around two-thirds of all young people in Switzerland, approximately 65,000 annually, begin a vocational apprenticeship after completing compulsory schooling. Switzerland's dual education system is unique in the world and serves as a model for countries ranging from Germany to Singapore.

More than half of all skilled professionals in technical, trade, healthcare, and commercial occupations have completed initial vocational education and training. It is an essential pillar supporting Switzerland's middle class, industrial sector, and healthcare system.

The message of the Prix Suisse 2026 is clear: Vocational education is not a Plan B. It is a first-choice educational pathway – socially valuable, economically essential, and personally rewarding.

Kamala D. Harris as Guest of Honor

The Prix Suisse connects national issues with international perspectives. This year, Kamala D. Harris, former Vice President of the United States (2021–2025), will attend the award ceremony in Bern as Guest of Honor and keynote speaker.

Kamala D. Harris is the first woman in U.S. history to have served as Vice President. Her political career began in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, followed by her tenure as District Attorney of San Francisco and later as Attorney General of California.

As Vice President, she championed efforts to reduce child poverty, combat gun violence, and protect reproductive rights. On the international stage, she worked to strengthen global alliances and promote democratic values – issues that also resonate strongly in Switzerland.

Prix Suisse

Initiative Switzerland annually honours an outstanding personality with the Prix Suisse. The recipients of the "Prix Suisse" are individuals who have made exceptional contributions to Switzerland in recent years and who stand out through courage, innovation and creativity. The award is presented alternately in the fields of business, science, sports and culture.

The first recipient in 2021, in the category of business, was entrepreneur and politician **Peter Spuhler**. In 2022, physician and scientist **Martine Clozel** received the award. In November 2023, exceptional athlete **Marco Odermatt** was honoured. In 2024, **Büne Huber** — musician, painter and frontman of the cult band Patent Ochsner — received the Prix Suisse in the category of culture. Last year, entrepreneur and innovator **Willy Michel** was awarded the Prix Suisse in the category of business. In 2026, the award will be presented to astrophysicist and former NASA Science Director **Prof. Dr. Thomas H. Zurbuchen**, who now heads ETH Zurich Space.

About Initiative Switzerland

As a foundation, Initiative Switzerland supports innovative ideas and projects across all regions and language areas of Switzerland. In doing so, it actively promotes the country's competitiveness and prosperity. Through its activities and initiatives, it aims to help ensure that Switzerland can sustainably maintain its global leadership position and innovative strength.

Initiative Switzerland is led by **Stefan Linder**, co-founder of the Swiss Economic Forum and its former long-standing CEO and delegate.

www.initiative-schweiz.org/en

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