

## **FILIPINOS IN SWITZERLAND CELEBRATE MIGRANTS' DAY**

The Philippine Catholic Mission-Switzerland organized the annual celebration of Philippine Migrants' Day in Switzerland on 02 November 2014, which was attended by around 500 people from across Switzerland. The event, held in cooperation with the Filipino Community of Fribourg, was held in the town of Belfaux in Canton Fribourg.

The celebration of Migrants' Day brought together the Filipino communities from the German and French speaking parts of the country.

The event kicked off with a mass concelebrated by Fr. Antonio Enerio, Chaplain of the Philippine Catholic Mission in Switzerland, Fr. Julipros Dolotallas of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), and Fr. Jojie Padilla, Order of Preachers (Dominican).



*The formal celebration of Philippine Migrants Day was started with a Thanksgiving Mass.*

The mass was followed by lunch serving Filipino cuisine and a program highlighting Filipino culture by showcasing the sights, sound and movement which are distinctly Filipino.

Performers from the Filipino communities in various cantons of Switzerland gave the audience the following special cultural numbers: Maranao Dance by the Filipino community of Geneva; Waray Dance by the Filipino community of Berne; and the Gayong-Gayong Dance (from Aklan/Capiz) by the Filipino Community of Lausanne.



*Members of the Filipino community in Geneva performing the Maranao "Fan" Dance*



*Members of the Filipino community in Berne performing the Waray-waray Dance.*

In his message to the Filipino community, Ambassador Leslie J. Baja expressed his appreciation to the Filipino diaspora community for their contributions to the Philippine economy and society. He commended the Filipino migrants in Switzerland for continuing to be truly Filipino notwithstanding the length of time that they have been away from the Philippines.



*Ambassador Baja commends all Filipino migrants in Switzerland for remaining truly Filipino over the years.*

The Ambassador also stressed that, with the cooperation of our *kababayans*, the Philippine Embassy in Berne and the Consulate General in Geneva shall be even more responsive to the needs and welfare of overseas Filipinos in Switzerland.

“If we Filipinos in Switzerland stay united, we can be a viable force to reckon with. We can do a lot for ourselves and our country. In all the events that I have been to, I have always said that *kung sama sama, kayang kaya*. We can do a lot together. And together, we can make a difference,” said Ambassador Baja.



*“Kung sama sama, kayang kaya”, the Ambassador’s call for unity to the more than 500 Filipinos present during the celebration of Philippine Migrants Day.*

The Ambassador also took the opportunity to invite everyone who was qualified to exercise their right to vote in the 2016 Philippine national elections to register for the Overseas Voting system. He called on everyone to participate in Overseas Voting system so that overseas Filipinos can truly participate in nation building.



*The Ambassador with Embassy and Consulate General personnel pose with the organizers of this year's Philippine Migrants' Day. At left of the Ambassador's is Sr. Merlyn Arsolon (WCW) who heads the Philippine Catholic Mission-Switzerland.*

As part of its consular service to the Filipinos in Switzerland, an Embassy booth was set up at the venue to facilitate the overseas voting registration process "on the spot" during the day's celebrations.

During the event, the Embassy processed thirty-one (31) applications: twenty-seven (27) for registration and certification as overseas voters; three (3) transfer of registration records; and one (1) change of address.



*The Philippine Embassy's Overseas Voting Registration Booth during the Migrants' Day celebration.*