



CH-3003 Bern, SDC

Bern, 5 March 2012

Swiss Rescue exercise 'ACHILLES'

Invitation to the visitor day on Wednesday 14 March 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Since November 2008, Swiss Rescue has been classified as a UN INSARAG team (International Search and Rescue Advisory Group), and as such is obliged to conduct deployment exercises at regular intervals. The next exercise, named 'ACHILLES', will be staged from 13 to 15 March 2012 in Epeisses in the Geneva area (as a substitute for the exercise of March 2011 which had to be postponed as a result of the earthquake in Japan). Overall around 100 personnel and 12 dogs will be put through their paces to test the operational capability of Rescue Swiss in the event of a severe earthquake.

The scenario for the exercise is based on a severe earthquake in the country of 'Romandia' (Geneva area), and consists of the following components:

- Initial mobilisation at Geneva airport, which is the setting for arrival in the affected country (registration at international reception centre) followed by transfer to the disaster area.
- Carry out fact-finding missions in the damage zone and define the deployment zones for Swiss Rescue
- Deployment of Swiss Rescue (all components) in the defined deployment zones for 48 hours
- Demobilisation

A visitor event for partners, guests and the media will be held on 14 March 2012 within the framework of this exercise in Epeisses, just outside Geneva. Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, who as Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs is also Head of Humanitarian Aid, is expected to attend the event. The plan is to visit both the exercise village and the operations base during the rescue operation.

We are pleased to invite you to Geneva to attend this event, and look forward to welcoming you.

Programme for Wednesday 14 March 2012

- 9.05 a.m. – 9.30 a.m. **Transfer from Geneva Airport railway station to the exercise village of Epeisses**
Train timetable: depart Bern 7.04 a.m. / arrive Geneva Airport 8.59 a.m.
Buses will depart from Platform A (Arrival Airport) by the taxi stand. Please follow the signs for 'Swiss Rescue operation ACHILLES'.
- 9.30 a.m. – 10.15 a.m. **Welcome and introduction to the exercise**
- 10.15 a.m. – 11.45 a.m. **Visit to the exercise area**
- from 11.45 a.m. – 13.30 a.m. **Aperitif followed by lunch**
- 1.30 p.m. – 2 p.m. **Transfer to Geneva Airport railway station**
Train timetable: depart Geneva Airport 2.01 p.m. / arrive Bern 3.56 p.m.

We look forward to your participation.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Manuel Bessler
Ambassador
Delegate of the Federal Council for Humanitarian Aid

If you have any questions please contact:

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Enclosures:

- Registration slip
- Map of the meeting point at Geneva Airport railway station
- Directions for those travelling by car