



Jakob Kellenberger | Class of 1975

Jakob Kellenberger is a distinguished diplomat, humanitarian, and academic. He headed the interministerial division overseeing European integration for Switzerland, first as Minister and then as Ambassador. In 1992, he was appointed State Secretary for External Relations with a focus on European affairs, and served in parallel as Head of the Political Directorate. As President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), he led a period of expansion and enhanced cooperation with the European Union and its member states. He later became President of Swisspeace Foundation. Additionally, he led an active academic career, teaching for example at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, the Geneva Graduate Institute, and the University of Salamanca.



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From his arrival at the helm of the ICRC in January 2000 until his departure in 2012, the organisation significantly grew both in terms of budget and personnel.



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Kellenberger worked tirelessly to uphold respect for International Humanitarian Law in conflict areas. During his term, the ICRC provided assistance to millions affected by the conflict in Darfur.



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Kellenberger campaigned to protect civilians and aid workers in conflict zones, especially during intense fighting. He urged all parties to ensure the safety and swift assistance of the injured, emphasising the non-negotiable respect for medical personnel's work.

