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# Letter from Christian Meuwly

## Dear compatriots and readers of the Swiss Review

From Pretoria where I arrived at mid-October, I have the honour to represent Switzerland in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Swaziland. During the past four years I worked from Berne as Head of Political Division I: my duty was to foster Switzerland's good relations with European countries, within and outside the EU, and with Central Asian emerging states. I also took part in shaping the Swiss policy in European multilateral organizations.

An integrating Southern Africa, with active participation of its governments to the definition and implementation of Africa-wide schemes of political cooperation, will give me an easy background for comparisons – however, the reality, I know, is complex, and I am looking forward to discovering and trying to understand more of the region, starting from South Africa and its people.

This country has an impressive history of recent achievements, its federal system seems in many respects familiar to the Swiss observer, and, after the successful hosting of the World Football Championship

last year, many hopes continue to shine on its future. South Africa has a clear regional role and a respected position in Africa; it has risen to platforms of worldwide influence through its membership of the G-20 and its association with Brazil, Russia, India and China as one of the "BRICS".

The Federal Council had identified this emerging position when it made a clear, bold statement of its vision of the global development, back in 2005: it decided to include South Africa among the "strategic partners" with which it intended to reinforce mutually fruitful and diversified relations. With the Memorandum of Understanding on strengthening mutual cooperation signed between the two governments in 2008, the framework has been set for tangible progress: the number and quality of high level contacts between governments and administrations is a proof that, for South Africa too, Switzerland matters. And economically, the level of bilateral trade and the flow of investment – in both directions – have confirmed that Switzerland and South Africa have deep, intensive and stable relations.

I am convinced that the wide number of Swiss citizens residing in South Africa contributes in many respects to this partnership: you are particularly well placed to promote Switzerland's

visibility and good reputation. As new Ambassador, fresh to this part of the world, I shall seek dialogue and cooperation with your organized representatives, and will be happy to meet you on numerous occasions to learn more about your expectations and projects for the future of this beautiful country. I shall also ensure that, together with the Swiss General Consulate in Cape Town for those of you who live in its area, the Swiss embassy in Pretoria, which has become a consular service center for an area reaching to the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo, remains truly available to be your point of entry to the Swiss institutions whenever you need care from Switzerland.

Yours sincerely  
Christian Meuwly

## CV of Ambassador Christian Meuwly



Christian Meuwly graduated in political science from the University of Lausanne. In 1989, he joined the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. In 1991, he was appointed to the post of press spokesperson of the Department and, in 1992, to Deputy-Head of Information. In 1995, he was transferred as First Secretary, then Counsellor to the Swiss

Permanent Mission to the European Communities in Brussels. In 1999, he returned to Bern, with the rank of Minister, as Deputy-Head of Political Affairs Division I (PA I), Europe and the former USSR, and as Head of the Section for South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the CIS countries. At the same time, he was Head of the Service for the Francophonie until 2001, and in a provisional capacity, Head of the OSCE Service. From 2002 until 2007, he was Deputy-Head of Mission in Paris with the rank of Minister and from April to August 2004, he was temporarily detached to Berne as Head of Information ad interim. As Head of Political Affairs Division I with the rank of Ambassador since March 2007, his responsibilities covered bilateral relations with European and Central Asian countries as well as Swiss participation to the OSCE and the Council of Europe. In 2011 he has been appointed Ambassador of Switzerland to South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Swaziland, with residence in Pretoria.

Christian MEUWLY is married and father of a son.

## Swiss project "Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln"

27 September marked the success of the Swiss Government's technology

Continued overleaf/...

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transfer project in South Africa, with the unveiling of the first operational energy efficient Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln for Clay Brick production.

The inauguration took place at Langkloof Bricks in Jeffrey's Bay, the first clay brick manufacturer in this country to pioneer this technology, under the auspices of the SA-VSBK Project. The VSBK is a simple clay brick firing technique that works with a counter current principle reducing coal consumption by more than 50% and therefore reducing largely greenhouse gas emissions. The VSBK Project forms part of the Global Climate Change Programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Given the enormous potential for this Open Source Technology, SDC together with the two Swiss organizations Swisscontact and Skat implement a programme to make the VSBK

technology available to the entire clay brick making sector in South Africa.

### *Bilateral research cooperation with SA*

**In the Federal Council Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation for 2008-2011, the Swiss Confederation reoriented its foreign science policy, naming eight non-EU countries with which it wished to broaden and deepen bilateral scientific relations.**

Among the priority countries mentioned was South Africa; the research institutes that Switzerland has been working with for the past fifty years in Tanzania (Ifakara Health Institute, IHI) and Côte d'Ivoire (Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques) are included in Switzerland's cooperation strategy with South Africa.

The Swiss South African Joint

Research Programme (SSAJRP) was launched for the purpose of encouraging bilateral cooperation with South Africa.

The bilateral programme launched to encourage research cooperation with South Africa (SSAJRP) has achieved very positive results: 16 JRP's have been approved for funding and are broadly established in the research communities of both countries: 10 higher education and research institutions on the Swiss side work with a comparable number of institutions on the South African side.

In addition, over 60 Faculty Exchange and Student Exchange proposals have been approved under the SSAJRP thus far. In February 2011, a joint call for seed funding was also launched for research projects involving industry partners.

Additional information and calls for proposals: jaqueline.friedenthal@eda.admin.ch.

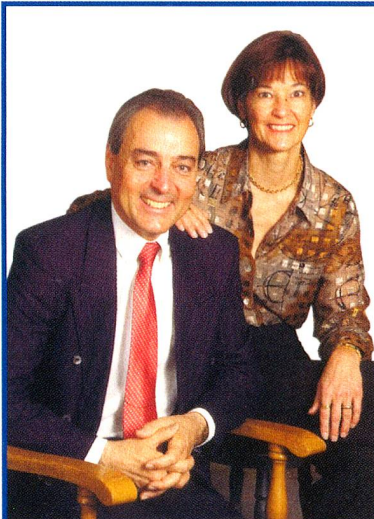
### *Report on the Council meeting*

**The summer session of the Auslandschweizerrat (ASR) was held in Lugano in August.**

The Southern African region were represented by Honorary Consul Hanspeter Graber from the Durban Consulate, as well as your elected Delegate Peter Muller. Unfortunately, your other Delegate, Rolf Schudel, was taken ill and had to undergo heart surgery in Lugano during the Congress. We are pleased to report that Rolf Schudel is making great strides, and wish him a complete recovery.

The matter of Freedom of Personal Mobility has become a controversial matter on the Swiss political agenda. For the Swiss in Southern Africa, who are married or live with a spouse who is a non-Swiss, and who could formerly come to Switzerland on a South African passport without a

Continued overleaf/...



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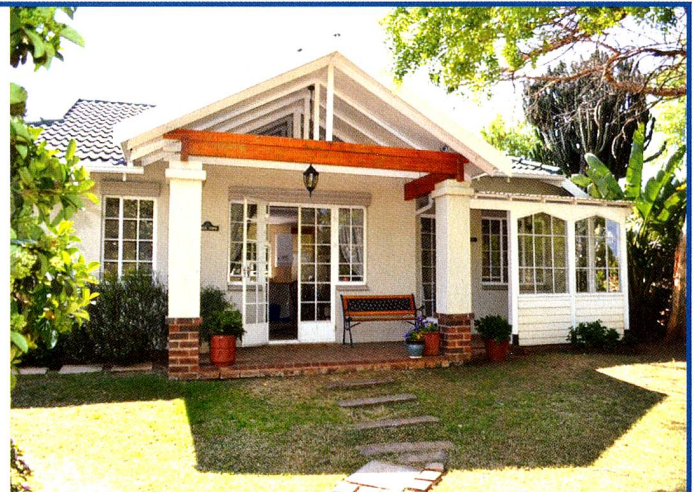
**Helene Scherrer**

C.E.A., NQF4 [SAQA-ID pending],  
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Continued from page 2

visa this is no longer possible, as they now have to apply for and be granted a so-called Schengen Visa, which is not only cumbersome but also costly. This whole matter was debated, and a resolution was adopted by 63 to 3 with 5 abstentions, urging the parties concerned to continue with and expand the realised progress of Personenfreizügigkeit.

During Question-Time, your Delegate pointed out that in Southern Africa, since the unilateral move by the Swiss Dept. of Foreign Affairs (EDA) to practically force Swiss to accept an electronic instead of a printed form of the Swiss Review, there had been massive haemorrhage of persons who were getting neither. It is your right as a Swiss Citizen Abroad to receive at least 4 issues of this magazine you are reading now, the Swiss Review, in a printed, or an electronic form.

Peter Muller

## Thank you for your feedback

Particularly during the past two years, the undersigned as your ASR Delegate for Southern Africa, has been thrilled to get increasing feedback from readers of the Swiss Review in Southern Africa.

Of the 10'590 registered Swiss, some 1'785 are under the age of 18. This leaves an adult population of 8'805 persons which represents our political voting potential in Southern Africa. However, as at 31.12.2010 only some 1600 had registered to enable them to vote. This represents a mere 18% of our possible voting potential. The undersigned therefore urges every Swiss in Southern Africa who has not yet done so, to go to the nearest consulate or embassy to register for voting.

Many Swiss Abroad have some money on various Swiss bank accounts. Most of the large Swiss banks are now levying monthly bank charges up to CHF 40 per month on accounts that do not have Swiss addresses. The latest list of banks NOT charging such fees can be obtained from the undersigned.

Your delegates are often made aware that there is minor discrimination against Swiss Abroad in certain Swiss legislation such as with the waiting period before a spouse can acquire Swiss nationality after marrying a Swiss Abroad. We are fighting to correct such matters in the proposed new LAW FOR SWISS ABROAD.

Your delegates wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a healthy, successful 2012.

Peter Muller

email [sargro@bluewin.ch](mailto:sargro@bluewin.ch) or telephone +41 62 8932 906 or fax +41 62 8932 907



**Delegates of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad for Southern Africa:**

**Peter Müller**

T +41 62 893 2906,  
F +41 62 893 2907,  
[sargro@bluewin.ch](mailto:sargro@bluewin.ch),  
P.O.Box 123, CH-5103  
Wildeggen;

**Rolf B. Schudel,**

T +27 11 452 2716,  
C +27 82 574 9883,  
[rolfbschudel@rolfbschudel.ch](mailto:rolfbschudel@rolfbschudel.ch),  
Beukes Avenue 49, 1609  
Edenvale, Johannesburg;  
1, Via al Piana 7, 6988 CH-  
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## SWISS CLUB INFO AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### JOHANNESBURG

Swiss Society Helvetia, 31 Moerdyk Ave, Vorna Valley, Midrand, Chairman: Mario Valli, 082 451 8040; office: Debora Lanz, T/F 0118053039, C 0826516152, [swissclubjhb@whoswho.co.za](mailto:swissclubjhb@whoswho.co.za), Swiss Country Club Rest. «The Courier», Wolfgang Wollauz, T/F 0118053040, C 0825610063, Tue-Sat 11-21h30 Rest./kitchen, 11-24h Bar, Sun 10-17h, T/F 011 805 3040, C 082561 0063, [www.dining-out.co.za](http://www.dining-out.co.za) «The Courier»

Our 1<sup>st</sup> of August Celebration was very well attended by ± 800 people. Congratulations to the winner of the Raffle Ticket 1<sup>st</sup> Prize of the Swiss International Airlines return flight to Switzerland for two, Brigitta George-Gujer. Our Clubs of Society: Afro Gugge, Amicale Suisse Romande, Boccia, Skittling Club. Associated Groups: Swiss Choir, Swiss Rifle Club, Swiss Golf, G.S.N.A. Senior Swiss Circle meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month for Lunch. Swiss Ladies meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month for lunch; Evi Frei 011 673 464. Please diarize our over 55 Christmas Lunch on 4 December.

### PRETORIA

Swiss Embassy 0124520660, Swiss Society Alpina, Hans-Georg Bosch, President, T 0123478310, C 0825510222, [swissclub.pta@hbosch.com](mailto:swissclub.pta@hbosch.com), Biffy van Rooyen, Secretary, [swissclub.pta@hbosch.com](mailto:swissclub.pta@hbosch.com) Kegelabend, Swiss Club, Vorna Valley: date to be confirmed: Yearend function, Johanneskirche Church Hall 19 November, 16h

### CAPE TOWN

Swiss Consulate General T 0214183665, Swiss Social&Sports Club, Nick Eppenberger, Nicky Rodrigues T 0722185759, membership secretary: [eppenberger@telkomsa.net](mailto:eppenberger@telkomsa.net), [www.swissclub.co.za](http://www.swissclub.co.za)

Our We welcome our new catering team, Renate & Norma in the kitchen and Krassi in the Bar. Our aim is to provide our members with good quality Swiss-style meals at club prices, as well as affordable drinks every Wednesday and Thursday from 18.00 - 23.00. 19 November - over 70's tea party, 4 December Samichlaus / JONKERSHOEK with Frauentreffen, 6 December Baenjeass, 17 December Xmas

Dinner. Browse [www.swissclub.co.za](http://www.swissclub.co.za) for forthcoming events

### SWISS CLUB NATAL

Hanspeter Graber, T/F 031 568 2457, C 083 262 6107, [hansg@saol.com](mailto:hansg@saol.com); Philippe Lanz, Secretary, [pl@swisscontact.co.za](mailto:pl@swisscontact.co.za), C 082 4932673

JASS EVENINGS: Westville Country Club, Link Rd, Westville (first road on the left when travelling from the Pavillion N3 exit towards Westville). As before, the Jass evening takes place every second Friday evening of the month at 19h. 11/11, 9/12 (price Jassen), 13/1, 10/2, 9/3, 13/4. TARGET SHOOTING: Dave Nicol Shooting Range, Nottingham Road, KZN Midland, starting at 9h: 26/11, 3/12, 28/1, 25/2, 31/3, 28/4. OTHER EVENTS: Ten Pin Bowling, Amanzitoti Dolphin Bowl, Sunday 20/11 10h, Years End Braai, Sunday 11/12, 11h, Culture Evening (Swiss Film Evening), Westville Country Club, Saturday 21/01, 19h, Ten Pin Bowling, Amanzitoti Dolphin Bowl, Sunday 19/02 10h, AGM, Kearsney College Grounds, Sunday 4/03, 10h30.

### SWISS CLUBS EASTERN CAPE Port Elizabeth

John Diener, President, PO Box 5608, Walmer 6065, T 0413792421, [the\\_dieners@bluewin.ch](mailto:the_dieners@bluewin.ch); comm.member Mark Kresber C 0823281098, T w 0413671422

### SWISS CLUB FAR NORTH

Paul Thomas, PO Box 148, Makado 0920, C 0823343187 Girardin T 0155563690

### NAMIBIA

Hon. Consul K. Neuenschwander, 36B Jan Brand Street, Windhoek, PO Box 9298, Eros/Windhoek, Telefon+Fax +264 61 225 116 Schweizer Club, Peter Hess, T +26461252943, C +264811246890, [phess@iafrica.com.na](mailto:phess@iafrica.com.na)

Provisorische Vorschau auf die Veranstaltungen: November: Jahresabschluss mit evtl. Buffetessen

### SWAZILAND

Ruedi Hofer, Calabash Rest., T (h) +2684161095, T (w) +2684161187, C +2686028545, [calabash@swazi.net](mailto:calabash@swazi.net)

### ZIMBABWE

Swiss Embassy, Harare (represents Angola, Malawi&Zambia), T +2634703997/8, F +2634794925, [vertretung@har.rep.admin.ch](mailto:vertretung@har.rep.admin.ch)

### MAURITIUS

Club Suisse de Maurice, Secrétariat: Alois Fürer, Comet Street 19, Roches Brunes, Beau-Bassin, T 466-2014 [fureralois@intnet.mu](mailto:fureralois@intnet.mu)

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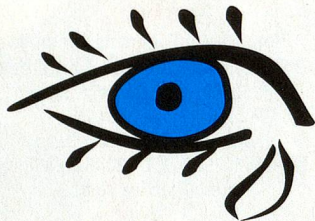
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### IMPRESSUM

Editor of

Swiss Review Southern Africa:

Gisela Piercey, P.O. Box 408,

Kenton-on-Sea 6191,

South Africa,

Phone 0466482632

Fax 0866020489,

gisela@africantwisttravel.com

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