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## Meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad 23rd March 2019

The legislative body of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), met for its biannual meeting at the town hall in Bern on 23 March 2019. For the second time, the meeting followed on an exchange with Swiss parliamentarians for an update on political issues with relevance for the Swiss Abroad.

Amongst the political issues discussed were the framework agreement with the European Union, the increasing opposition against e-voting and the ongoing efforts to improve the Swiss bank situation. A presentation about the Swiss Old Age insurance by representatives from the 'Zentrale Ausgleichsstelle' (ZAS) provided helpful information about common AHV questions.

With a view to the upcoming federal parliament elections in October a draft election manifesto was approved. The Council decided for a questionnaire to be sent to members of parliament standing for re-election. They will be asked on their position to topics concerning the Swiss Abroad, notably the right to vote, international mobility, Switzerland's consular network and the policy of Swiss banks with expat clients.

### Election of Council Delegates:

There were critical voices from within the Council against the planned broadening of the electorate (ALL Swiss Abroad registered with a Consulate should be able to vote as opposed to only the Swiss Clubs having voting rights).

Katja Wallimann Gates (CSA from Australia) spoke about her experience during the pilot project of all Swiss directly voting for the delegates in Australia in 2017. Carmen Trochsler followed up with facts and actual numbers and emphasised that representation of the Swiss Abroad is only possible if all Swiss can vote. Together it was one encouraging and positive statement for direct elections.

Franz Muheim (CSA from Scotland) presented results of a working group consisting of delegates from around the world, including Roland Isler, representing Australia. The group is investigating ways for the introduction

of worldwide direct election of CSA delegates to take place in 2021, based on experience with pilot projects in Australia and Mexico in 2017. The electorate would be the country in general but could also be the consular district or regions.

What does online election of delegates mean: Start early with election preparation. Search for candidates, get them checked, inform Swiss Abroad via Swiss Review, social media, local newsletters, vote via e-voting.

Given the current resistance within Switzerland against e-voting in general the question remains what would be appropriate for the election of the delegates and what can be financed.

The topic will be further discussed at the meeting in Montreux in August.

### Wealth Creation through the Swiss Abroad (positive contributions of Swiss Abroad)

This initiative by Beat Knoblauch, (CSA from Australia) acknowledged by the CSA, will be passed on to 'Presence Suisse' in Bern. The CSA and the Secretariat have not sufficient funding in place for such an in-depth study: motion carried.

### Cantonal Bank of Geneva

Difficulties of Swiss residents to establish a relationship with the Cantonal Bank of Geneva (BCGE), the new partner of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, had been addressed in the lead-up to the meeting. Discussions between the different parties helped to resolve the issues. Contact person for any request to open a bank account with the bank is Stephan.Vayanos@bcge.ch

### Support of political parties

While meeting in a scheduled session in Bern with Swiss parliamentarians before the CSA session, discussions were held on the coming Federal Elections. It was brought over the Swiss Abroad take notice of the mood of the political parties and their stance in matters concerning the Swiss Abroad. The parties were urged to make a more concerted effort to get the votes from the Swiss Abroad.

## News from Swissinfo

Swissinfo would like to launch an app for Swiss Abroad with a daily briefing specifically for Swiss Abroad. They also want to give Clubs a chance to raise their voice ahead of the elections by organising a roundtable discussion for later this year. [www.swissinfo.ch/eng/-weareswissabroad\\_swiss-abroad-clubs--we-want-to-talk-with-you/44840468](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/-weareswissabroad_swiss-abroad-clubs--we-want-to-talk-with-you/44840468)

### E-voting

SVP Member of Parliament, Claudio Zanetti is one of the founding members of the committee to put a stop to e-voting. Being at the same time a board member of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, he put forward an interpellation with the goal to allow for voting material to be sent out via email.

### Banks

John McGough (CSA from Hungary) put forward a motion to sue PostFinance in court, in the hope of forcing the company to grant expatriate Swiss clients the right to hold an account.

Both the OSA president, Remo Gysin, as well as senior council member and Senator Filippo Lombardi, warned against launching into long and costly legal dispute with very limited chances of winning. They believe political solutions hold more promise given a reshuffle of the Swiss government at the start of the year and parliamentary elections due October.

Lombardi said he was confident that it will be worth launching new proposals in parliament to achieve an improvement of the current situation.

The delegates in the end called for equal access to the services of PostFinance, but did not support John McGough's proposal.

### Old Age Insurance

Representatives of the Old Age Insurance presented general and practical information about the topic AHV for Swiss Abroad.

- Zentrale Ausgleichsstelle (ZAS), part of this is the Schweizerische Ausgleichskasse (SAK), responsible for all insured with residence abroad.
- 13,000 Swiss Abroad have voluntary old age insurance.
- Communication will be improved, working on online solutions/digitised

## OSA News and Medal Results

services, e.g. Platform ESAK or contract with SwissPost for IncaMail (secure emails).

- Life Certificates: 800,000 have been sent out in 2017 for completion.
- Change of address ideally via guichet virtuel / Online Desk of FDFA.
- Individual figures can't be accessed yet online however good website with different forms relating to old age insurance. Also, pension estimate can be calculated online [www.ahv-iv.ch/en/Leaflets-forms/Online-pension-estimate-ESCAL](http://www.ahv-iv.ch/en/Leaflets-forms/Online-pension-estimate-ESCAL)

The Life Certificate can apparently be returned via email.

### Election Manifesto / Recommendation for elections

The Council approved an election manifesto. The charter lays out a procedure to recommend candidates and political parties for the forthcoming national elections.

Based on how much they support our manifesto on what they have done in the last 4 years.

Discussed, will be revised and decided on at the next meeting in Montreux.

The results will be used as a basis for the elections in October.

The above has been printed with the courtesy and approval of the Australian ASO Delegates.

*Peter Ehrler*

*Elected Council Member of the Swiss Abroad representing New Zealand.*



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*Dear Society Members,*

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's society games, and congratulations to all the medal winners!! The top 20% of competitors in each sport and/or category, of each Club qualify for a medal. I'd like to encourage everyone to take part in future society games, it really doesn't matter if you good or not because it's all about taking part, having fun and keeping the great traditional Swiss sports going.  
Manuela Epp, Riflemaster

### Auckland Club

#### Treble Medal Winners

Henry Werfelli 1st bowling  
=1st shooting, men  
3rd cards

#### Double Medal Winners

Adrian Blaser =1st shooting, men  
3rd cards

#### Single Medal Winners

Eloise Dance 1st bowling, juniors  
Erika Lanz 1st shooting, ladies  
Cedric Blaser 1st shooting, boys  
Louis Wallimann 1st cards  
Neil Kaiser 2nd bowling  
Heinz Frei 2nd cards  
Joshua Kaiser 3rd bowling

### Taranaki Club

#### Double Medal Winners

Richard Drummond 1st shooting, boys  
=1st bowling, juniors  
Daniel Drummond 1st shot put, boys  
=1st bowling, juniors  
Victoria Arnold 2nd shot put, ladies  
=2nd shooting, ladies  
Mark Kiser 2nd shooting, men  
2nd bowling, adults

#### Single Medal Winners

Aalyah Oliver =1st shot put, girls  
Jena Buhler =1st shot pu,t girls  
Yvonne Plumtree 1st shot put, ladies  
Alby Schuler 1st cards  
Remigi Zimmermann 1st bowling, adults  
Thomas Werder 1st shot put, men  
Helen Freiman 1st shooting, ladies  
Jonno Phillipps 1st shooting, men  
Mary Ann Whakatutu =2nd shooting, ladies  
Vonnie Ngatai =2nd shooting, ladies  
Marcus Rufer 2nd cards  
Kim Danz 2nd shot put, men  
Ruedi Benkert 3rd cards  
Jonny Bishop =3rd bowling, adults  
Armin Buhler =3rd bowling, adults  
Peter Kaiser 3rd shooting, men  
Bertha Hughes 4th cards  
Adrian Drummond 5th bowling, adults

### Hamilton Club

#### Double medal Winners

Fynn McDonald 1st shot put, boys  
1st shooting, boys  
Hanspeter Burch 1st cards  
2nd bowling  
Manuela Epp 1st shooting, ladies  
2nd shot put, ladies  
Hans Vetsch 2nd shooting, men  
7th bowling

#### Single Medal Winners

Anna Ede 1st shot put, girls  
Heidi Fransen 1st shot put, ladies  
Isaac Kennel 1st bowling, juniors  
Nael Matti 1st shot put, men  
Herbert Staehli 1st bowling  
Walter Zuber 1st shooting, men  
Ruth Baumberger 2nd cards  
Paul Fransen 2nd shot put, men  
Hanna Frischknecht 3rd cards  
Charlie Leuenberger 3rd bowling  
Anna Blättler 4th cards  
Franz Morgenthaler 4th bowling  
Ueli Hofer =5th bowling  
Jo (Joanne) Kennel =5th bowling  
Sharon Bruderer =7th bowling

### Wellington Club

#### Double Medal Winner

Tim Leanny 1st shot put men  
1st bowling

#### Single Medal Winner

John Jordan 1st shooting, men  
Sabin Imhasly-Yang 1st shooting, ladies  
Odile Stotzer 1st shot put, ladies  
Olivia Leanny 1st shot put, girls  
Paul Scherrer 2nd shooting, men  
Nathalie Leanny 2nd bowling



**Total:** 1 treble, 10 double and 48 single medal winners