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# REGIONAL NEWS

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### Editorial



Dear readers,

One topic at the ASR Spring Session in Berne was about the Swiss banks and the Swiss living abroad – a relationship that proves to be more and more difficult. Not only have the Swiss banks increased their account tariffs drastically, Auslandschweizer from certain “risk” countries such as South Africa are now officially not very welcome any more unless they use their bank accounts for asset management.

A few weeks ago I received a call from my bank account consultant in Zurich where I have been banking for more than 20 years (one of the leading banks of Switzerland). The lady came straight to the point and asked me whether I could not please do my international bank transactions with another bank as they would like to only focus on investment advice with Swiss living abroad. I was speechless. She mentioned changing banking regulations and that it was possible that some accounts might be closed in the near future.

I find it appalling that Swiss banks discriminate Swiss living in Southern Africa. I hope that the Auslandschweizererrat is successful in finding a solution to this serious issue which affects all of us in Southern Africa and other countries.

All the best,

GISELA PIERCEY

Editor Swiss Review Southern Africa

### *Consular visits of the Regional Consular Centre Pretoria*

**After a first round of successful visits to the whole consular district last year, the Regional Consular Centre is happy to offer Consular meetings again in Mauritius and Durban this year.**

Please take note of the following schedule:

**Kwazulu-Natal**, South Africa (Durban) 11. – 13.11.2013

**Mauritius** (Quatre Bornes): 18. – 20.11.2013

Swiss citizens will have

the opportunity to apply for a Swiss passport but can also attend to any other consular business. Please use this opportunity to make direct contact with a representative of the Regional Consular Centre.

Please check if and for how long your current Swiss passport is valid. As we cannot guarantee yet that the next visit will take place in 2014, we suggest that passports with a validity of less than 12 months by the end of November 2013 be renewed using the facility we offer on these visits, unless

you already plan a trip to Pretoria or Cape Town.

If you wish to order a new passport you have to present yourself personally at the meeting due to the biometric data that has to be registered.

Swiss citizens registered in the country or province mentioned will receive a letter with detailed information about the venue a few weeks before the visit. It is, therefore, important that you register your current e-mail address and/or your postal address. You can do that by sending an e-mail to: [southernafrica@eda.admin.ch](mailto:southernafrica@eda.admin.ch).

Hopefully, we will see you soon in Mauritius or Durban.

Contact details:

Regional Consular Centre in Pretoria:

E-mail: [southernafrica@eda.admin.ch](mailto:southernafrica@eda.admin.ch)

Tel. +27 (0)12 452 06 61

Fax +27 (0)12 346 26 05

### *Matters for discussion at the ASR Spring Session*

**A number of important matters affecting the Swiss Abroad were scheduled for discussion at the Spring Session of the Auslandschweizererrat on 16 March in Berne.**

### *Difficulties regarding Swiss banking connections for Auslandschweizer*

Many Swiss abroad have at least one banking account in Switzerland usually at one of the major banks.

Unfortunately, since the financial crisis some 6 years ago, and increasing pressure on Swiss banks to refuse questionable holdings by

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depositors with foreign addresses, the holdings by Auslandschweizer, particularly those in the USA, have come under scrutiny and/or been loaded with excessive charges.

Your delegate has been inundated by complaints from Swiss throughout Southern Africa, who have had similar experiences. Just recently, a long-time depositor at one of the large Swiss banks, was told that his account might be closed in the near future.

The officials and certain committee members of ASO/ASR, have thus far tried to discuss the problem with the banks concerned, to no avail.

Roland Büchel, a member of the Swiss Parliament and an ASO committee member, has requested the Bundesrat (Swiss Cabinet) to investigate this matter and to ensure that the government-owned Postfinance (Post Office) would enable Auslandschweizer to open an account, and that this could be done with “reasonable” charges. We anticipate a lively discussion and hopefully some positive answers at the March meeting.

### *Initiatives “against mass immigration” and “stop the overpopulation”*

In 2012, these two Initiatives were submitted in Bern by the Swiss Volkspartei (SVP) with the required number of valid signatures. Representatives of the Party have been invited to the March meeting to elaborate on their Initiatives. Their views regarding “free movement by individuals” (Personenfreizügigkeit) were

no doubt a discussion point.

### **Swissinfo offerings for Auslandschweizer**

The director of Swissinfo, Peter Schibli, has been invited to the meeting to elaborate what the Swissinfo internet platform can offer Swiss abroad in the exercise of making informed political decisions.

### **The Swiss Abroad in Italy – a Presentation**

Approximately 50 000 Swiss reside in Italy, 15 000 of which have registered to exercise their political rights. There are over 60 Swiss clubs in Italy, as well as 5 Swiss schools recognised by the Swiss Confederation. The Auslandschweizer delegates from Italy made a presentation to the Council. Your delegates from Southern Africa made a similar presentation 4 years ago regarding the 9 000 Swiss in Southern Africa.

### **Proposed law regarding Auslandschweizer**

The task force entrusted with the piloting of this matter, chaired by Ständerat Lombardi, who is also a member of the ASR, is progressing well. A progress report will be expected.

### **Annual report and Accounts for 2012**

Approval will be sought for the annual report as well as the yearly accounts for 2012. A budget for 2013 was tabled, discussed and hopefully approved.

The Spring Session of the ASR is normally held in the historic Ratshaus in the "Altstadt" of the capital Bern. As always, your delegate was in attendance and will report

back in the next issue of the Swiss Review.

PETER MÜLLER

(sargro@bluewin.ch)

Delegate for Southern Africa

### **Calling on Swiss Club and groupings**

### **Calling all Southern African Swiss Clubs or groupings to consider applying for recognition and accreditation by ASO/ASR in Bern.**

At present 9 clubs in Southern Africa are recognised and accredited by the Auslandschweizer-organisationn (ASO) and the Auslandschweizererrat (ASR) in Bern.

This entitles them to be regularly informed by ASO and the Dept. of Foreign Affairs (EDA) as to what is happening in Switzerland, as well as nominating and voting for the two Delegates who represent the 9000-odd Swiss officially registered as residing in Southern Africa.

We have just had nominations, which closed on 28th February 2013, after the 9 clubs were circularised, resulting in 2 valid nominations for the 2 vacancies, for the 4 year term August 2013 till August 2017.

The clubs presently recognised are:

Swiss Club Helvetia – Johannesburg

Swiss Club Alpina - Pretoria

Swiss Rifle Club – Johannesburg

Swiss Choir – Johannesburg

Swiss Club – Far North

Swiss Club – Durban

Swiss Club – Eastern Cape

Swiss Rifle Club – Cape Town

Swiss Social and Sports Club – Cape Town

Now that the nominations and the 9 AGM confirmations of these two nominations are virtually behind us, your delegate, Peter Müller, considers it opportune to call on other Swiss Clubs or groupings throughout Southern Africa to consider applying for recognition and accreditation by ASO/ASR in Bern.

In order to seek such accreditation, the following document and details are necessary:

- A written application sent to ASO for consideration by the committee, must enclose –

- The objectives or purpose of the group,
- The date of foundation,
- The total number of members,
- The number of Swiss members,
- The club organs, ie executive or committees, and the AGM,
- Details of the committee members and their nationalities,
- The current activities of the group or club

The application needs to be accompanied by the following:

- A written constitution,
- A written agreement declaring to inform ASO when the club's Swiss membership falls below 50%, when the majority of the committee are non-Swiss, or the President is not a Swiss national.

The criteria for a positive accreditation, include:

- The purpose is the furtherance and promotion of Auslandschweizer relations and activities,
- More than 50% of the members are Swiss,
- The majority of the committee is Swiss,
- The President is a Swiss national
- A written agreement regarding the informing of ASO regarding major changes is included.

Absolute minimum requirements include having at least 7 Swiss nationals in the group or club, and having at least 2 club organs, one of which must be an AGM.

The application must be addressed to the ASO, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Bern, Switzerland, with a copy to your delegate – Peter Müller, Postfach 123, CH-5103 Wildeg, Switzerland, who will successfully guide your application through the ASO approval procedure to final approval by the ASR itself. Interested clubs or groups are urged to contact Delegate Peter Müller at any time for advice.

PETER MÜLLER

(sargro@bluewin.ch)

Delegate for Southern Africa

### **Election of two new delegates to represent the 9000 Swiss abroad resident in South Africa**

It has been very pleasing to get considerable feedback and response, after the Swiss Review editor Gisela Piercey and the undersigned have appealed in various previous issues, for Southern African Swiss to consider making themselves available for nomination and election to

the Council of the Swiss Abroad (ASR) for the term 2013 - 2017, in succession to Rolf Schudel and the undersigned.

Nominations from the nine Swissclubs in Southern Africa recognised by the Auslandschweizerorganisation (ASO) in Bern, by the closing date of 28th February 2013, were two to fill the two available delegate-vacancies.

The two nominations are:

**Mr Hans-Georg Bosch** – President of the Swiss Club Alpina in Pretoria

**Mrs. Marcie Bischof** – Secretary of the Swiss Social and Sports Club in Cape Town

As there are two candidates for two vacancies, their ratification by the AGMs of the nine clubs is a formality, but will take place during the next three months, after which election monitor Francois Jeannerat will formally declare them as elected, probably through an announcement in these local pages of the Swiss Review.

Their first Council Meeting, and the undersigned's last one as your delegate, will take place on Friday 16th August 2013 in Davos, Switzerland.

The undersigned has been asked to continue as an ASO Nominee on various bodies such as the Foundation for the Auslandschweizerplatz in Brunnen. It is an honour to

continue to represent the interests of Swiss Abroad in this small way. So, if space permits, you will still hear from me here from time to time.

Hans-Georg Bosch, although born and educated in Switzerland, has been in South Africa since 1976, and his wife, family and he have long been stalwarts of the Swiss Club Alpina in Pretoria.

Marcie Bischof, born and educated in the Western Cape, married Werner Bischof some 15 years ago, and is the „live-wire“ Secretary of the Swiss Social and Sports Club in Cape Town.

With their different backgrounds, but both having the interests of the 9000 Swiss in Southern Africa at heart, they complement each other admirably, and will do a great job for you in the ASR and in Berne. The undersigned thanks them for their willingness to serve, and wishes them an interesting and challenging term of office.

In conclusion, the undersigned also wishes to extend the thanks of the Swiss in Southern Africa to Francois Jeannerat, who as our Election Monitor, has performed, yet again, a wonderful service for us all.

PETER MÜLLER

(sargro@bluewin.ch)

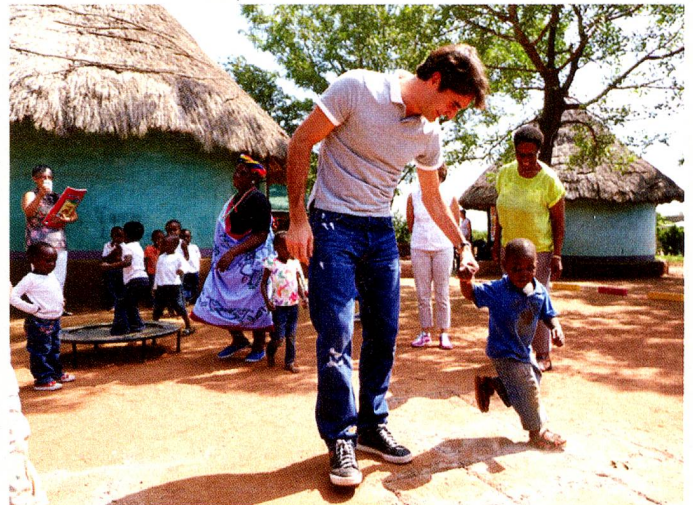
ASR Delegate for Southern Africa

## *Federer visits foundation project in Limpopo*

**In February Roger Federer, in his capacity as President of the Roger Federer Foundation, and his mother Lynette visited the Hlukani and Govhu crèches in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.**

They were given a warm reception by the children, parents, caregivers and official representatives from various authorities. The Roger Federer Foundation has partnered the locally organized READ Educational Trust since 2010.

The aim of the Trust is to promote good quality education in 40 crèches for children between 4-6 years old situated in rural and remote areas in Northern Limpopo. During his visit Roger learned all about the current curriculum and saw for himself the children's daily activities.



After being absent for eight years Federer finally returned to South Africa again for a visit.



14000 children in South Africa alone benefit from the Federer Foundation.

GISELA PIERCEY

### IMPRESSUM

**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, P.O.Box 123, CH-5103 Wildeggen

**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. Please make a note of all the upcoming Southern African Regional issues in 2013:

Number	Deadline Date	Date of distribution	Number	Deadline Date	Date of distribution
03/2013	29.04.2013	05.06.2013	04/2013	09.09.2013	16.10.2013

## Swiss Club Info

### JOHANNESBURG:

Swiss Society Helvetia, 31 Moerdyk Ave, Vorna Valley, Midrand, Chairman: Mario Valli, 082 451 8040; office: Debora Lanz, T/F 0118053039, C 0826516152, office@swissclubjhb.co.za, www.swissclubjhb.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 082 561 0063, www.dining-out.co.za «The Courier»

Our AGM is scheduled for the 12th April 2013 at 20h00, we hope to see you all. **SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS**, Sunday 4th of August. 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 2nd Saturday of the month for Lunch Swiss Ladies meet every 4th Thursday of the month for lunch;

Swiss Rifle Club Johannesburg: Shooting days are every 4th Saturday starting at 09h00, 25/05 & 22/06. We call on all Swiss to participate in the Traditional "FELDSCHIESSEN" on 25th of May, we need every able Swiss to come to the range. Every participant will receive a Cervelat & Brot. Also we are now on Facebook under "Swiss Rifle Club Johannesburg". For more info call Daniel on 082-5699146.

### PRETORIA:

Swiss Society Alpina, Hans-Georg Bosch, President, T 0123478310, C 0825510222, swissclub.pta@hbosch.com, Biffy van Rooyen, Secretary. Facebook group: Swiss Club Alpina On 22 February we held our AGM at the Swiss club Restaurant in Vorna Valley, where the Vorstand was re-elected with the following changes: Beisitzer Prisca Schleiffer-Marais has resigned due to returning to Switzerland. In her position, Mrs Marzia Maurer was elected. One of our auditors, Mrs Pia Gallegos-Müller is leaving for Barcelona this year and we have been able to secure Mrs Claudia Thomas in her place. The Vorstand presents itself as: Hans-Georg Bosch-President, Gabor von Moricz- Vice President, Biffy van Rooyen-Secretary, Edith Steyn-Treasurer, assisted by Margrit Müller, Lisa von Moricz-Beisitzer, Marzia Maurer-Beisitzer. Auditors are Sonja Bosch and Claudia Thomas.

ASO elections: The Swiss Society Helvetia has nominated Hans-Georg Bosch for the position of ASO Representative for the period 2013 – 2017. During its AGM on 22nd February Hans-Georg Bosch and Marcie Bischof were given the vote for ASO representatives. Marcie Bischof was nominated by the Cape Town Swiss Club. There will be the following major events during the year: Fondue Evening in June, National Day Celebrations on 27th July and Year end function in November. Further details can be obtained closer to the events by sending an email to swissclub.pta@hbosch.com

### CAPE TOWN:

Swiss Social & Sports Club, Bill Peters Road, Green Point, www.swissclub.co.za. PRESIDENT: Stefan Pflocks, stefanp@execsonthemove.co.za T 021 715 2703, C 082 920 9351 VICE PRESIDENT: Nicky Rodrigues nicky.rodrigues@za.sabmiller.com T 021 658 7276, C 072 218 5759 SECRETARY: Marcie Bischof mwbischof@telkomsa.net T 021 554 0176, C 082 925 2280

The club remains open every Wednesday and Thursday evening for dinner. If you are not on the data base to receive the "catering newflash" please contact the club at catering@swissclub.co.za or on +27 21 4348405.

Active sub-sections are the Rifle Club, Cycling Club & Tennis Club. The ladies continue to meet monthly – last Wednesday of every month. For more information on the above sub-sections, please contact info@swissclub.co.za or André Häberli, Membership & Advertising, Phone +27 (0)21 551 48 98, Skype andre.haberli, Fax +27 (0)86 532 80 02, Cell +27 (0)76 933 03 04

Our newsletter is distributed via email and postage (as per request), but regular updates can be obtained on our website at www.swissclub.co.za

### NATAL:

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

JASS EVENINGS: Westville Country Club, Link Rd, Westville (first road on the left when travelling from the Pavilion exit towards Westville). As before the Jass evening takes place every second Friday evening of the month 18.00 for dinner. 19.00 start Jassen: 12/4, 10/5, 14/6, 12/7, 16/8, 13/9, 11/10, 8/11, 13/12/2013 (prize jassen). TARGET SHOOTING: Dave Nicol Shooting Range, Nottingham Road, KZN

Midland starting at 9.00 am: 27/4, 25/5, 22/6, 28-30.6 Swiss Interclub-Wilhelm Tell Trophy Shoot, 27/7, 24/8, 28/9, 26/10, 23/11/2013.

OTHER EVENTS: Thursday (Human Rights Day) Joint venture with Alliance Française, 14/4 Outing (to be advised), 19/5 Beach Breakfast, 28-30 June Schützenfest, 20/7 Cheese Fondue Evening, 4/8 Swiss National Day, 15/9 Green Bowling, 20/10 Outing (to be advised), 17/11 Ten Pin Bowling, 8/12 Year End Braai, 25/1/2014 Swiss Film Evening, 16/2 Ten Pin Bowling, 9/3 AGM.

### PORT ELIZABETH:

John Diener, President, PO Box 5608, Walmer 6065, T 0413792421, the\_dieners@bluewin.ch; comm.member Mark Krebs C 0823281098, T w 0413671422 Yvonne Bruehwiler, secretary, C 0834408130 EAST LONDON: c/o Christine and Paul Stiffler, T 0437483542, C 0837008846, C 0832874324, christinestiffler@telkomsa.net

### FAR NORTH:

Michael Holford Contact No. C: +27 83 229 3787 Postal Add: P.Bag X2465 Louis Trichardt 0920, Secretary: Suzanne Holford-Salchli Suzanne.holford@gmail.com

### NAMIBIA:

Peter Hess, President, T+26461252943, C+264811246890, e-mail : phess@iafrica.com.na, Kurt Neuenschwander, Vice President C +26811279388

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Ruedi Hofer, Calabash Rest., T (h) +2684161095, T (w) +2684161187,

C +2686028545, calabash@swazi.net

### ZIMBABWE:

Oscar Rothen, 4 Blue Haze Lane, Umwindsdale, Harare (Physical) P.O. Box CH 837 Chisipite, Harare. C +263772241537, H +2634861702, lorthen@zol.co.za

### MAURITIUS:

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

## Pro Helvetia Johannesburg

Pro Helvetia Johannesburg, renamed as such since they moved from Cape Town to Johannesburg in February 2012, is one of the Pro Helvetia representations abroad. Through an agreement with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Pretoria, the office in Johannesburg also supports local capacity building and encourages cultural interaction between Southern African countries. The activities granted support are regional cross-border projects initiated by arts organisations, with a focus on either advocacy or mentoring. Their current strategy is defined around a focus on Dance and Music, as well as on new collaborative initiatives in arts mediation (arts education), and finally on the rich mutual residency programme between Switzerland and the region, with shorter research and longer studio residencies available. More information on www.prohelvetia.org.za

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