

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

I always like to start my President's reports by thanking people. Unfortunately, it is something that I fear is becoming less customary today. However, in the voluntary sector, which is where FOSSUK operates, we must more than ever be attentive at thanking people, as it is only through their dedication that organisations like ours can continue to exist.

To all our friends, colleagues, swiss clubs and Swiss in the UK, a heartfelt 'thank you' for your continuous support and commitment to the Swiss community in the UK. It is remarkable to see the dedication from so many people who are still devoted to FOSSUK and the Swiss Community. A special 'thank you' to Honorary Consul Franziska Hewitt, an inspirational person with who I truly enjoyed organising the 2018 AGM.

In 2017 we had an unprecedented response from young Swiss to become part of the OSA UK Delegation to represent the Swiss in the UK in Switzerland. It was remarkable to see so much passion at such a young age and we hope that this will be replicated in the OSA election of 2021!

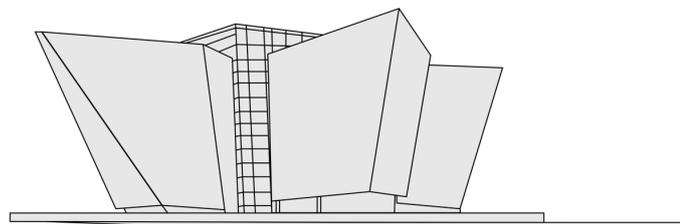
Nevertheless, a significant challenge for many Swiss associations in the UK and abroad, is the attraction of new and, in particular, young members. The overall number of members is decreasing, not-only endangering the existence of the Swiss clubs in the UK, but of FOSSUK as well.

It is partly for this reason that I decided to resign as President of FOSSUK, to accept the new challenge of becoming the President of the New Helvetic Society. A club that has existed for over 100 years, but which is also suffering from decreasing membership.

It is my intention to remain a part of the FOSSUK Committee as well as an ASO delegate. Please do not therefore be too concerned by my early departure as FOSSUK President. I leave the Presidency in the capable hands of the FOSSUK Committee and the new President, who will be revealed at the AGM in Belfast. I do however feel that it is the right time to step away from FOSSUK and to take up the role at the New Helvetic Society, to try to find a new ways of engaging with the Swiss in the UK, especially the younger generation.

I recall a discussion with a young OSA candidate who suggested that perhaps, nowadays, clubs might be a thing of the past and that the 'new generation', the so called 'millennials', might deem them unnecessary, preferring to connect via social media groups. The question was posed as to whether interactions need to be on a face to face basis? Why is a Facebook social group not considered to be a club, after all, they do bring people together? The discussion continued with emphasis on the structure of the clubs and the relevance of complicated constitution in a world that is fast moving and heavily driven by technology.

They are certainly some interesting arguments and in the fog of the 'digital transformation' era, these are topics that continue to be discussed both at FOSSUK and at OSA levels.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW HONORARY PRESIDENT

The FOSSUK team is thrilled to welcome **H.E Ambassador Fasel** and **Madame Nicole** to the U.K.

H.E Ambassador Fasel took up his new post at the beginning of September 2017 and is acquainting himself with the large and diverse Swiss community across the UK.

The 35,000 Swiss citizens living in the U.K, each in their own way, promote cultural and commercial exchanges and thus contribute towards the enduring friendship between our two countries.

H.E Ambassador Fasel will be working towards strengthening these bonds as their importance cannot be underestimated as the preparations continue for the UK's departure from the European Union. The Ambassador and the team are working hard to ensure clarity and continuity in the post-Brexit UK-Swiss relationship

BREXIT

It is with no surprise that Brexit remains a hot topic, with many people still unclear whether they will be able to remain in the UK. The current situation is certainly adding to the pressure on clubs which are finding it difficult to recruit new members.

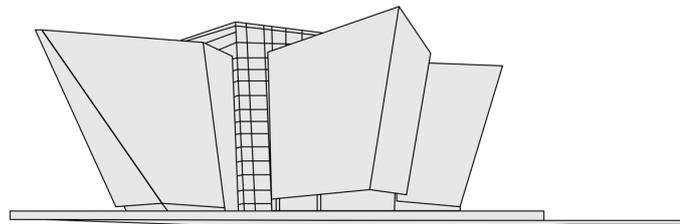
A loud 'Bravo' to the Swiss Clubs in the UK, with the support of the Swiss Embassy and its team, for organising very informative sessions on BREXIT and its potential impact. These sessions have been welcomed by the Swiss living in the UK. As we approach the deadline, more events will be organised to keep the Swiss in the UK informed.

WELCOME TO THE NEW DELEGATES

We are delighted that the OSA election attracted a high number of candidates, many of which were young Swiss living in the UK. Unfortunately, only 5 were able to be elected. We welcome and thank the new delegates; **Franz Muheim**, **Alexandre Tissot**, **Loredana Guetg-Wyatt**, **Nathalie Chuard** and **Vincent Croset**.

The elected delegates met in Basle from 18th–20th August for the Council's appointment where they were introduced to the members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA). The theme of the Congress was 'Inland- und Auslandschweizer: eine Welt!' ('Swiss at home and abroad: one world').

We are extremely pleased to inform you that the UK is now represented on the CSA Executive Board with **Franz Muheim** being elected as a board member for the next four years. This will allow Swiss citizens living in the UK to increase their influence in the Organisation, which is important at this time of considerable uncertainty over Brexit.



SOCIAL MEDIA, THE WEB and the SWISS REVIEW

Our new website was launched in May 2017 and we are enthusiastic about this given the positive feedback received. The website and its calendar are carefully maintained by **Ané-Mari Peter** and the **on-IDLE** team, with some help from **Gioia Palmieri**. We thank them all for their continuous support, commitment and dedication.

As always, we strongly encourage our corporate members (and non-members) to inform us of their events, AGMs or social gatherings. We believe in keeping Swiss people living in the UK informed on a timely basis. Please do send us details of your events so that we can help you to publicise them.

The Swiss Review has been revamped, thanks to the guidance and creativity of the new editor **Gioia Palmieri**, and the careful artistic eye of **Marc Peter**. Both have done a superb job and we all take pleasure in reading the upcoming editions.

THANK YOU

I commenced the report by thanking people, and I believe it is equally important to end it the same way.

Thank you to our new team members, **Nathalie Chuard** and **Vincent Croset** who have been extremely supportive and helpful. FOSSUK would not be as successful without the support of a dedicated team and I have been extremely lucky to be the President of an association that has committed and motivated members.

A special 'thank you' goes to **HE Ambassador Dominik Furgler** and **Madame Hayam Furgler** who have supported our activities right up to their the last day in office. We wish them all the best in Prague and we are certain that we will be seeing them soon in London. Thank you to our new Honorary President, **H.E Ambassador Alexandre Fasel** and **Madame Nicole** who have been extremely supportive of our initiatives. Our journey together has just started but it is promising to be cooperative and successful. A heartfelt 'thank you' to **General Consul Hermann Aebischer** and **Consul Tiziano Pedrioli**. Both have endorsed our activities and provided invaluable expertise to the FOSSUK Committee members. We are sad to see them leave and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours in France and India.

I am also extremely grateful to our sponsors **on-IDLE**, **Faulhaber**, **Bisbino** and **Skincode** for the contribution they continue to make to FOSSUK and the Swiss community in the UK.

Last but not least, I would like to say a special thank you to **Daniel Pedroletti** who is resigning from the FOSSUK Committee as well as President of the New Helvetic Society. Daniel, in addition of being a great friend, has been a great supporter of FOSSUK's forums and joint events. He has dedicated many years to the Swiss community and Swiss clubs and has been extremely helpful in supporting me in my role of President of FOSSUK. We will all surely miss his knowledge and humour.

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt
President