### Minutes

**General Assembly 2019**

**Place**
Musée d’Ethnographie de Neuchâtel (MEN)

**Date**
Saturday, March 16, 2019

**Time**
10.42 AM

#### Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allgöwer Erik</th>
<th>Frei Marie-Noëlle</th>
<th>Pfeiffer Gabi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allgöwer Carole</td>
<td>Frey Richard</td>
<td>Rast Lukas</td>
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<td>Baumann Werner</td>
<td>Frey Rosmarie</td>
<td>Rothacher Daniel</td>
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<td>Bouvier Jean-François</td>
<td>Grossenbacher Fabienne</td>
<td>Schwitter Ruth</td>
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<td>Brändli Alfred</td>
<td>Gygax Hildegard Lucia</td>
<td>Schwitter Dani</td>
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<td>Buhofner Heinz</td>
<td>Koller Beat</td>
<td>Stähli Peter</td>
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<td>Cherpillod Jacques</td>
<td>Külling Werner</td>
<td>Stähli Susanne</td>
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<td>Cherpillod-Exchaquet Clio</td>
<td>Loppacher Fritz</td>
<td>Trad Ilham</td>
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<td>De Montmollin Gérald</td>
<td>Meichtry Fischer Karin</td>
<td>Truog Brigitte</td>
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<td>Degruffy Brigitte</td>
<td>Müller René</td>
<td>Washington Katharina</td>
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<td>Fischer Meichtry Rudolf</td>
<td>Müller Lisette</td>
<td>Wild Markus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frei Marianne</td>
<td>Perrenoud Michel</td>
<td>Zingg Claudio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frei Christof</td>
<td>Pfeiffer Hansruedi</td>
<td>Zürcher Dieter</td>
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</tbody>
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Excused

Berthiaume Christiane
Bollmann Felix E.
Bratschi Dieter
Coley-Saner Elisabeth
Degruffy Brigitte
Ditzler Christoph
Dösssegger Mutti Allain u.Simona
Egli von Matt Silvia
Engi Christian u. Sigrid
Fehr Riedi Mario u. Anna Maria
Fèvre Baridon Myriam
Finker Marcel
Furrer Christina
Gähwiler Franz
Galmarini Carlo
Gilg Nadine u. Rainer
Giron Lionel
Güller Peter
Reichel Eveline

Hanimann Regula
Hansel Silvia
Hartmann Christian u. Olivia
Huber Charles Erik
Huber Nicole u. Thomas
Koestler Christa
Kramer Monika
Lham Dechen und Tshering
Liebherr Sabine
Maag Hanspeter u. Inge
Maurer Sangay u. Tshering Choden
Menzi Martin
Moser Peter
Moser Sämi
Müller Lukas
Petkova Svetlana
Rebond Adrien
Reinhardt Ernst
Rohrbach Christian
Schmid Ursula
Schneider Suzanne
Singye Yarab
Sterlin Pletscher
Hansruedi u. Dagmar
Strassmann Ruth u.
Hans
Suter Claudia
Tho Ha Vinh u. Lisi
Tshering Jimmy
Van Diem Georges u.
Krishna
Vankrunkelsven Jan
von Büren Madeleine
Wirth Urs
Yangden Tshering
Zahler Peter

Guests

H.E. Ambassador Kinga Singye
Tshering Lhadn (Minister Counsellor)
Rigtsal Dorji (Second Secretary)
Kinga Dorji
Dhondup Roder
Sonam Wangchuk
Mayor Grégoire
Battiaz Pierrette
Schinz Olivier
Nowak Klod Claudia

Agenda

1. Opening
2. Nomination of Vote Counters and Minutes Taker
3. Minutes of General Assembly 2018
4. Annual Report by the President (verbal/approbation)
5. Presentation of Accounts 2018 and Audit Report
6. Programme and Activities 2019
7. Budget 2019
8. Membership Fees
   Confirmation of current Membership Fees
9. Additional motions by members
10. Date and Place of Next General Assembly
11. Miscellaneous

Decision 1: The agenda is approved. No additional motions were submitted to the board prior to the General Assembly, therefore item 9 is deleted from the agenda.
1. Opening

- Marianne Frei, President of the SSB, welcomes the members and guests of the Society Switzerland Bhutan.
- Marianne Frei introduces the members of the board and explains their functions.
- Gregoire Mayor from the MEN gives his opening remarks and welcomes the attendees.
- Marianne Frei welcomes the Bhutanese guests Sonam Wangchuk, Dhondup Roder and Kinga Dorji.

2. Nomination of Vote Counters and Minutes Taker

- Proposed vote counter: Markus Wild.
- Proposed minutes taker: Lukas Rast.

**Decision 2:** The proposed vote counter and the minutes taker are appointed by acclamation.

- Marianne Frei calls the number of SSB members present at the General Assembly to be at 40, the absolute majority therefore at 21 votes.

3. Minutes of General Assembly 2018

Marianne Frei thanks Lukas Rast for his excellent work on the 2018 minutes.

**Decision 3:** The minutes of the General Assembly 2018 are approved unanimously.

4. Annual Report by the President (verbal/approbation by Marianne Frei)

**Activities 2018 in Bhutan:**

- The sister organisation, Bhutan-Switzerland Society (BSS) usually holds their GA on August 1st. Last year it was held at the Royal Textile Academy. “Interaction and Cooperation of People-to-People”. The board of the BSS currently consists of Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji (presiding), Dragyel T. Dorjee, Nado Dukpa, Kunzang Wangmo and — newly elected — Tashi Rabgyel.
- Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji has been appointed Honorary Consul of Switzerland to Bhutan on August 1st during the Swiss National Day celebrations.
- Several BSS / SSB Board meetings were held: on 22nd of April at Hotel Terma Linca, on 30th of August at the Helvetas office, and on 22nd of November at the Bhutan Red Cross Society. It is helpful to meet in person in Bhutan or in Switzerland, or to talk to each other regularly through the means of online communication.
- On 21st of April, the film “A Woman’s Place” was screened at the Royal University of Bhutan. It was screened again on 1st of May in Bumthang.
- Mountain Echoes: Prof. George van Driem spoke on “One amongst Twenty-two: The Dzongkha Script”. A second speech was given on “The Ancestry of the Bhutanese People — A reconstruction based on language and genes”.
- A donation was given to VAST for the programme “Young hearts weekend art classes”.
- Support was given to Nashoen Lamtoen on 22nd of April, after the screening of the film “Chuut Wai” for children and youth in difficult circumstances.
- Tied donations were given to Ogyen Choling Foundation for new windows for the museum. Through the help of one of our members, a big mask could be transported back to Bhutan to the museum.
- Tied donations were given to the Incense Group Merak which provides a possibility to generate income for villagers. The donations were used for incense grinding, buying drying machines and a renewal of the shed.
- Support to seven schools in remote areas was given to: Tradijong Primary School, Zhemgang (2011), Barpong Primary School Zhemgang (2012), Kagtong Primary School, Zhemgang (2013), Yaragla Primary School Mongar (2013), Tashibi Primary School, Mongar (2013), Yangbari Primary School, Mongar (2016), Daksa Primary School, Mongar (2018). This School Children Support Programme is one of the priorities of our sister organization BSS.

> Activities 2018 in Switzerland:

> SSB Events:

- Former SSB board member E. Werner Külling and Mario Fehr spoke on “Bhutan, a Country in Transition” at the Songtsen House on March 2nd.
- The General Assembly 2018 was held on March 17th at the Ethnographic Museum in Zurich. The film “Chuut Wai” was screened in the afternoon with Tshering Dorji, a social activist, present.
- On May 14th, a visit was made to the Swiss Federal Archives in Bern by the SSB Documentation group.
- The SSB Annual Excursion took place on June 2nd at the “Schlattwald-Eiche” and at the “Naturzentrum Thurauen”. Erich Oberholzer, Kaspar Schmidt and KJ Tempel led through the day, focusing on “Forest management in Bhutan and in Switzerland and the cooperation between the two countries”.
- On June 7th, a presentation was given at the Songtsen House on the topic “Eintauchen in die bhutanische Welt” by Barbara Mühlemann, Christoph Schwitter and Christine Gundi.
- During the Locarno Film Festival „The Open Door“ by Jamyang Jamtsho Wangchuk and “Honeygiver Among the Dogs” by Dechen Roder were screened. On August 9th, a Reception for Dechen Roder was given in Locarno.
- On November 9th, a Bhutanese Film Evening was held at the Songtsen House with the film “The Prophecy” by Zuri Rinpoche. From June 21st to 23rd, the 10th Meeting of European Bhutan Friendship Associations was held in Geneva and Chamonix.
- From June 24th to the end of August, a Bhutan photo exhibition was held in Chamonix.
- On September 26th at the HWZ in Zürich, a Business Impuls Event was held with the first Swiss Business delegation to Bhutan planned for June 2019.
- On May 13th, Ambassador Kinga Singye invited the SSB to his residence in Geneva.
- On December 17th the Bhutan National Day was celebrated by invitation from Ambassador Kinga Singye, with a reception at the WTO.

> Visitors from Bhutan:

- On March 8th then-Prime Minister Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay met with SSB Board Members in Zurich.
- The Speaker of the National Assembly from 2013-2018, Jigme Zangpo and Ambassador Kinga Singye visited Uri Peter Trier and Mrs. Rhomberg.
- Chimmy Pem, Director of the Tourism Council of Bhutan, visited Scuol, Arosa and HTW School of Applied Sciences Chur.
- Puspalal Tendrel Sharma from the Bhutan Olympic Committee and the Paro College of Education visited Switzerland.
- Three Participants of the BMMHP had a chance to come for an internship to Hotel Belvedere in Scuol.

> Development of membership:

MF thanks the members for their continued support and reports a steady increase in membership since 2008. She expresses the sorrow over the loss of Sonja Galmarini, Leo Caminada and Lisina Hoch von Schulthess.

Decision 4: The General Assembly unanimously approves the President’s annual report by voting and acclamation.
5. **Presentation of Accounts 2018 and Audit Report**

   > The Treasurer, Rosmarie Frey, presents the Annual Accounts for the year 2018 (see full accounts in the General Assembly documents).

   - The balance shows a profit of CHF 6’926.01 including tied donations at the end of the year of CHF 14’202.07. Without the tied donations there would be a deficit of CHF 7’276.06, which still does not reach the estimated deficit in the budget of CHF 18’800.

   - Without the tied donations the Assets would amount to CHF 43’494.96, with the tied donations we show total Assets of CHF 57’697.03.

   - Tied donations are donations made with a specific purpose, either for a predefined project in Bhutan or the donations are made in memoriam of a passed away person with strong ties to Bhutan. The tied donations allow us to support projects which we could not support within the regular budget.

   - Omitting the tied donations, the costs would reach CHF 34’401.36 which is CHF 5000.- less than in the budget. The income would be CHF 27’125.30 which is CHF 6000.- more than in the budget.

   > Lisette Müller-Jaag reads the audit report 2018 (see the statement in the General Assembly documents) and thanks Rosmarie Frey for her work.

**Decision 5:** Annual financial statements approved unanimously.

**Decision 6:** Board discharged unanimously.

6. **Programme and Activities 2019**

   > **Programme and Activities in Bhutan:**

   - Dieter Zürcher speaks on the SSB strategy 2018-2022 and the planned support for the Loden Foundation, which enforces the SSB strategy goals 2018-2022.

     - Hanspeter Hösl suggests that the funding be split to reduce the financial burden on the SSB. Dieter Zürcher responds by saying that he would be open to that idea.

   - Support is planned for the Blind Music Training Centre: They play at various events. (video shown).

   - A tied donation will be given to Druk Metho / the Drachuka Flower Group, who are partnering with “Swiss Alpine Herbs” in Därstetten, guaranteeing a selling market.

   - Regarding the School Children’s Support, there was a miscommunication about the SSB reducing its engagement, which is why seven schools will be continuously supported. We found three last-minute donors to be able to guarantee the support.

   - There will be a Conference of the European Friendship Associations in Thimphu in late November 2019 on “Exploring the future contributions and roles of European – Bhutan Friendship Associations”, with the support of Ambassador Pema Choden and Ambassador Kinga Singye, and the organizing committee consisting of Andrew Sutton (UK), Marianne Frei (CH), Francoise Pommaret (F and BT), and Michael Rutland (UK and BT).

   > **Programme and Activities in Switzerland:**

   - During the FIFF Fribourg International Film Festival, “The Red Phallus” by Tashi Gyeltshen will be screened.

   - The next Annual Excursion will take place on Thursday, August 22nd to Swiss Alpine Herbs in Därstetten.

   - There will be a meeting with Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji in August.
– Dechen Lham and Sonam Wangchuk will present their research topics: “Ecology and conservation of snow leopards in Bhutan” / “Impacts of climate change on glaciers of Bhutan”. The date is not fixed yet.

– Newsletter / Focus: We could not fulfil our promise regarding the new newsletter. It was very difficult to get substantial and critical contributions. Dieter Zürcher is currently working on a newsletter about hydropower. To update you with information, we will send you emails.

– In 2020, we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the SSB. The idea is to celebrate with 20 highlights in different parts of Switzerland.

– On June 15th, the General Assembly of Helvetas will take place with an afternoon programme with former Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay from Bhutan, speaking on GNH.

7. Budget 2019

Rosmarie Frey presents the budget 2019 explaining some key figures (see the full budget in the General Assembly documents).

– Without the tied donations of CHF 29’000.- (which are already on the bank account), there are regular costs left of CHF 41’600.-. This is not much more than in the budget of the year 2018. The only divergence lies in the anticipated costs for the organisation of the SSB 20 years Jubilee next year of CHF 5000.-

– The support of projects in Bhutan amounts to CHF 20’000.-

– At the end we anticipate a loss of CHF 33’800.-. Without the tied donations it would be CHF 21’800. It will be covered easily by our assets.

– We anticipate more income with the sale of media.

Decision 7: The General Assembly approves the proposed budget unanimously.

8. Membership Fees

Marianne Frei proposed unchanged fees of CHF 100.- for individual membership, CHF 150.- for joint membership and CHF 50.- for students.

Decision 8: The General Assembly confirms the membership fees unanimously.

9. Additional motions by members

10. Date and Place of Next General Assembly

Marianne Frei explains that the next General Assembly is planned for Saturday, March 14, 2020.

11. Miscellaneous

Marianne Frei announces her resignation by the next elections. She informs the members that the board will establish a finding committee and promises that she will remain active as a member of the organizing committee for the Jubilee 2020.

General Assembly closed at 12:10 PM

Place and date Zürich, 23. Jun. 2019

Recipients SSB Members

Keeper of the minutes Lukas Rast