# Minutes of the General Assembly

St. Gallen, 21\textsuperscript{st} March 2015 at Federal Administration Court (Bundesverwaltungsgericht)

## Participants

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<td>Hanimann, Regula</td>
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<td>Keller Tosio, Hans-Jakob</td>
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<td>Frey, Richard &amp; Rosmarie</td>
<td>Menk, Julia</td>
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<td>Gähwiler, Franz</td>
<td>Mettler, Regula &amp; Kaspar</td>
<td>Washington, Katherina</td>
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<td>Grunauer, Hans Rudolf</td>
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## Excused

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<td>Baumgartner, Kurt</td>
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<td>Kramer, Monika</td>
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<td>Lombard, Hubert</td>
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<td>Suter-Mosca, Stephan B. &amp;</td>
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<td>Dürsteler, Urs</td>
<td>Lüthi, Simon</td>
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<td>Egger, Urs</td>
<td>Maag-Senn, Hanspeter &amp; Inge</td>
<td>Treier, Hannes</td>
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<td>Engi, Christian &amp; Sigrid</td>
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<td>Faes, Ralph-Remo</td>
<td>Menk, Helene</td>
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<td>Fankhauser, Meret</td>
<td>Menzi, Martin &amp; Küngold</td>
<td>Vogel Dechen Wangmo</td>
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<td>Fehr Riedi, Mario &amp; Anna Maria</td>
<td>Metzger, Bernhard &amp; Stephanie</td>
<td>Weber-Berg, Christoph</td>
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<td>Fischer, Eberhard &amp; Barbara</td>
<td>Moser, Samuel</td>
<td>Widmer, Walter</td>
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<td>Mottet, Christian</td>
<td>Wirth, Urs</td>
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<td>Gilg, Rainer &amp; Nadine</td>
<td>Mueller, Juerg</td>
<td>Zürcher, Dieter</td>
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Special Guests

Embassy of Bhutan
- H.E. Ambassador Daw Penjo
- Mr. Tandin Dorji (Second Secretary)

Bhutanese Guests
- Dorjee Tso
- Kuendrak Tobbgyal
- Sangay Maurer

Speakers
- Dr. Christoph Bandli
- Gyelpo
- Jigme Loday
- Karma Tshering
- Tenzin Dorji
- Thongjay
- Richa Gurung

Swiss Guests
- Allenspach Mäusli Marlies
- Eisenring Markus
- Coley Tom
- Gerber Lotti
- Güver Ebru
- Mäusli Allenspach Peter
- Rast Lukas
- Schneider Felicitas
- Stettler Evelin
- Zahler Peter

Agenda:
1) Opening by Dr. Bandli Christoph, Former President Federal Administrative Court
2) Nomination of Vote Counters and Minutes Taker
3) Minutes of General Assembly 2014 (www.bhutan-switzerland.org)
4) Annual Report by the President (verbal/approbation)
5) Presentation of Accounts 2014 / Audit Report
6) Strategy 2016 - 2018
7) Programme and Activities 2015
8) Budget 2015, confirmation of Membership Fees
9) Additional motions by members
10) Date and Place of next General Assembly 2016
11) Miscellaneous

Decision 1:
The agenda is approved. No additional motions were submitted to the Board, point 9 of the agenda can be skipped.
1. Opening by Dr. Christoph Bandli, Former President Federal Administrative Court

Marianne Frei, President SSB, welcomes the members and guests of the society. She especially welcomes the Bhutanese guests. The six Bhutanese students, who are pursuing a master in International Law, will attend the assembly around 11 a.m., since they still have to follow an important seminar in the morning at the university. She thanks Dr. Christoph Bandli very much for the unique possibility of being here in this wonderful building of the Federal Administrative Court in St. Gallen.

Dr. Christoph Bandli, Former President Federal Administrative Court, welcomes all the members and guests of the Society Switzerland-Bhutan. He excuses the current President of the Federal Administrative Court, Mr. Lucas Baechler, due to family reasons. Dr. Christoph Bandli informs that the friendship with the Bhutanese Judiciary started in 2010 through SDC. The nice friendship and partnership is for both sides very fruitful. He adds that the six Bhutanese students, who are doing a master in International Law at the University in St. Gallen, are doing a very good job in their studies.

Dr. Christoph Bandli explains that to hold the assembly of the SSB here in the Federal Administrative Court is a good opportunity to show the building to the public and therefore it is possible to present the building to the members and guests of SSB as well. We are happy to conduct the meeting at this new and centrally located venue and are thankful for the generous hospitality given at the Bundesverwaltungsgericht. SSB has a total of 234 members and attending today are 43.

2. Nomination of the Vote Counter and Minutes Taker

- Proposed vote counter: Koestler Christa, accepted
- Proposed minutes taker: Schwitter-Allenspach Ruth, accepted

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

3. The Minutes of the General Assembly 2014:

See also http://www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/meetings.htm

Decision 3:
The minutes of the General Assembly 2014 are approved unanimously. M. Frei thanks Dieter Bratschi for his excellent work.

4. Annual Report by the President

Activities 2014 in Bhutan:
Besides the financial support of five schools in remote areas Zhemgang and Mongar, SSB was involved in other projects. The reports of the schools and the other projects are presented in paper form at the assembly, but they also can be downloaded from the SSB website.
The Ministry of Education approached our society with the request to pilot a Bakery Project in one of the remotest schools of Zhemgang. The idea was to diversify the food basket of the children. A baking oven, a mixer, other equipment and ingredients for one year was delivered. One trainer from Thimphu instructed six participants for one week. The school offered to share their experiences and new skills with other schools later on.

Yangbari Kitchen Garden Irrigation Project (Mongar) was another project. The aim was to make it possible for the 45 village households to produce vegetable for their own use and for additional income. A water tank was constructed, and the water was distributed to the 45 gardens through waterpipes. Sprinklers were installed. There is a committee of five members of the community to manage and further coordinate the project.

In 2014 SSB supported Lama Shenpen Zangpo in an urgent case when a boy had to be sent to the hospital immediately. Lama Shenpen is working in Thimphu with drug addicts and with people with an alcohol problem.

SSB could make a contribution to Loden Foundation, which is doing an important work to support entrepreneurs in Bhutan. Dorji Tashi, the Executive Director of Loden Foundation, was invited through our society for an event in Switzerland.

**Activities of Bhutan-Switzerland Society BSS:**

The BSS 5th annual meeting took place on August 1, 2014 at SDC Office Thimphu. Our sister organisation held elections on 1st of August 2014.

We appreciate that Lyonpo Dr. Kinzang Dorji will remain the president of our sister organisation. All the other board members are new: the secretary is Mr. Kinzang Tobgyal and the treasurer is Mr. Ram Dorji Tamang. Other Board Members are: Mr. Peter Schmid, Ms. Tashi Pem, Mr. Kinzang Namgay, Mr. Karma Tenzin, Mr. Sonam Tashi, Mr. Tshering Wangchuk (Bumthang) and Mr. Ugyen Dorji (Bumthang). The Support Group Members are Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji, Dasho Nado Richen, Dr. M.K. Rai, Ms. Pema Baumgartner, Mr. Namgyel Tshering and Mr. Chhimi Dorji.

M. Frei had a meeting in September 2014 with the BSS Board and Support Group Members.

**Activities 2014 in Bhutan**

Our sister organisation BBS produced a documentary “People to People Partnership”. The film is shown at the assembly. It was planned first that the film should show only our school projects. The result is that the film documents the work of BBS and SSB throughout the past 15 years.

The documentary is very well received. Members and guests are giving a big acclamation at the end of the film.
Highlighted Activities and Events in 2014 in Switzerland:

- 2 Newsletters in June and December, editor is Dr. Otto Stern
- SSB events were the General Assembly with a presentation on “Bhutan-Swiss Archaeology Project”, a lecture by Dr. Francoise Pommaret on the topic “Lama or monk? Religious semantic categories of Buddhism”, the screening of the documentary “Made in Bhutan” with Dorji Tashi from Loden Foundation and a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Hugo Bigi.
- SSB facebook-sight is visited frequently in Bhutan and in Switzerland
- SSB Website, Hanspeter Bürgi und Peter Moser are preparing the relaunch step by step.

Various information:

- Several Bhutanese are currently studying in Switzerland.
- Many guests from Bhutan visited us in 2014.
- Meeting of European Associations of Friends of Bhutan in Middelburg, Zeeland, in October SSB was suggesting that in 2018 Switzerland and France could host the meeting somewhere around the lake of Geneva.

Decision 4:
The General Assembly unanimously approves the President’s annual report by voting.

5. Presentation of Accounts 2014/ Audit Report

The Treasurer, Rosmarie Frey, presents the Annual Accounts for 2014.

Income:

- Accumulated profit of CHF 2’329.65 as compared to a budgeted loss of CHF 8’300.-.
- Thanks to an increase in members (234), the total amount of member fees reached CHF 19’652.- Due to a generous contribution for our School program we were able to have a positive balance. In 2013 and 2014 SSB could collect through fundraising CHF 36’775.- and we transferred to the schools CHF 46’317.20.

Tied Donations 2014

Costs:

- We had less expenses in most of the cost-accounts.
- Two main projects were sponsored through private donations (Watering 45 Kitchen Gardens at Yangbari and Pilot Bakery Project at Bjoka Primary School)
- There were no other projects submitted from BBS in 2014.

Audit:

Christoph Ditzler presents the Audit Report: “The Auditors have checked and verified the accounts of 2014 and can state that all transactions and bookings have been done in a correct way. Therefore, no objections from the Auditors’ side were raised. The Auditors would like to thank Rosmarie Frey for this perfect job”. 
For details refer to the report by Ch. Rohrbach and Christoph Ditzler on the website.

**Decision 5:**
The General Assembly unanimously approves the annual accounts and financial statements for the year 2014. The Executive Board is fully discharged.


**General strategic direction**

1. Cooperation SSB and BSS as strategic partnership – Identify, plan, implement and evaluate projects together.

   M. Frei explains that we are hoping to intensify the partnership with BSS. We are aware that this is a process which will need time. As a next step, we are planning to discuss the topic with the opposition leader Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamthso during his visit in Switzerland in April. In August or September 2015 we are planning a workshop with BBS President Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji in Switzerland.

2. Link and support people (networking)

3. Enable transfer of knowledge and know-how

4. SSB to be recognized, appreciated and visible throughout Switzerland as reliable, competent Bhutan expert.

**Ernst Reinhardt:**
He thanks Marianne Frei for outlining the strategy and mentions that the cooperation between the sister organizations is important and includes a long process as pointed out by M. Frei. He feels that being active and taking initiatives to support BSS is always necessary. E. Reinhardt expresses his thanks to the people who made the documentary “People to people Partnership”. The film shows that many of our friends in Bhutan have substantial capacities in different fields. Considering the fact that also these friends are growing older like us, a lot of practical experiences will be lost shortly. He suggests to consider firstly: How to maintain, strengthen and motivate our sister organization, and how to practically involve the knowledge and experience of the members of BSS in joint activities. And secondly: The SSB Board shall involve actively other SSB members in the process, warranted by the substantial financial volume of SSB.

M. Frei thanks E. Reinhardt for his suggestions. The two points will be considered and discussed at the workshop of the SSB Board in June 2015.

**Franz Gähwiler:**
He asks for some clarification regarding key point 1 “Development of BSS as a contribution towards developing democratisation”.

M. Frei answers that an association like SSB is a model for a democratic cell in the civil society. We hope that through the collaboration with BSS we can show how democracy works within groups of civil society.
Decision 6:
The General Assembly approves the strategy points and agrees that the two proposals of Ernst Reinhardt are considered and discussed in the Retraite of the board.

7. Programme and activities 2015

- Continuation of the Community Primary School (CPS) program in 3 Schools. The Ministry of Education is developing a new strategy. They are planning to build central schools with boarding facilities in future. “Our” schools are not included in the first batch. We will have to observe what will be the long term strategy. M. Frei is in close contact with the Director of School Education.
- School Exchange Programme: Two Swiss teachers, Christoph Tshering Schwitter and Barbara Mühlemann are working at the Early Learning Center in Thimphu in 2015. Our aim is an exchange programme between Bhutanese schools (also public schools) and secondary schools in Switzerland.
- Programme for Bhutanese farmers to come to Switzerland for specific training for three months is planned to start in 2016.

Events 2015 in Switzerland

- Lecture by Dr. Saamdu Chetri “Gross National Happiness” at Songtsen House in Zürich
- Lecture by Dr. Hans van Nord (Netherlands) “Ice, water and floods: Natural hazards in Bhutan” (in June or November)
- Annual SSB Excursion: Visit Zürich Zoo Elefantenpark & Talk on the construction by Carlo Galmarini, Dipl. Ing. ETH SIA & Lunch (in June or September)

Decision 7:
The General Assembly approves the program and activities for the year 2015.

8. Budget

Rosmarie Frey presents the budget 2015 and explains some key figures:

Earnings 2015: CHF 26’000

Expenses 2015: CHF 35’700

The difference of CHF 9’700 can be covered by the existing assets of the Society reaching CHF 44’500.

The Board is convinced to generate enough additional income (donations, sponsorships, contributions) throughout the year to cover the expenses when actual projects will be carried out.

Decision 8:
The General Assembly approves the proposed budget for 2015.
9. **Additional motions by members**

There are no additional motions by the members noted.

10. **General Assembly 2016**

The Board is suggesting to conduct the next assembly on Saturday, March 12 or 19, 2016 in Lausanne (Uni) or Zürich (ETH), presentation by Dr. György Hetényi “Mountains and earthquakes – fieldwork and results of two geophysics projects in Bhutan”. Details will follow and will be posted on the website.

11. **Miscellaneous**

M. Frei asks the members of the Society for help: Karma Tshering and Thongay (MIL students St. Gallen) are looking for a summer job from June to September 2015 because the convocation takes place only on October.

Dorjee Tso and Kuendrak Tobbyga, two Bhutanese students at the International School in Schaffhausen, need a place to stay during school holidays in 2015/2016 when the boarding facilities are closed.

The film “3 Year 3 Month Retreat” by Dechen Roder from Bhutan will be shown at the Film Festival in Freiburg in March.

The Kulturfestival OBWALD will take place in July. A Bhutanese singer is performing.

The six Bhutanese students, Ms. Richa Gurung, Mr. Karma Tshering, Mr. Thongjay, Mr. Tenzi Dorji, Mr. Gyelpo and Mr. Jigme Loday, who are pursuing an MIL in St. Gallen, introduce themselves to the audience.

The President closes the assembly around 12.00 h and invites all members and guests to an aperitif followed by a lunch.

The afternoon program starts with the address by the Chief Guest H.E. Ambassador Daw Penjo and continues with a presentation by Dr. Christoph Bandli, former President Federal Administrative Court: “Project Judiciary of Bhutan / Federal Administrative Court Switzerland”. Afterwards, the six Bhutanese students (Master in International Law) share their experiences: “Judiciary in Bhutan and in Switzerland: Differences and Similarities”.

At the end of the General Assembly we enjoy a short visit of the building of the Federal Administrative Court.

Keeper of the minutes: Schwitter-Allenspach Ruth

March 21, 2015