

MINUTES

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY Saturday 7th October 2023, 14:00 – 16:00

Meeting held online

WELCOME

FOSSUK President, Ané-Mari Peter welcomed participants on behalf of the FOSSUK Committee. She confirmed that the member clubs had called for an extraordinary AGM and explained the reasoning behind holding this. She also described some of the steps that have been taken since the previous AGM – namely individual conversations with Club presidents and a Roundtable at the Embassy, chaired by Mr Filippo Lombardi, for the whole Swiss community (not just FOSSUK members).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted.

ESTABLISHING A QUORUM

As the presidents of the Unione Ticinese, New Helvetic Society and Edinburgh Swiss Club were present, there were 3 of 5 members present (representing 5 of 7 potential votes). Quorum was therefore established.

CANCELLING PREVIOUS DECISIONS AND RATIFYING THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Members voted to void the decisions taken at the AGM held on 17th June 2023 and to proceed with this extraordinary meeting to ratify documents and votes. They also agreed to void the minutes from the last AGM (but not any notes from other parts of the meeting). The motion was approved unanimously by all three present club representatives.

There was also unanimous agreement by the members present to proceed with this Extraordinary AGM.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

There were no matters arising. The minutes of the AGM held on 21 May 2022 were approved.

Proposed by Franz Muheim (Swiss Club Edinburgh) and seconded by Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom (Unione Ticinese).

ANNUAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ané-Mari Peter presented the President's Report. She highlighted some of the issues facing clubs and other more informal groups of Swiss citizens in the UK. She also reminded members to encourage Swiss citizens to use the traveladmin.ch portal and SwissInTouch mobile app.

The report was accepted.

Proposed by Loredana Guetg-Wyatt (New Helvetic Society) and seconded by Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom (Unione Ticinese).

DELEGATES' REPORT

Franz Muheim presented the delegates' reports from the OSA Council meetings of 2022. The Spring meeting was held online. The Summer meeting was held in person in Lugano – the first in person meeting since 2019. There was also a third Council meeting held online in November. He reminded members that OSA launched swisscommunity.org in 2021.

There was a question about whether the minutes of the Council meetings are being published on the website. Franz confirmed that these should be available and that he would follow up with the Council on this point.

Franz also shared some of the details from the 2023 Council meetings, including the Summer OSA meeting in St Gallen. Two points to note are that the Council approved its manifesto for the upcoming federal elections and that contract between FDFA, OSA and the Swiss Review and Gazzetta Svizzera was renewed for 5 years.

Emilie requested more information about the Gazzetta Svizzera (the version of the Swiss Review for Italy), as this may be of interest to members of the Unione Ticinese.

Two OSA delegates are standing as candidates in the federal elections, as is a member of the Unione Ticinese Committee. This is one way of bringing greater focus to the issues of the Swiss abroad. The group discussed how these candidacies could be highlighted to the community of Swiss living in the UK. There was a suggestion that it could be very interesting for the Swiss in the UK to hold a webinar before the next federal election on how to stand for elections in Switzerland. There was also a suggestion that, before the next election, FOSSUK could invite members of different parties to explain how they would support the Swiss abroad.

There was also a discussion about the purpose of OSA's new 'lobbying and communication' working group – which is to support and encourage OSA members to contact cantonal and federal officials in Switzerland and make them aware of the issues affecting the Swiss abroad.

The reports of the OSA council meetings were accepted.

Proposed by Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom (Unione Ticinese) and seconded by Loredana Guetg-Wyatt (New Helvetic Society).

FINANCE

In the absence of Michelle Hufschmid, outgoing FOSSUK Treasurer, Ané-Mari Peter presented FOSSUK's financial situation. The accounts were audited by Mr George Lee, Ceresio Investors.

There was a discussion about needing to have a clear picture of the expenses incurred by delegates and committee members (whether or not there is a claim for reimbursement). There are still a few outstanding requests for reimbursement from 2022 that need to be processed. Andreas Feller-Ryf said that this topic could be added to the agenda of the next FOSSUK committee meeting.

There have been good examples of informal collaboration between clubs, FOSSUK and other groups around sponsorship for events. The group agreed that further discussions would be useful between FOSSUK and the clubs to ensure good channels of communication and mutual support and reinforcement around events and sponsorships.

1) The Income and Expenditure Accounts for 2022

The accounts were approved (proposed by Franz Muheim and seconded by Loredana Guetg-Wyatt).

2) Budget for 2023

There was a question regarding whether the budget included any financial support for special events (such as the 150th anniversary celebration of Unione Ticinese). At this moment, with an expected income in 2023 of only £250, we cannot promise any outright funding for member events. However, the FOSSUK Committee is committed to supporting member clubs in non-monetary ways and with sponsorship efforts. Recognising the significant time and effort the clubs are putting into organising their events, and that there are significant interlinkages between the different club committees, the group agreed that we need to better work together to create more open and more mutually beneficial arrangements, especially around creating a hub for sponsorship.

The accounts were approved (proposed by Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom and seconded by Franz Muheim).

3) Appointment of Auditor for 2023

George Lee was reappointed as Auditor for 2023. However, as he is the husband of Lakshmi Sundaram, who will be taking over the Treasurer role in the coming months, FOSSUK is actively looking for a new auditor to avoid conflict of interest.

The appointment was approved (proposed by Loredana Guetg-Wyatt and seconded by Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom).

4) Membership subscription for 2023

The membership subscription was approved (proposed by Franz Muheim and seconded by Loredana Guetg-Wyatt).

SWISS REVIEW AND DIGITAL STATISTICS

Nothing has changed since June 2023. However, there was a note that the FOSSUK website gets about 700 visits per month, so is a good platform to highlight member events. Ané-Mari Peter said that FOSSUK will create a separate page featuring the Unione Ticinese 150th year events.

CHANGES IN THE FOSSUK COMMITTEE

Ané-Mari Peter will be stepping down as President of FOSSUK. Loredana Guetg-Wyatt and Andreas Feller-Ryf will take over as Co-Presidents.

Michelle Hufschmid will be moving back to Switzerland and is therefore stepping down from her role as OSA delegate and FOSSUK Treasurer. Lakshmi Sundaram will take over as Treasurer. The FOSSUK Committee will consider how best to fill the vacant OSA delegate role, in collaboration with the OSA Secretariat.

The members thanked Ané-Mari Peter for all her work as President.

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE

Ané-Mari Peter presented a summary of the Roundtable discussion with Club Presidents chaired by Filippo Lombardi. A written summary has been shared with Mr Lombardi and will be circulated to participants as soon as it is approved.

There is a real financial pressure on clubs and a lack of people and resources to organise events. The club model is also not as attractive to the current generation of Swiss abroad who are also more nomadic, and we need to be more agile and

dynamic. We therefore need to balance finding new ways to support the Swiss community now, while also recognising and celebrating the rich heritage of the long-standing clubs. We need to find ways to bring the generations together and brainstorm on how to become more welcoming to people with different levels of interest and commitment – as this will benefit all the clubs. The group also reflected that the existing clubs have also undergone major changes over the years, and that this is a sign of healthy organisations.

The incoming FOSSUK Co-Presidents highlighted that they are committed to creating change over the coming year for the Swiss community in the UK, in full collaboration with all interested parties.

AOB

Unione Ticinese 150th Anniversary: Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom presented the ambitious plans for the 150th anniversary celebrations. She highlighted the need for financial sponsorship and support for the different events. The FOSSUK committee agreed that these celebrations are a significant milestone for the Swiss community in the UK and that FOSSUK should do its utmost in supporting Unione Ticinese in its fundraising efforts. The FOSSUK Committee clarified that it is willing to support Unione Ticinese's fundraising efforts in the coming weeks, with a particular focus on Swiss companies that are not specifically linked to Ticino.

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt and Andreas Feller-Ryf confirmed that this topic should be addressed urgently in the next FOSSUK Committee meeting.

AGM 2024: Given the importance of the Unione Ticinese's 150th anniversary, it is highly likely that the most suitable option is to work hand-in-hand with Unione Ticinese to combine efforts around the next AGM.

UK CSA Delegate Vacancy: The FOSSUK Committee needs to discuss next steps on how to address the vacancy created by Michelle Hufschmid's resignation and return to Switzerland.

Swiss National Day: This will take place on 21 July 2023. Andreas Feller-Ryf is actively looking for someone to take over the organisation of Swiss National Day for 2024.

Artist in Residence: FOSSUK will advertise the application for the Artist in Residence programme for Swiss abroad.

ATTENDEES

- **FOSSUK Committee Members and OSA delegates**

Andreas Feller-Ryf
Loredana Guetg-Wyatt
Franz Muheim
Ané-Mari Peter
Lakshmi Sundaram
Gioia Palmieri

Excused: Michelle Hufschmid, Joelle Nebbe-Mornod

- **Representatives from member clubs**

New Helvetic Society, Loredana Guetg-Wyatt
Unione Ticinese, Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom
Swiss Club Edinburgh, Franz Muheim

- **Representative from the Embassy**

Excused: Thomas Wagner