Bangkok, 26 February 2023

# Annual General Meeting 2023 of the Swiss Society Bangkok
# 8 March 2023 at Holiday Inn Bangkok Sukhumvit

## Report of the President

(March 2022 - March 2023)

### 1. Introductory Remarks

Since March 2022, life in Thailand has largely normalized and we could foresee a return to activities similar to the time before 2020. However, the first two monthly meetings in 2022 had to be cancelled due to renewed Covid-19 restrictions.
Several SSB members were visibly happy to meet again with friends and other members to create and resume contacts and exchange adventures, impressions, and opinions about the current situation here in Thailand and in other regions of the planet.

As of springtime many enjoyed the regained freedom of travelling and spent some extended time in Switzerland or other destinations. This made it difficult to organize events until the end of summer 2022. Then, later in the year, we reckoned that there were many different events and activities planned and offered by other organizations and institutions, and it was difficult to find dates for SSB events.

### 2. The Committee and it's meetings

Mr. Sacha Bürgi (event manager); Mr. Pierre Chabloz (link with CH embassy, returned to Switzerland and was replaced in summer by his successor at the Swiss embassy, Consul Mr. Jacques Baudevin; Mr. Thomas Gerber (treasurer); Mr. Michel Henriod, who is planned to take over the treasury; Mr. Andreas Mikes (secretary, website, FB); Mr. Werner Schäppi (registration and events); Mr. Josef Schnyder (vice-president and events); Mr. Christian Vogel (link with the RIS Swiss section); Mr. Mike Wyler (membership administrator); the undersigned (president).
In September 2022, new SSB member Mr. Mattias Pawlik, chief at the Marriott Sukhumvit soi 55, joined the Committee as food and beverages expert. However, the situation at his understaffed hotel did not allow him to be active in the Committee and he had to give priority to his job.
For the organization of the 2023 AGM at the Holiday Inn Sukhumvit, Mr. Alessandro Haab jumped in as F&B expert, as he did already last year for the AGM dinner/90-years party at the Montien hotel.

At this AGM 2023, the Committee must be newly elected. Therefore, all members mentioned above will withdraw.

Since last AGM, the Committee held six meetings, all took place with the physical presence of its members. Microsoft-Teams was used once to let board members who were in Switzerland join the meeting online.
The dates of the meetings in 2022 were 26 April, 6 June, 5 September, 25 October, and 20 December.
On the 17th of January 2023, the sixth meeting was held, mainly to organize the AGM 2023.

### 3. Membership

Nothing unusual happened in terms of SSB membership. Some have left the country and with it the SSB. Several new arrivals have decided to join the society. Members who did not pay the annual membership fee after having been reminded repeatedly were taken off the membership list.

The actual count is the following (26 February 2023):

- Ordinary members: 202
- Honorary members: 7
- Associate members: 11

In total, the SSB counts 220 members. Out of this total number, 95 are family members and 125 are single members. If we consider that the family members count more than one person, we can state that we have about 315 members with approximately 40 children in the SSB.
209 members (202 ordinary and 7 honorary) have the voting right.

With deep regret, we must report the loss of one of our most senior members. **Mrs. Matilda Lim,** SSB member since 1975, passed away on February 7, 2023.
The undersigned attended the funeral mass together with some other SSB members on 13th of February 2023. Our sincere condolences were extended to the family of Matilda Lim.

## 4. Report on the activities of the Swiss Society Bangkok

### 4.1. Monthly Get-together meetings 2022/23

As mentioned in the introductory remarks, to meet monthly with other members and guests of the SSB is important for some of us. The formula with short presentations is however tricky because certain presentations shied away some from joining. Well, it is hardly possible to find speakers and topics which interest everyone. When we did not find a speaker, we just talked about issues which were suggested by participants present that evening. We called those meetings chat-room meetings ("Plaudertreffen").

January and February 2022: The first two monthly meetings in 2022 had to be cancelled due to renewed Covid-19 restrictions.

March 2022: On 15 March, 27 participants enjoyed a fascinating brief exposé by **Mr. Michel Baumgartner** about our relationship with the changes of our planet Earth and possible challenges for future generations.

April 2022: The April meeting just at the end of Songkran happened without presentation because the planned speaker was tested Covid positive a day before he should have talked to 11 registered participants.

May 2022: On 17 May, our associate member **Professor Dr. Pornsan Watanangura** presented the journey of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) to Europe in 1934 and the dramatic resignation of the Thai king.

June 2022: The monthly meeting on 21 June was apparently not well enough announced because several members said that they would have joined but were not aware of the interesting subject: 21 participants listened to **Mr. Gilles Logelin**, chief at the tower of control at the Paris airport, who spoke about the Concorde disaster of 2000 at the airport Charles de Gaulle where he was in charge when the accident happened.

July 2022: For the get-together on 19 July, no speaker could be found. It was the time of summer holidays when many members were absent from Bangkok.

August 2022: On 16 August, 20 participants joined the monthly gathering. SSB member **Mr. Michel Baumgartner** made a philosophical excursion about "Love".

September 2022: In this meeting, 15 members and guests listened to **Pastor Carsten Körber** who was talking about his work as the evangelical pastor for the German speaking community in Bangkok.

October 2022: The get-together on 18 October was organized as a chatroom meeting ("Plaudertreffen"). Some 20 members exchanged opinions and expectations about our monthly meetings. The feedback about such meetings was encouraging so that the formula can be repeated.

November 2022: On 15 November, the principal of the RIS Swiss section, the bilingual German/English Swiss school in Bangkok, **Mr. Christian Vogel** presented his school to 17 participants. The relatively small number of participants reflects probably the SSB membership: the children of the majority are out of school.
On Monday 21 November, an additional get-together meeting was organized at the request of the Swiss embassy in Bangkok on the occasion of a visit of **Mr. Laurent Perriard** from the EDA in Bern. The deputy chief of the Consular department in Bern wished to talk directly to Swiss living in Thailand. The meeting was thought fruitful by most of the 28 participants.

December 2022: Shortly before Christmas, on December 20, popular SSB member **Mr. Peter Wiesner** was the speaker. Was it Peter's presentation about the Furka Cogwheel Steam Railway (DFB), or the special menu of Chefs René and Thomas of the Swiss restaurant Chesa, the grilled Argentinean beef fillet, that attracted 40 members and guests to attend this December get-together? Probably both.

January 2023: Shortly after New Year, on 17 January 2023, 22 members and friends followed an interesting presentation by **Mr. Aron Schindler.** He explained the present situation for the agricultural sector of his drone business, and with this, it became clear that drones will be a very attractive business for the future, also in this part of the world.

February 2023: Our member **Mr. Kurt Ulrich** spoke about his recent fascinating journey to Argentina and the Antarctica to 17 participants of the monthly get-together.

### 4.2. Events since AGM 2022

26.03.2022 **The Annual General Meeting 2022 was combined with the celebration of 90 years of the SSB**
The AGM took place on a Saturday, because of the anniversary party that followed. It was organized in newly renovated Montien hotel Bangkok Surawong and attracted 98 members for the AGM and 162 for the dinner. For more details, please find the report on the SSB website.

22.01.2022
23.04.2022
01.10.2022
17.12.2022 **Jass tournaments:** The plan to organize 4 Jass tournaments per year could be realized in 2022. As this event has gained in popularity, we plan to continue with these Swiss style competitions in 2023. Mr. Stefan Kuhn, responsible for the technical part, and Mr. Josef Schnyder, who organized the announcements and registrations, have confirmed their readiness to continue respectively.

30.07.2022 **Swiss National Day celebration (the first of August):** The 731st Swiss National Day was celebrated on Saturday, 30th of July in the garden of the residence of the Swiss ambassador in Bangkok. As Mrs. Helen Budliger Artieda has left Thailand for her new post as Secretary of State and head of SECO in Bern, Mr. Conradin Rasi, Deputy Head of Mission, was the host.
257 guests registered but only 244 participants showed up at the celebration. We were very lucky with the weather: it was very wet a day before and it rained again a day after.

26.11.2022 R**aclette evening:** With the number of guests still limited, 160 members and guests enjoyed the exquisite meat platter and the Raclette à discretion in the nice garden of the Swiss embassy. The Swiss folk music played from tape and the pleasant temperature that evening contributed also to the friendly native atmosphere. This was also the first event with the presence of the new Swiss ambassador, HE Mr. Pedro Zwahlen, who arrived in Thailand a few days before.

10.12.2022 **National Museum Bangkok**: On a warm Saturday morning, 23 members and friends of the SSB followed two competent guides, Mrs. Tiziana Greger and Mr. Werner Schäppi, through the National Museum and enlarged their knowledge about history, culture, and religion of their host country.

11.12.2022 **Christmas brunch:** 90 members and friends of the Swiss Society Bangkok (65 adults with 25 children and youth) gathered at Brasserie 9 for the annual Christmas brunch. With this event, the Swiss community maintained an old tradition with the authentic Santa Claus (SSB Honorary member Mr. Albin Ruffner in his yearly act).

26.– 29.01.2023 **Exclusive River Kwai Cruise:** 18 guests, members of the SSB with their spouses went on this wonderful 4-day trip to Kanchanaburi. They travelled up the Kwai river on a cruise ship, a newly built colonial-style river cruise ship modelled on the original Irrawaddy flotilla from Burma, which also served as a floating hotel. On the way they visited many interesting sights. The evenings were spent on the boat with tasty food, good wine, impressive sunsets, dancing, and lively discussions.

## 5. Swiss Society Bangkok Covid-19 Donation

Following a decision taken by the SSB Committee in its meeting of 20 December 2022, the remaining funds from the SSB collection for Covid-19 sufferers, namely THB 23,427.83, was donated to the **Anti-Human Trafficking & Child Abuse Center (ATCC)** at their 2022 Children's Christmas Party on 23 December 2022 at the ATCC in Pattaya. http://www.atcc.or.th/16681663/atcc-need

## 6. SSB Newsletters

During the reporting period, SSB Information Bulletins (Newsletters) were sent out to all members on 6 June 2022, 9 September 2022 and on 12 December 2022. As the beginning of 2022 was again a period when normal life was partially restricted due to a (hopefully last) wave of Covid-19 infections, **no** Newsletter was done in the first quarter of the year.

## 7. Conference of the Presidents of Swiss Societies in Thailand

In 2022, it was the Swiss Society Phuket (SSP) that invited to the yearly conference of the Swiss Society presidents. The meeting was held on 19 November in the Mövenpick Resort Bangtao Beach, Phuket.
The Swiss embassy was represented by Consul Mr. Jacques Baudevin, who informed about the current numbers of the Swiss communities in the countries covered by his consulate and some of the current challenges. ASO delegate Mr. Josef Schnyder gave an update on the issues currently treated at the ASO meetings in Switzerland, and the SS presidents reported about their current situation of membership and activities.
A common problem reported from all Swiss Societies in Thailand was the difficulty to find members for their respective boards.

It was remarked that in terms of average age of membership, the SSB has most likely the youngest membership average age (with about 63 y) as the sister societies are with a few exceptions composed of pensioners. This has, of course, an impact on the activities of the respective societies.

In 2023 it is the SSB's turn to organize the Conference of the SS presidents in Thailand. It is planned to hold it on Saturday, 25 November, the day of the Raclette evening. The presidents of the participating Swiss Societies will be invited by the SSB.

## 8. Increase of yearly membership fee (MF) – SSB Questionnaire of January 2023

An SSB questionnaire that was sent to all 219 SSB members on 9 January 2023 was answered by 54 members (24.7 %). We thank the quarter of the members for their effort.
Concerning the question about an increase of the MF, 40 % said no to an increase, 43.6% agreed to increase the MF to THB 1,500 for single and THB 2,500 for family membership, and 16.4% would accept to increase the MF to THB 2,000 for single and TFB 3,000 for family membership. The results of the questionnaire will be publicized in the next SSB Newsletter by end of March 2023.

The question about the yearly SSB membership fee w on the agenda of the AGM on 8 March 2023 (Item nr. 13 on the Agenda of the AGM 2023).

## 9. Clubdesk, the SSB software, the SSB website, SSB on facebook

SSB is mostly visited on facebook, less on its website. However, please be reminded that there are two areas on the SSB website www.ssb.or.th :
1. A public area to present the society to the outside with lots of information about events,
2. An internal area which can only be viewed by members.
All SSB members have the opportunity to register for the internal area and to create a password.
So far, only some 20% of all members have created an account. For help to get there, please contact admin@ssb.or.th or secretary@ssb.or.th. A quickguide can be found on the website (www.ssb.or.th).
Members who were not able to join certain events can find reports and pictures about them very easily on the website.

## 10. SSB Book „90 Years of SSB"

So far, 205 books were sold, 95 books are in stock
Deficit (currently): THB 19,630.00

## 11. Special Thanks

**We are especially grateful to the following persons:**

**- Swiss ambassadors HE Mrs. Helen Budliger Artieda (until her departure in July 2022), and HE Mr. Pedro Zwahlen and his staff for** support and sponsorship.
- **Mr. Linus Knobel** for supporting Raclette, Christmas Brunch, and also for hosting and sponsoring Jass competitions as well as gift vouchers for get-together speakers.
**- Mr. Thomas Nowak and Mr. René Kuhn of Swiss restaurant Chesa** for hosting get-together meetings and sponsoring the meals of the speakers.

**- Some generous members** for their financial support.
**- Mr. Stefan Kuhn** for officiating the internal audit, and for organizing the technical part of the Jass competitions and the Pub-tour.
**- Khun Dhira** for doing all the legal work**.**
**- Khun Ploenta,** for supporting the treasurer.
**- Mr. Albin Ruffner** for acting the «Samichlaus» each year.
**- Mr. John Hauenstein** (Paparazzo) for reports and pictures of SSB events.
**- all members of the SSB Committee** for the excellent cooperation in a pleasant atmosphere.
**- all speakers of our get-together meetings** (see point 4.1.).

**and finally, all SSB members and friends,** who helped over the year with organizing and participating in SSB events.

Bangkok, 26 February 2023
Christian Brunner
SSB president

Final remark:
For translations we suggest using DeepL Translator (easy to download, easy to use, free of charge)