

When banks say "Thank you"

Basel, 19 January 2012 – The Swiss Bankers Association (SBA) celebrates its centenary this year. The banking centre says "Thank you" to Switzerland with a range of activities throughout the year.

The significance of the banks in Switzerland for the country's economy is renowned. To mark its 100th anniversary, however, the SBA is focusing not on its member institutions but on the people who - day in, day out - help Switzerland in a multitude of ways to make progress. The motto of the SBA's centenary year is simply "Thank you". Patrick Odier, Chairman of the SBA, explains: "Switzerland and the banks here are bound by a common history. By saying "Thank you", we aim to highlight our commitment to the country." The various activities planned throughout the year aim to enforce trust and understanding. Patrick Odier: "Our banks have their roots in Switzerland and are based on Swiss virtues, one reason why the banks are held in high regard outside the country. I would like to call for us to reflect on our roots, and on the values that made Switzerland strong as a financial centre. At the same time we can look to the future with optimism, as our banks have every opportunity to be successful in future."

Reflecting the population

Switzerland's population as a whole will also be given the opportunity to say thank you, with a "Dankomat" in which anyone can record a video thank-you message making its way around Switzerland this year. These messages will be published on www.merci-danke-grazie.ch and Facebook, and all submissions will also be entered in a regular prize draw for an iPad. In addition, 15 young photographers have travelled all over Switzerland to create portraits of 100 professional individuals as a representative cross-section of the country's population. The resulting volume of photographs is an impressive reflection of our society. It also contains a brief history of the Swiss Bankers Association written by Dr. Robert Vogler, an economic historian. The photographs will be displayed in an exhibition, and be auctioned for the benefit of the Speranza Foundation during the course of the year. The central objective of Speranza is the education and the successful integration of young and older people into the employment market. The centenary year will be rounded off with an international conference on a current issue in the financial centre. With the conference entitled "Swiss Banking Global", SwissBanking aims to make a forward-looking contribution to the discussion and resolution of the current challenges facing the Swiss financial centre and the financial industry at a global level.

About the Swiss Bankers Association (SBA)

The SBA, as it is known today, was founded on 16 November 1912 as the Association of Representatives of the Swiss Banking Industry. A total of 316 representatives from 159 banks gathered at the foundation meeting in Basel's City Hall. Today, the SBA comprises around 350 member institutions (plus 350 Raiffeisen banks) and some 17,700 individual members. With offices in Basel, Zurich and Bern, the SBA employs a total of 70 individuals. Eleven commissions and associated working groups deal with key issues affecting the industry. Serving on these commissions are some 583 representatives of various banking groups as well as specialists from the SBA.

Swiss Bankers Association press release

2/2

Information for editors

A press conference to launch the centenary year will be held at 11 a.m. today at the gallery ARTseefeld, Seefeldstrasse 301a, 8008 Zurich.

The Website www.merci-danke-grazie.ch will be available throughout the year for you to access thank-you messages, activities and news.

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