

Bankers Day 2017: Remaining at the top

Basel, September 14, 2017 – This year’s Annual General Meeting of the banks in Switzerland is being held under the motto “Remaining at the top”. The banks are highly competitive. They differentiate themselves through innovation, professionalism and quality. But they must have framework conditions that allow them to successfully develop their business strategies. The Swiss Bankers Association (SBA) is successfully contributing to the establishment of the best-possible framework conditions for its members.

- Bankers Association positioned as thought leader for the framework conditions of tomorrow.
- Association defines three principles for a successful, globally competitive Swiss financial centre:
 - Firstly, the Bankers Association calls for competitiveness to be taken into account consistently in all regulatory projects.
 - Secondly, the association advocates open markets and insists on recognition by the EU of equivalence for relevant Swiss laws. If equivalence in the area of finance cannot be provided, no in-depth discussions should be conducted with the EU about the cohesion contribution.
 - Thirdly, the Bankers Association is focusing on the sector’s capacity for innovation and is closely following digitalisation trends with a view to the development of innovation-friendly framework conditions.

Bankers Association’s strategic areas of focus

The SBA outlined three strategic areas of focus for its work as an association: clear positioning, anticipating the framework conditions of tomorrow, and collaboration and strong networks. The Swiss banks stand for first-class service, professional customer advisory services and best products. They make a major contribution to prosperity in Switzerland. The association’s committees act as thought leaders for the framework conditions of tomorrow. This is contingent on the banks being able to contribute their insights to the regulatory process from the outset by providing clear positions – at the national level as well as in international standard-setting bodies. The SBA takes advantage of the resources of its members and other associations to consolidate its positions on the basis of the highest level of expertise and contributes these to the dialogue.

Principles for the future

With a view to the future, the SBA is aligning itself along three principles. Firstly, the SBA calls for competitiveness to be consistently taken into account for all bank-relevant regulatory processes. “We do not need a Swiss finish, but rather a Swiss way”, says Herbert J. Scheidt, Chairman of the SBA. “Regulation must focus unconditionally on competitiveness and take advantage of room for manoeuvre that does not exist in other countries.”

The second principle is openness. As liberal representatives of open markets, the SBA resolutely calls for market access and the guarantee of equivalence in financial matters before Switzerland embarks on discussions about a further cohesion contribution. Switzerland is not just a random third country, but is extremely closely linked to Europe and has been an established partner of the EU for decades.

The third principle is innovation: the SBA is in intensive discussions with its members about the trends in the industry that are opening up through the developments in digitalisation. To this end, the SBA last summer created a group of experts wherein industry specialists continuously analyse the suitability of existing framework conditions with a view to these developments.

New board member

A new board member will be put forward for election at this year’s Annual General Meeting: Kristine Braden, Managing Director, Citi Country Officer for Switzerland, Monaco and Liechtenstein, Corporate & Investment Banking Head for Switzerland, Citibank (Switzerland) SA. As the representative for foreign banks, she will replace Marco Bizzozero, former CEO Deutsche Bank Schweiz, who has stepped down from the Board of Directors.

Swiss Bankers Day

Bankers Day is the Annual General Meeting of the SBA and is one of the highlights of the Swiss banking year. In addition to the speech by Herbert J. Scheidt, Chairman of the SBA, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, will deliver a welcome address in the name of the Federal Council. State Secretary Jörg Gasser will give a keynote speech about the competitiveness of the Swiss financial centre. This will serve as the introduction to a panel discussion, which in addition to State Secretary Gasser, will feature high-ranking banking representatives from the four business areas private banking, asset management, retail banking and capital markets. The 2017 graduates of a banking apprenticeship who achieved the best business grades will also be recognised at Bankers Day.

The focus of Bankers Day is the exchange between figures from the worlds of banking, politics and industry. Ambassadors, who give the event an international dimension, are also invited. Around 450 guests are expected to attend.

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