

Update from Swiss Amcham April 8

Dear members,

We are in week four of the lockdown in Switzerland. While here the news are cautiously optimistic and the number of new confirmed cases and deaths due to COVID-19 are going down, news from other countries are alarming and a return to normal is not in sight.

We all get inundated by newsletters, free trainings, analyses of the situation. We will not add to the cacophony. But I would like to give you a short update of the activities of your Swiss Amcham

1) Events

- We have postponed or canceled all events until mid-June. Sad! We had planned some outstanding events for you.
- Gallatin Award ceremony May 18 in Geneva: After a lot of hopeful thoughts, we had to decide to postpone the Award ceremony to a new date in April or May 2021. We will try to get the same stellar group of speakers together: Hansjörg Wyss, Ernesto Bertarelli, Federal Councilor Guy Parmelin, current President of the National Council Isabelle Moret, President of Geneva Antonio Hodgers, US Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein Edward T. McMullen jr., President of EPFL Martin Vetterli and President of ETH Zurich Joel Mésot. We will get back to you shortly with the new date.
- Annual General Meeting on June 29 in Rüschlikon: We are still in planning and - with a lot of optimism - hope to be able to hold the AGM with in-person participation. Guest of Honor will be FC Guy Parmelin.

2) The activities of Swiss Amcham

- We are still working hard to plan the future after COVID-19. We work on the verifications of the members' coordinates, on the publishing of the Yearbook 2020/2021, on a great events program for H2 2020 and all the questions coming our way from the members.
- We have been fielding a series of offers from companies who want to help. We have connected these companies with the relevant authorities and organizations.
- We have been active in support of a large scale, global effort for the development of vaccines in cooperation with the relevant international organizations. I will inform you about this important initiative when we can go public.
- We have also fielded some interesting technical questions related to COVID-19, such as fiscal issues for cross-border workers who cannot get to work, compensation of employees called on to serve in the Swiss Army and many more.
- Last, but not least, we are keeping up with our traditional key issues on trade (and free trade!), taxes, immigration (esp. for international talents), relationship with the EU (multilateral recognition agreements, data equivalency, participation in Erasmus and Horizon Europe, framework agreement). While these issues are on the backburner due to the crisis, they will be essential in the restart of the economy.

3) Operations

- We have reduced the hours of operations and a majority of the employees are working from home. The office will be occupied from 09:00 to 16:00. Outside these hours, we are reachable by email.
- We have registered for partial unemployment benefits ("Kurzarbeit"). Without events, meetings, workshops and a lot less direct contact with members, we estimate a work shortfall of approx. 35%
- Finally, to add insult to injury, our systems have been attacked with a crypto blocker. According to our IT providers, we were a "random victim" and never received a ransom note. We also have confirmation that while the systems got locked, no data was stolen. Most of our systems were operational quite rapidly, but we have a bigger issue with our website which is in many ways linked to our systems. We have to rebuild the website which will take some time. We will be up and running as soon as possible.

Please let us know how we can be of help in these difficult times. I would also be interested to hear about your issues and questions in these difficult times. I will always be available on my mobile +41 79 240 0500 or email martin.naville@amcham.ch. For general requests, please send to info@amcham.ch.

Thank you for your continued support. I wish you all the best for the coming challenges, together with equanimity and a good health. There is always light at the end of the tunnel!

Martin Naville, CEO
And the Swiss Amcham Team

CEO
martin.naville@amcham.ch