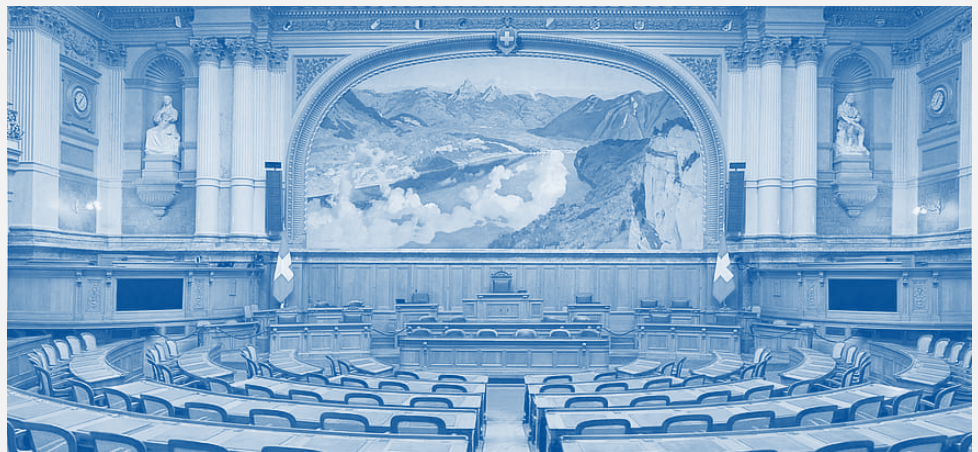


# Annual Report

# 2021



Bern, April 2022

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## 1. Foreword

The Swiss startup ecosystem enjoys an increasingly positive perception at the political level. It has been recognized that today's startups have an influence on both innovation activity and future jobs that should not be underestimated. This has led, for example, to the Federal Council wanting to strengthen Switzerland as a startup location with various measures.

Especially when the momentum is good, it is important to take advantage of this. Together with the parliamentary group Startups and Entrepreneurship, SWESA was active in various areas in 2021. Now that the pandemic hopefully continues to weaken, the focus can return to other issues. We will continue to be involved in 2022, participating in various initiatives at the federal level and representing the interests of our members.

SWESA is the sponsor of the parliamentary group Startups and Entrepreneurship, which gives the Swiss startup ecosystem direct access to politics. At the meetings with the parliamentary group, current topics are discussed, and corresponding political proposals are formulated. We are always happy to receive input and suggestions from our members.

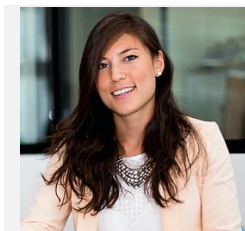
I would like to take this opportunity to thank Judith Bellaiche and Andri Silberschmidt for their pleasant and always constructive cooperation. A big thank you also goes to my board colleagues Déborah Heintze, Marc Maurer and Karim Maizar!

Simon Enderli  
President SWESA

## 2. Management

The initiator behind the establishment of SWESA was the Swiss Entrepreneurs Foundation. The foundation also pursues the goal of improving the economic policy framework for startups and entrepreneurship and is under the patronage of Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin. SWESA has transferred the management of the association to the Swiss Entrepreneurs Foundation, which has taken it over as part of a pro bono mandate.

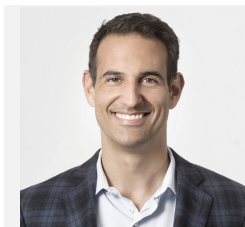
## 3. Board



**Déborah Heintze**  
CMO and Co-Founder  
Lunaphore Technologies SA



**Marc Maurer**  
Co-CEO  
On AG



**Karim Maizar**  
Partner and Head Startup Desk  
Kellerhals Carrard



**Simon Enderli**  
CEO  
Swiss Entrepreneurs Foundation

All members of the Board are volunteers.

## 4. Members

The members form the basis of the association and ensure its financing. For startups, membership is still possible for as little as one symbolic Swiss franc. SWESA members enjoy the following advantages:

- Members can submit their political concerns to SWESA. The issues are reviewed and forwarded to the Parliamentary Group for discussion.
- Informative newsletters following parliamentary sessions, which provide updates on the status of business relevant to members.
- Invitations to networking events that promote exchange between business and politics.
- Participation in polls and surveys and access to the results.
- Exchange / network with other Members.
- Support from the SWESA network on specific issues.

We are happy to have almost 200 members who support our work. We want to continue to build on this strong foundation.

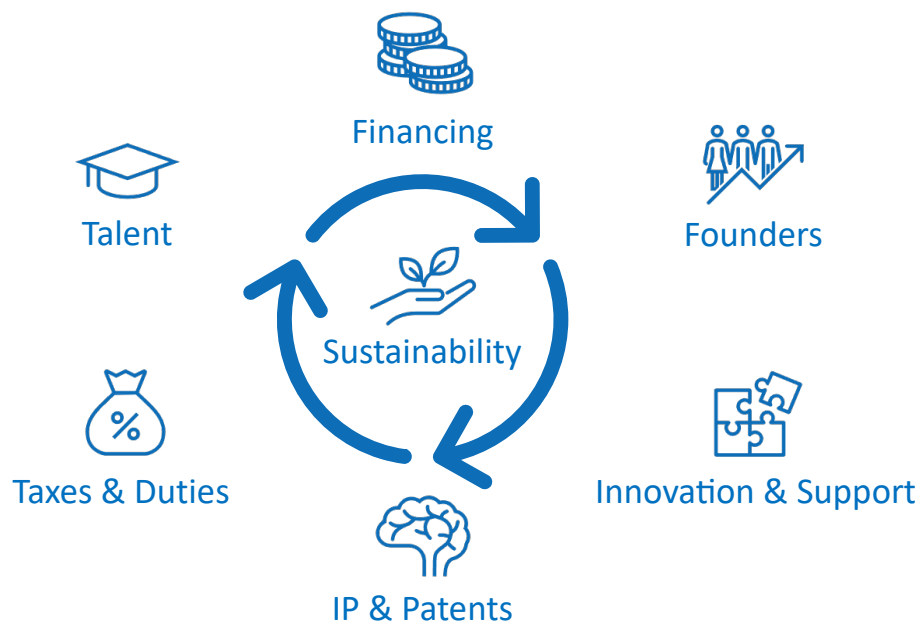


The complete list of members can be found at [www.swesa.ch/mitglieder](http://www.swesa.ch/mitglieder).

## 5. Charta

Unlike other associations and organizations in the startup ecosystem, SWESA is concentrating only on political aspects. The Executive team has drafted a charta based on various questionnaires that guides the association's work. Our goal is to make a difference in the following areas through our activities:

- **Taxes & filings** We aim to make tax conditions as attractive as possible for the entire ecosystem. That includes founders and employees, as well as investors.
- **Talents** We endeavor to give Swiss startups easier access to the top talents, in terms of both quotas and regulatory processes.
- **IP & patents** Existing patent processes need to be simplified. Swissness should be used as a positive force to gain footholds in international markets.
- **Innovation & support** We strive to make sure the federal development agencies (Innosuisse, S-GE etc.) put businesses at the forefront of their efforts. They need to raise the quality of their services and make them easily accessible.
- **Founders** We champion entrepreneurship and endeavor to keep the regulatory hurdles for newly founded businesses as low as possible.
- **Financing** We aim to drive forward political discussion to help raise more Swiss venture capital in the future.
- **Sustainability** We are committed to sustainability in the pursuit of all our initiatives. That includes our relationship with the environment, our social interactions, and our efforts to build an attractive and future-oriented business environment.



## 6. Parliamentary Group

The cross-party parliamentary group on Startups and Entrepreneurship provides our direct connection to the political sphere of influence. Like SWESA, the group was formed in spring 2020, by its co-presidents Judith Bellaiche and Andri Silberschmidt. The group is open to all parliamentarians interested in furthering the interests of startups and innovative SMEs.



From left: Alois Gmür, Esther Friedli, Min Li Marti, Andri Silberschmidt, Judith Bellaiche, Gerhard Andrey

### The Core Team:

#### Judith Bellaiche

National Councillor GLP, ZH

#### Alois Gmür

National Councillor CVP, SZ

#### Min Li Marti

National Councillor SP, ZH

#### Andri Silberschmidt

National Councillor FDP, ZH

#### Esther Friedli

National Councillor SVP, SG

#### Gerhard Andrey

National Councillor Greens, FR

### Other members:

#### Marianne Binder-Keller

National Councillor CVP, AG

#### Kurt Fluri

National Councillor FDP, SO

#### Ruedi Noser

Councillor of States FDP, ZH

#### Damien Cottier

National Councillor, NE

#### Johanna Gapany

Councillor of States FDP, FR

#### Fabio Regazzi

National Councillor CVP, TI

#### Jacqueline De Quattro

National Councillor, VD

#### Lars Guggisberg

National Councillor SVP, BE

#### Maja Riniker

National Councillor FDP, AG

#### Marcel Dobler

National Councillor, SG

#### Charles Juillard

National Councillor CVP, JU

#### Beat Walti

National Councillor FDP, ZH

#### Beat Flach

National Councillor GLP, AG

#### Isabelle Moret

National Councillor FDP, VD

## 7. Activities and Initiatives

In 2021, SWESA has engaged with the parliamentary group on Startups and Entrepreneurship in various areas. Below is an overview:

### ▪ **Startup Visa**

In spring 2021, the core team of the PG Startups and Entrepreneurship once again dealt in depth with the topic of startup visas. This provided the opportunity to discuss the requirements of the startup ecosystem directly with State Secretary Mario Gattiker, Head of the State Secretariat for Migration SEM. Based on the discussion, the first results could be realized in the context of adapting the relevant directives:

- a. The granting of a residence and work permit to persons who are involved in a company that is part of a cantonal or federal support program will now be possible even before the actual founding of the company.
- b. Employee participation plans will in future be considered as a salary component in an appropriate ratio
- c. More flexibility for the cantons in extending residence permits after 24 months.

Further parliamentary initiatives in this topic area will be examined.

### ▪ **Panel discussion at the Startup Days conference**

The Swiss startup ecosystem meets in Bern at the annual Startup Days in June. SWESA organized an exchange between startups, politicians, and representatives of the authorities. The discussion focused on the question of what consequences innovative and disruptive technologies can have on the design of economic policy framework conditions. The meeting showed that a good basis exists, but that there is also potential for optimization in various areas. For example, there are still many uncertainties in the application and regulation of artificial intelligence. The participants also see room for improvement in technology transfer at universities.

### ▪ **Consultations**

SWESA participates in consultations that are relevant for the startup ecosystem. In 2021/22, submissions were formulated for the following consultations:

- a. Total revision of the contribution ordinance of Innosuisse ([link](#))
- b. Amendment of the Foreign Nationals and Integration Act: Easier admission for foreign nationals with a Swiss university degree ([link](#)).

### ▪ **Innovation event at Bühler AG in Uzwil**

At Bühler AG in Uzwil, innovation is a daily reality. In the company's own CUBIC innovation campus, we were invited to hold an event on the topic of "Success factors and framework conditions of innovative Swiss companies" in the presence of CEO Stefan Scheiber, startups, politicians, and other personalities. The event impressively showed that innovation is a key success factor, especially for established, traditional companies, and that everything must be done to ensure that progressive business models continue to be possible in Switzerland.

### ▪ **Involvement in referendums**

SWESA took a clear position in the referendums on the so-called 99% initiative and the amendment to the Stamp Duty Act. To this end, we joined the umbrella campaigns of other organizations such as Economiesuisse and the Trade Association (Gewerbeverband) and represented the concerns of the startup scene.



- **Participation in working groups**

The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) has investigated the startup ecosystem in Switzerland on behalf of the Federal Council. It was recognized that there is room for improvement in various areas, namely technology transfer, internationalization, access to skilled workers and financing. SWESA is participating in the process, particularly regarding issues surrounding the financing of startups. The first results are expected to be available in June 2022.

## 8. Financial Statement

When the association was founded, it was decided not to define rigid membership categories. Instead, only minimum contributions were defined for the various categories. This makes it possible for startups and SMEs to become SWESA members for as little as a symbolic Swiss franc. The income from membership fees is primarily used to finance infrastructure and tools, the monitoring of political business and the organization of meetings and events. As a result, the annual financial statements for the second fiscal year are again clearly structured:

### Income statement – January 1 - December 31, 2021

	2020	2021
Membership fees	11'927	11'100
Donations	-	1'000
Services purchased	18	-1'315
<b>Gross profit</b>	<b>11'909</b>	<b>10'785</b>
Personnel expense	-	-
Other personnel expense	-	-145
Marketing expense	-	-
IT and administrative expense	-5'748	-5'534
<b>Operating profit (EBIT)</b>	<b>6'137</b>	<b>5'106</b>
Financial expense	-138	-109
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>5'999</b>	<b>4'997</b>
Association's capital on 31 December 2021	10'996	

### Commentary on the financial statement

The free choice of membership fees continues to have the effect that many new members have opted for the minimum amount of CHF 1. Due to the reduced activities during the pandemic and the pro bono work of the board and the management, the association is financially viable in this form and the minimum contribution of CHF 1 remains unchanged. However, if activities are expanded and additional work is assigned to the management office, new sources of funding will need to be discussed. The expected expenses for 2022 will be significantly higher than in the reporting year.

## 9. Outlook

In the third year of our existence, we want to further focus and sharpen our activities and strengthen our membership base wherever possible. This also includes partnerships and/or mergers with other organizations from the startup ecosystem and business associations. We continue to pursue the goal of making the concerns of startups and innovative SMEs more heard in Bern. This is what we focus on and measure ourselves by.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have supported SWESA in any way during its second year. Whether as a member, advisor, sponsor, board member, partner, or politician.

26 April 2022

**Swiss Entrepreneurs & Startup Association SWESA**

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[www.swesa.ch](http://www.swesa.ch)

Note:

Most of this annual report has been translated automatically using DeepL.