

Berne, 18 October 2020

115th SIG Assembly of Delegates 2020

Ralph Lewin elected new SIG President

On Sunday, 18 October 2020, the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities (SIG) held its Assembly of Delegates in Berne. The main focus was on the general elections and changes in leading positions. After 12 years in office, SIG President Herbert Winter and other long-serving members of the Board of Directors and the Central Committee passed the baton on to new hands. Ralph Lewin was elected as new SIG President by the Assembly of Delegates, and the Board of Directors subsequently chose Ralph Friedländer as Vice-President.

The 115th SIG Assembly of Delegates was, in many ways, a novelty. The program of the DV was radically shortened, in order to ensure the safety of those present in light of the current corona situation. The election was the focus. For the first time since the Federation's foundation in 1904, it was given the option of two candidates for President, Ralph Lewin and Ralph Friedländer. In the first round of voting, the 88 attending delegates chose Mr Lewin with 45 against 40 votes, with one invalid and two missing votes. Mr Lewin, a member of the Israelitische Gemeinde Basel (IGB), will take over as SIG President from Herbert Winter, who held this position as leader of the umbrella organisation for the last 12 years.

New President and Vice-President both highly experienced

With Ralph Lewin, the SIG will have a skilled negotiator as well as an experienced and strong leader at the helm. Aged 67, Mr Lewin has a doctorate in economics and has held various senior management and strategic leadership positions over many years. In particular, he was a member of government of the canton of Basel-Stadt, responsible for the department of economic and social affairs, from 1997 to 2008. After his time in the cantonal government, he was primarily active as a board member in companies and associations. He is currently President of the public transport association «Tarifverbund Nordwestschweiz» and a member of the Bank Council of the Basler Kantonalbank. After his election, he thanked the delegates and he allowed himself to be cited: «The perception of the Jewish community in public and political spheres needs to be further strengthened. This is something I will commit my efforts to.» He added that he would also focus on the internal needs of the SIG community and these, too, would feature prominently in his work.

Ralph Friedländer, the second candidate and also a distinguished personality, congratulated Ralph Lewin on his election and was shortly after chosen as a member of the Board of Directors by the delegates. In its constituting meeting, the Board of Directors subsequently elected him as the new Vice-President. The Assembly of Delegates also saw the election of new members of the Board of Directors and the Central Committee. Nadja Gut from the Israelitische Cultusgemeinde Zürich (ICZ) and Michael Goldschmidt from the Communauté Israélite de Lausanne et du Canton de Vaud (CILV) were picked to join Ralph Lewin and Ralph Friedländer on the Board of Directors. The other current members of the Board of Directors, Jacques Lande from the ICZ, Edouard Selig from the Israelitische Gemeinde Basel (IGB) and Ariel Wyler from the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft (IRG) in Zurich, were re-elected.

Bidding farewell

After a five-month extension due to the Corona crisis, an era has come to an end. Herbert Winter, SIG President since 2008, has stood down after 12 years. The statutory term limits forbid a further term of office. Herbert Winter thanked the delegates for their cooperation and support over many years. In his farewell speech, he noted the following: «We can be proud of our active and highly diverse community life, which we should make even better known in the outside world in future. We can present the SIG with pride. In its united, strong and stable form, the umbrella organisation is well set up to cope with what the future brings.» Three further long-serving members of the SIG Board of Directors also stepped down: Vice-President Sabine

Simkhovitch-Dreyfus, Francine Brunschwig and Evelyne Morali. The delegates bid them all farewell with long-lasting, heartfelt and grateful applause.

Background, interviews, photos

Please contact the SIG media office for background information, photographs and the arrangement of interviews.

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