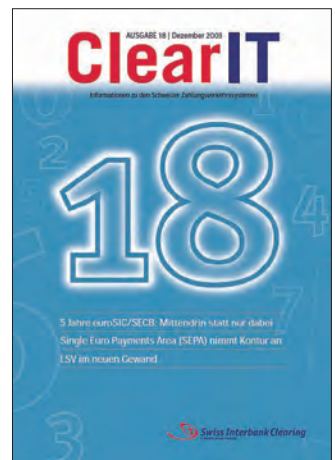


CLEARIT turns 50



CLEARIT has many initiators: the representatives from Swiss banks as editors in the earliest times and the SIX Interbank Clearing board members in the late 1990s. But without then-CEO André Bamat as the driving force and advocate, the trade journal wouldn't be where it is today: At 50 issues.

How did it all begin? "With the euro payment traffic project launched by the Swiss banks," André Bamat remembers. In the fall of 1997, when facing the introduction of the euro, the banks had decided to introduce their own Swiss system for interbank transactions for the new currency. That was a fast-paced project, the now-retired executive observes. The company, then known as Telekurs, had to get the euroSIC system up and running within sixteen months, set up a company together with the two major banks and PostFinance, and start a bank in Frankfurt. "Instead of just communicating with our 22 original and 82 first participants by sending out minutes and e-mails, we periodically published the euroSIC NEWS – a multi-faceted information newsletter, in which we conveyed project-related instructions and information." André Gsponer, head of today's CLEARIT advisory council, specifies that it used to be an actual working tool back then. Project management was all set to halt publication of the euroSIC NEWS



André Bamat, father of CLEARIT



after the fifth issue in 1998, at the time of the euroSIC production release. Purpose achieved. As André Bamat tells it, "After we had outlined our intention at the last steering committee meeting, there was a long silence – you could hear a pin drop. Nobody spoke until Stephan Zimmermann, then president of the board of directors, opined that dropping publication wasn't such a good idea, since it had been so well received and had become established." That's how I decided to rename the euroSIC NEWS and to broaden its content.

The new name

"Various suggestions combining clearing, the actual payment and securities processing with IT were presented during a working group brainstorming." Somehow "ClearIT," in the colors blue/white on a red background, won out and evolved into today's logo. – "André Gsponer, you're nodding your head – were you actually part of it back then?" "Yes, I personally created the very first layout... what a tough nut to crack that was! No comparison to today's professional production."

The collaborative payment traffic publication

"As far as I know, there is no other payment-traffic trade publication other than CLEARIT, neither in Switzerland nor elsewhere in Europe," ponders André Bamat. This is one of

the reasons why this magazine is really a necessity. But the true formula for success is how CLEARIT is designed. Ever since its inception, representatives from Swiss financial institutions have continually contributed to and shaped it, be it as authors of trade articles, as interview partners, or as generators for the planning of its contents. "The representatives from Credit Suisse, UBS, PostFinance, SNB, SECB and the cantonal banks were all aboard right from the start," says André Gsponer, "and they are mostly responsible for shaping content guidelines and the topic emphases of individual issues." The credo of all participants is to "inform without judgment."

And both Andrés are convinced that that's how it should be in the future, too, in order for CLEARIT to be able to continue to offer news and information around the national and international payment traffic – something readers won't find anywhere else. <

Moderation:

Gabriel Juri, SIX Interbank Clearing
gabriel.juri@six-group.com