

## **Message of the President**

The Foundation HFSJG has the great privilege to serve the scientific community with two high alpine research infrastructures which are absolutely unique. Maintaining and even extending this privileged and leading position in a world and an environment that are continuously changing, is a tremendous duty. “Dedicated to Excellence in a Changing World” must therefore be the guiding theme for all institutions and individuals that are engaged within the Foundation HFSJG in one way or the other. After the second year of my presidency I am extremely happy and grateful to see that the members and friends of our foundation, the management as well as the numerous research teams through their high-class scientific activity are incessantly working to ensure that the foundation is able to continue to pursue its goals.

In this sense, three main topics were addressed during the period covered by this report:

- First, major steps forward could be made towards the realization of the new project “Stellarium Gornergrat”, which fills the gap in astronomical activity at Gornergrat after the closing down of the Italian TIRGO and the German KOSMA research. Of particular interest is the fact that the new project will fulfill in an exemplary manner the needs and wishes of all the main partners involved, i.e. the University of Bern, the University of Geneva, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, and the Foundation HFSJG. I gratefully acknowledge the commitment shown in this endeavour by our honorary president, Professor Hans Balsiger, by Professor Willy Benz, Director of the Physikalisches Institut of the University of Bern, Professor Didier Queloz of the Observatoire de Genève, as well as by the President of the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, Mr. Andreas Biner, and Mr. Fernando Clemenz, Director of the Matterhorn Group.

- Second, the design of a new scientific exhibition at Jungfrauoch was initiated to be opened to the public in 2012 on the occasion of the Jungfrau Railway Centenary and the 75th anniversary of the Sphinx Observatory. My sincere thanks go to the President of the Jungfrauoch Commission of the Swiss Academy of Sciences scnat, Professor Martin C. E. Huber, for initiating and securing the funding of the project, to our Director, Professor Markus Leuenberger for the lead in its realization, to Professor Hans Balsiger, for acting as the “Art Director”, and to the many contributors to the video and text presentations.

- Finally, I am extremely happy that the Jungfrauoch Commission of the scnat under the presidency of Professor Martin C.E. Huber agreed to constitute a task group to work out a strategic study. Research infrastructure in a high alpine environment is not something that is ready on short notice and only if needed. It must be continuously maintained and adapted to meet the needs of the researchers. A “white paper” will include analysis and recommendations securing the quality of the clean environment at Jungfrauoch despite the effects of an expanding and dynamic touristic destination. Changing needs of cutting edge research will be identified and measures will be suggested of how to meet them. Necessary adaptations of the infrastructure as well as the need and the possibilities for expansion will be addressed. We gratefully appreciate the ongoing dialogue with the management of the Jungfrau Railways in this matter.

For the operation of our research infrastructure at Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat a stable long-term financial basis is essential. In this regard, we highly appreciate and gratefully acknowledge the long standing loyalty and responsibility demonstrated

toward our Foundation especially by our non-Swiss member institutions, i.e. the Belgian Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique, the Max-Planck Gesellschaft, the Royal Society, and the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Their substantial support, even under difficult financial conditions, has an essential signaling effect to our Swiss member institutions, i.e. the Swiss Academy of Sciences, the Jungfrau AG, the Gornergrat Bahn AG, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, the University of Bern, as well as to the Canton of Bern and to our main funding body, the Swiss National Science Foundation. With a significant new 3-year grant awarded in 2011, which is gratefully acknowledged at this point, the latter has again clearly demonstrated its solidarity with our goals and activities.

In summary, I think that the Foundation HFSJG can look back again on a year of continued excellence. As evidenced in this annual report, high alpine research platforms are as much in demand as ever. I would like to congratulate all the scientists for their outstanding work. With your work the key role of Jungfrau as a European cornerstone for environmental and climate research was confirmed and strengthened, and the relevance of Gornergrat as a superb astronomical site was re-established.

With Professor Markus Leuenberger as Director of the research stations, with the continued collaboration of our Honorary President, Professor Hans Balsiger, the support of the Jungfrau Commission of scnat under the presidency of Professor Martin C.E. Huber, with the highly motivated members of the HFSJG team, the dedicated science groups conducting research of highest international standard, and with the support of all of you, the interested readers of this report, I am convinced that we can cope with the challenges ahead of us for the benefit of a broad international community.

Bern, May 2012



Erwin O. Flückiger