

## **Message of the President**

Once again the International Foundation HFSJG can look back on an extraordinary year - a year with excellent scientific activity, a year with stimulating historical reviews of the visions of outstanding pioneers, and a year with a highly optimistic perspective on the future.

At Jungfrauoch an impressive number of scientists from the Foundation's member countries and beyond have been conducting cutting-edge research in a multitude of areas, including e.g. meteorology, environmental sciences, astrophysics, and medicine. It gives me great pleasure to see that a large part of this work is done by students and early-career scientists. I am convinced that they will remember their stays at one of the most unique research sites in the world as being highly profitable and as a once in a lifetime experience, becoming thus effective goodwill ambassadors of Top of Europe. As documented in the present report most of the studies can only be performed at very high altitude and/or in a high alpine environment. Furthermore, many of these studies are linked to measurements at other research sites in Europe and overseas. The research infrastructure at Jungfrauoch operated by our Foundation has therefore continued being of utmost relevance to a globally linked scientific community. I am extremely happy that in our effort to support this international networking we could formally intensify the collaborative contacts between our Foundation and the Umweltforschungsstation Schneefernerhaus at Zugspitze in Bavaria.

At Gornergrat significant progress could be achieved in the realization of the new project "Stellarium Gornergrat", involving the University of Bern, the University of Geneva, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, and the Foundation HFSJG. The commitment shown in this endeavour by our honorary president, Prof. Hans Balsiger, by Prof. Willy Benz, Director of the Physikalisches Institut of the University of Bern, Prof. Kathrin Altwegg, Executive Director of the Center for Space and Habitability at the University of Bern, Prof. 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, is gratefully acknowledged. We are confident that in 2013 the new observatory will become operational, to the benefit of a broader and especially young public target group.

The inspiring look back in history was dominated by the centenary of the Jungfrau Railways. In a series of events our benevolent partner and supporter from the very beginning of scientific research at Jungfrauoch commemorated the visionary work of Adolf Guyer-Zeller and his team. In parallel the Foundation HFSJG and the Jungfrau Railways celebrated 75 years of research at the Sphinx observatory. What was first a meteorological observatory, has over the years become a distinctive globally known landmark, and is nowadays one of the most important high alpine environmental laboratories worldwide. At Jungfrauoch the jubilee activity included from our side the opening of a new scientific exhibition for the public and the realisation of a significantly improved visibility of our infrastructure. On a national scale the birthday celebration of the Sphinx observatory was integrated in the 192nd Annual Congress of the Swiss Academy of Sciences SCNAT. This congress under the theme "Höher und kälter – Forschung am geographischen Limit" was held in Interlaken and was organized jointly by the Jungfrauoch Commission of the SCNAT and the Swiss Committee on Polar and High Altitude Research. It commemorated the pioneering work of Alfred de Quervain, in particular his exploration of the glaciers in Greenland, and his visionary efforts as initiator of the scientific station at Jungfrauoch. I would like to thank the past and present president of SCNAT, Prof. Denis Monard, and Prof. Thierry Courvoisier, and the chair of the SCNAT platform MAP, Prof. Hans Rudolf Ott, for having offered to us this prestigious outreach chance. I also gratefully acknowledge the devotion, the hard work, and the financial support by all those who contributed to the success of this event.

Operating a research infrastructure in a high alpine environment requires permanent adaptations to the changing needs of scientists, beside continuous maintenance in response to the harsh environment. New long-range international projects, as e.g. the Integrated Carbon Observation System ICOS bring up specific claims. Dynamical strategic planning and

visionary looks into the future are therefore a must also for the Foundation HFSJG. Ongoing discussions in the context of the planned “White Paper” addressing this topic are extremely useful and are expected to help in securing the unique environmental research site in harmonious coexistence with the dynamically expanding touristic destination.

The fact that we can look back again on a successful year has to be ascribed primarily to the outstanding work done by the scientists. My sincere congratulations and thanks, therefore, go to them. Then, credit is due to the broad networking and support of many institutions and individuals. In this regard, we highly appreciate and gratefully acknowledge the long standing loyalty and responsibility demonstrated toward our Foundation by our national as well as our non-Swiss member institutions, including our main funding body, the Swiss National Science Foundation. Among the many individuals I would like to thank in particular Prof. Hans Balsiger, our Honorary President, and Prof. Martin C.E. Huber, the president of the Jungfrauoch Commission SCNAT. But a smooth day to day operation of the research stations would not be possible without the dedicated work of our Director, Prof. Markus Leuenberger, and his highly motivated team. My sincere thanks, therefore, to all of them.

Together with all the members, partners and friends of our Foundation, our devoted management and of course the numerous research teams achieving scientific output with social impact at the European level and beyond, we are incessantly working to ensure that the Foundation HFSJG is able to pursue its challenging goals. Let us continue to work hard to serve a broad international science community, for a better understanding of our environment, and thus for a sustainable benefit of society.



Erwin O. Flückiger

Bern, April 2013