

Message of the President

The International Foundation HFSJG has the privilege to serve the scientific community with two high alpine research infrastructures of global reputation which are absolutely unique. Maintaining and even extending the renowned and leading position in the broad entity of dynamic surrounding conditions is a permanent challenge.

This challenge includes many different aspects, e.g. the maintenance of the buildings in a harsh high alpine environment, the preservation of a clean environment, and a secure financing. To meet this challenge, combining the efforts of many partners, organizations and individuals on a national scale and across the borders is essential.

Excellence in the scientific activity, as conducted and documented again in this annual report, is of course the primary basis for the continued success of our research stations. My grateful appreciation therefore goes to all the research teams and scientists for their outstanding work.

Maintenance of the buildings at Jungfraujoch is an important, continuous task, and it is conducted in accordance with a rolling 10-year servicing plan. In 2013, preparations started for a major task, the renewal of the 50 years old protective roof of the research station.

Early identification of potential problems and future needs as well as foresighted actions are key elements in the successful operation and development of our research infrastructures. For Jungfraujoch, visions being worked out in a “White Paper” under the leadership of the Immediate Past President of the Jungfraujoch Commission of the Swiss Academy of Sciences SCNAT, Prof. Martin C.E. Huber, will contribute to securing and strengthening the role of the site as a cornerstone in European and global environmental and climate research. As this subject is closely related to the touristic exploitation of Jungfraujoch, we are grateful for the appreciative collaboration with our partner, the Jungfrau Railways.

At Gornergrat, after installation of most of the hardware, “Stellarium Gornergrat” approaches the operational phase. This project is a joint endeavour of the Universities of Bern and Geneva, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, and our Foundation. I am extremely grateful to our honorary president, Prof. Hans Balsiger, for his leading role in the realization of this ambitious project. We also recognize with appreciation the financial input and personal commitments by the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, in particular its president Mr. Andreas Biner, and Mr. Fernando Clemenz, and by the two university teams headed by Prof. Didier Queloz and Prof. Willy Benz. The dedication shown in this activity by Prof. Kathrin Altwegg, Executive Director of the Center for Space and Habitability CSH at the University of Bern, is highly appreciated.

For the continued and successful operation of our high altitude research stations, a stable long-term financial basis is essential. In this regard, we highly appreciate and gratefully acknowledge in particular the enormous support by our main funding body, the Swiss National Science Foundation SNSF. During the current funding period the grants awarded by the SNSF exceeded by far the normal amount for the operating costs. We are extremely grateful for this extra funding. It is assigned to cover a significant part of the extraordinary costs for the new protective roof. It will also allow us to meet the additional requirements within the new Swiss Integrated Carbon Observation System (ICOS-CH) where Jungfraujoch will represent an atmospheric primary site in the framework of the European ICOS network. We are also very thankful for the significant direct and indirect contributions by the University of Bern, as well as the long standing loyalty and responsibility demonstrated towards our Foundation by our Swiss and non-Swiss member institutions.

International networking has been a key asset for our Foundation from its beginning. I am very happy that in this context we could continue intensifying the collaborative contacts between our Foundation and the Umweltforschungsstation Schneefernerhaus UFS at Zugspitze in Bavaria, and with the Sonnblick Observatory in Austria. First results of this intensified collaboration were a joint workshop under the auspices of the Jungfraujoch

Commission of the Swiss Academy of Sciences SCNAT, held in early 2014 in Bern, and the planning of a joint European project “Virtual Alpine Observatory” VAO.

Fostering international contacts and strategic planning is an incessant commitment of the board and management of the Foundation. Among the many individuals giving us support in this domain I would like to thank in particular Prof. Joachim Trümper and Prof. Martin C.E. Huber. At the time of the meeting of the Board on 25 October 2013 Prof. Joachim Trümper declared his wish to resign as the delegate of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft in our Foundation. In recognition and in grateful acknowledgement of more than forty years of personal endeavours for the benefit of the Foundation and its research stations the Board HFSJG elected him as a Corresponding Member. I would like to express here my private thanks and appreciation for his continuing support and friendship. At the same time we present a hearty welcome to his successor, Prof. Martin Heimann. By the end of the year 2013, Prof. Martin C.E. Huber retired as the President of the Jungfrauojoch Commission of the Swiss Academy of Sciences. Since 2008 he was the delegate of SCNAT and assumed responsibility in representing the interests of Switzerland and Swiss research in the Foundation. With his broad interests and visions, his energy, and his wide-ranging network of contacts in science and science policy he succeeded in making significant contributions to the activity of the Foundation. Thank you, Martin, for a sometimes busy but wonderful time! We are looking forward to an equally fruitful collaboration with his successor, Prof. Heinz Gäggeler, who was introduced to and welcomed by the Board HFSJG at its meeting in October.

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 team. My sincere thanks, therefore, to all of them, for successfully coping with an immense workload in a spirit of mutual respect and friendship.

In summary, we can look back once again on a year of continued excellence. I am confident that with our highly motivated HFSJG team and with the support and benevolence of all the members, partners and friends of our Foundation, we are ready to meet the challenges ahead of us. Let us continue to work hard to attain the ambitious goals of the Foundation HFSJG, to the benefit of a wide international scientific community and for excellence in high alpine research with strong social impact.



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Erwin O. Flückiger