

## Message of the President

Dear Reader, let's start with a short historical excursion. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1930, the Foundation Deed of the "Internationale Stiftung Hochalpine Forschungsstation Jungfrauoch" has been signed between the partners "Schweizerische Naturforschende Gesellschaft, Kaiser Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften in Berlin, der Universität Paris, der Royal Society London und der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, unter Mitwirkung der Jungfraubahn-Gesellschaft, zum Zwecke, Gelehrten aller Länder wissenschaftliche Forschungen aller Art im Gebiete des Jungfrauochs zu ermöglichen und zu erleichtern". And already in 1931, in a publication in *Nature* (*Nature* **1931**, 128, 817-820), the newly opened research station was announced as the top high altitude research station in Europe: "... with the full laboratory facilities at their disposal, research workers at the new station should be better able to attack with success many problems which are as yet unsolved". From another perspective, it is an accepted fact that this astonishing operation in the early 1930s paved the way for Switzerland's role as host country for research with international charisma, whereby nowadays, CERN may provide a prominent example for it.

Now, 87 years after the Foundation Deed of our *HFSJG* was signed, the Board members of our Foundation met in Interlaken on the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> October 2017 for the biennial General Assembly. Importantly, Delegates from all current Member Institutions could be welcomed, and I would like to thank all of them for their continuous support during the year. As a new Delegate, Dr. Elke Ludewig from the Austrian Academy of Sciences was present. Currently, she is director of the Sonnblick research station in Austria and as a side note, in 2015 she was leading the German meteorological Observatory Station in the Antarctic. Prof. John Pyle is the new Delegate from the Royal Society, UK. He is Professor of Atmospheric Chemistry and currently Head of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Cambridge. Dr. Emmanuel Mahieu from the University of Liège is our new Delegate of the "Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique" in Belgium, whereas Prof. Martin Heimann is acting since many years as the Delegate from the Max-Planck-Society, Germany. In the report from our Director, our new Delegates are shown in a picture (see Figure 1). I also would like to thank Prof. Peter Steinhauser who resigned as a Delegate from the Austrian Academy of Sciences for his continuous support over all the years. With Markus Balmer we could also welcome the new Delegate of the Jungfraubahn AG.

Already the Activity report 2016 addressed the efforts taken on combining the research activities of the European Alpine High Altitude Research Observatories for an enhanced climate and environmental monitoring. In march 2017, the VAO (virtual alpine observatory) organisation held a meeting at the EURAC centre in Bozen, whereby at the VAO board meeting a new strategy paper was adopted (for a download see: [www.vao.bayern.de](http://www.vao.bayern.de)) which should pave the way for a support of all networking activities on a European scale. Correspondingly, it was announced that in march 2018, the 4<sup>th</sup> VAO symposium will be organized in Grenoble covering the topics of (i) atmospheric and climate variability, (ii) climate impact on alpine environment, hazards and risks, (iii) alpine water cycle and (iv) environment and human health. As a matter of fact, the VAO organisation is heading off for establishing a forum for networking with the international high altitude research community and for preparing joint EU R&D-projects.

Networking in science and on the political agenda, this issue was frequently practiced during the year while hosting many visitors at our two stations at Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat. To give an example, in June 2017, high representatives from the *Common Foreign and Security Policy and Bilateral Relation offices* from Germany and Switzerland visited our Jungfrauoch research station; this happened in the context of bilateral discussions of global security challenges. And so, the decisive factor where our activities come into the game, has a name: "Environmental risks". Importantly, these kinds of visits render us also an increasing visibility.

For our Gornergrat station, there is a good progress on the concept *Stellarium Gornergrat*, and the report from our Director will present it in more detail. I would like to thank for all the significant support we received from our partners, the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, the Gornergrat-Bahn and the University of Bern with the partners of the University of Geneva.

Based on our initial contacts which were established with the organisation of the UNESCO World Heritage Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch, we now intend to strengthen the links between their organization and our Foundation. In this common spirit, the new CEO, Dr. Hans-Christian Leiggenger was presenting their mission at our Board meeting in Interlaken.

Finally, I express my great respect to all researchers being active at our stations, be it at the Jungfraujoeh or the Gornergrat station, for their formidable work they accomplished over the year; the detailed report from our Director will show it at best.

All over the year, I could also notice with great pleasure the dedicated work of our Director, Prof. Markus Leuenberger and his team, for fulfilling the mission assigned to our Foundation, be it for the Jungfraujoeh or the Gornergrat station. On behalf of the Board of the Foundation HFSJG, I express my sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the progress and accomplishments during the year 2017; thereby, I am happy to join our Director in giving acknowledgements to all our partners, team members and members of the Foundation, as it is nicely detailed at the end of the Directors' message.



Silvio Decurtins

Bern, February 2018