

Message of the President

Dear Reader, what for a year, the year 2019 – already on 7./8. February, we could enjoy an outstanding event while celebrating our EPS Historic Site Award given to the Jungfrauoch Research Station. With this award, the European Physical Society commemorates places in Europe with national or international significance for the development and the history of physics. Ample reason for our case are the significant scientific results obtained in the fields of cosmic-ray based particle physics by Nobel prize winners Patrick Blackett and Cecil Powell, Marcel Migeottes' measurements of the solar infrared spectrum and the first measurement of the solar constant by Dietrich Labs and Heinz Neckel. Moreover, we are proud, that also today, Jungfrauoch houses one of the best-equipped research stations worldwide for physics-based climate and environmental science. But the chemistry discipline isn't behind: on 25./26. April we celebrated the Chemical Landmark Award given by the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences to the Jungfrauoch Station. This was for good reason as well, as this award is based on the early research work of Max F. Perutz, carried out in the 1940s and 50s on Jungfrauoch; also Max F. Perutz is a Nobel laureate, and this time in Chemistry in 1961. The pictures below show Max on Jungfrauoch in 1949 and his son Robin speaking at our Symposium in Bern in 2019, hence a full 70 years inbetween. Both awards are nicely documented, each by a plaque mounted at the entrance of the Sphinx Station, perfectly visible to all our visitors. For more pictures, you may also visit our HFSJG web-site.

The VAO (virtual alpine observatory) group maintained its momentum also through the year 2019. Early in the year, we hosted the VAO Board for a meeting in Bern, and our Director Markus Leuenberger assumed the task to organize the 5th VAO-Symposium, scheduled for February 2020 in Bern. Even though being a 2020 activity, we can already summarize that the symposium was a great success, and in collaboration with our colleagues from the VAO office in Munich, our Director did an excellent job for it. At the VAO Board meeting, we adopted a "Charter of the VAO" which declares its role, objectives and cooperation strategy (see also at: www.vao.bayern.de).

Our International Foundation HFSJG is expanding continuously. Starting from 2019, the Institute for Atmospheric and Earth System Research (INAR) – University of Helsinki, joined our Board, whereby Prof. Markku Kulmala and Prof. Tuukka Petäjä were nominated as Delegates. Certainly, this growth will strengthen our position in the field of environmental sciences and establish closer links to the Nordic States. In June 2019, a delegation of the Embassy of People's Republic of China, Bern, visited our Jungfrauoch station. We took the chance to discuss the issue of scientific collaborations between China and Switzerland and as a result, the College of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Centre for Environment and Health at Peking University, took a decision to join our HFSJG Board from 2020 onwards. Prof. Tong Zhu was nominated as their Delegate. A warm welcome to our new partners from Finland and China. We may note, that for the first time since our International Foundation was established, we made a step outside of Europe – global challenges need global answers, we may say. In this context, it's interesting to add a historical note: already in the early 1930s, Prof.

Walter R. Hess, initiator, founder and first President of our International Foundation intended to make this step. At that time he offered to the Rockefeller Foundation, which is based in New York, a seat on the Board of our International Foundation; however at the end, the action was not realized.

In September we have held our two-days HFSJG Board meeting in Zermatt which takes place every other year, either in Zermatt or in Interlaken. Delegates of all member countries and institutions were present and this platform provides us with a much valued opportunity to share recent national experience in our common area, to assess the outcomes and to take our work forward. I really appreciate the active participation of all our Delegates of the Board. To note, the next meeting is scheduled for 22./23. October 2021 in Interlaken. At the Zermatt meeting, Prof. Heinz Gäggeler and Prof. Martin Huber were elected as new Corresponding Members of HFSJG. Heinz Gäggeler served very actively for 20 years as a member of the Jungfrauoch commission of the Swiss Academy of Sciences, the last 6 years as President, and Martin Huber was also a long-standing member and former President of the Jungfrauoch commission. Congratulations to both new Corresponding Members. We note also, that the Swiss Academy of Sciences elected Prof. Urs Baltensperger, PSI/ETHZ, as new President of the Jungfrauoch commission from 2020 onwards. We wish him a successful work.

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 from the University of Bern with the partners of the University of Geneva. Importantly, many thanks to the Burgergemeinde Zermatt for its generosity in regard to the "Schenkungsvertrag", comprising the telescope and a comprehensive set of equipment around it – this great support with a view to the future is greatly appreciated. For the coming year, a discussion will be opened with our partners of our common "Memorandum of Understanding" with regard to the Stellarium Gornergrat. Among others, the Canton of Bern will be involved; the goal is to place our Gornergrat mission on a long-term and stable footing.

Brief outlook: Great events are quickly approaching in the horizon. The years 2020/21 will be 90 years since the International Foundation HFSJG was established and the Jungfrauoch station was built, respectively - good reason indeed why we should celebrate it. An ad-hoc committee is preparing for a two-days event in Bern and on Jungfrauoch, planned for spring 2021.

And even more to be aware of: On a Saturday, 14. October 1922, the Swiss Government headed by Federal Council Robert Haab, issued a presidential decree for the attention of the "Schweizerische Naturforschende Gesellschaft" (nowadays the Swiss Academy of Sciences). The order was, to establish a special committee committed to the task to build a research station on Jungfrauoch - thus, this decree is the official birth of our Jungfrauoch commission, and therefore in 2022, we can celebrate its 100-years anniversary - be well aware of this at an early stage.

Finally, I express my great respect to all researchers being active on our stations, be it at the Jungfrauoch 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 Jungfrauoch or the Gornergrat station. A special thanks goes also to our Custodians on the Jungfrauoch station for their significant contribution to the success of our common mission. 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 2019; thereby, I am happy to join with our Director in giving acknowledgements to all our partners, team members and members of the Foundation.



Bern, March 2020

Silvio Decurtins



Father and Son: Max F. Perutz on the Aletsch Glacier, 1949; Robin Perutz speaking at our Symposium in Bern, 2019.