

Meeting of the ETH Board of 12/13 December 2018

Proportion of women increasing among professors in the ETH Domain

The ETH Domain continued its efforts to increase the proportion of women professors in 2018. About one in three of the new professorships was filled by women. The gender strategy that had been adopted last year was successfully implemented. Thanks to the budget adjustment by Parliament, the ETH Board will increase its investments in teaching and research in the coming year. A study about patents that has recently been published confirms the ETH Domain's international top position in the field of research.

Berne, 13 December 2018 – The ETH Board was pleased to note that the gender strategy that was published last year has been implemented well. One of the focal points of this strategy is the support of women with regard to career development. In 2018, about one in three new professorships (31%) was filled by women. In the last two years, in particular, appreciably more women have been appointed. The ETH Board wants to achieve a continual increase in the proportion of women among professors. In the last two years, the proportion of women appointments was 33% (2017) and 31% (2018), respectively. From 2008 to 2017, the percentage of women among all the professors increased from 10% to 15%.

2019 budget: investments in central fields of research

In its winter session, Parliament adjusted the budget of the ETH Domain by 30m CHF. The ETH Board is pleased with this parliamentary support and will make efficient use of the resources. In strategic terms, the ETH Domain will spend the increase in resources on fields of research from which significant impulses can be expected for Switzerland as a centre of expertise and know-how. In particular, this includes data sciences and digitalisation, medical technology, as well as new technologies and materials. In addition, the ETH Domain is planning a nationwide network of technology transfer centres which will help SMEs and industry to develop new processes and materials and to translate them into marketable products. The ETH Domain would like to place additional emphasis on cyber security. The institutions of the ETH Domain are already centres of competence and partners of public offices and private companies. These competencies must be extended in order to provide Switzerland with better protection against cyber risks.

Many countries invest more in research and development than Switzerland

Financial resources in education and research have a direct economic impact. Research and training in the field of technology are crucial economic success factors today. Many countries are therefore increasing their expenditure on education, research and innovation. Germany is planning to raise its investment stake for research and development from 3% to 3.5% of the GDP. Switzerland's stake is approx. 3%. France announced in March 2018 that it would invest 1.5bn EUR in research on artificial intelligence in the next five years. The big national economies of the US and China are increasing their investments in research and development by 12% and 14%, respectively. The first results of these investments are already visible. Thus in 2017, China applied for more European patents than Switzerland for the first time. Chinese universities are also rising rapidly in the university rankings. Therefore stable funding is very important in Switzerland in order for this country to maintain its leading position.

Important transfer of knowledge into the economy

As a study that has recently been published reveals, the institutions of the ETH Domain produce many patents of a very high quality. About one in three of the patents examined is part of the "World Class" category. This means that they are among the most highly rated 10% in the given technology. The institutions of the ETH Domain are particularly strong with regard to drones, security technologies and photovoltaics. Only two institutions from the US, namely Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have a higher share in world class patents. Cooperation with trade and

industry, as well as the transfer of top-class research, are central functions of the institutions of the ETH Domain. 376 patents derive from cooperation ventures with the economy. In addition, the ETH Domain participated in projects which generated a further 479 patents and are in the ownership of partner companies. Knowledge is also transferred via heads. 3,801 corporate patents list at least one researcher who had worked for the ETH Domain and had already applied for patents there.

2019 wages – adjustment to inflation

The ETH Domain's salary negotiations with the social partners resulted in an inflation adjustment of 0.8% being granted. Renegotiations are scheduled for February 2019. This means that the ETH Board adopts the course of action pursued by the Federal Council, which envisages renegotiations with the social partners in February. At an individual level, salary increases based on achievements and experience continue to be possible.

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