



State Secretariat for Education and Research SER

News **SER**, January 2010

Switzerland co-signs Convention concerning the Construction and Operation of a European X-ray Free-Electron Laser Facility

Following several years of negotiations, the founding documents to build and operate a European x-ray free electron laser (European XFEL) research facility were initialled on 23 September 2009. The ceremonial signing of the Convention and Final Act took place in Hamburg on 30 November 2009. The company European XFEL GmbH will be responsible for building and operating this unique research facility. So far, shareholders include government agencies and institutes from thirteen European countries (including Germany, where the company's headquarters are based) and China. The treaty was signed on behalf of Switzerland by State Secretary for Education and Research, Mauro Dell'Ambrogio.

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ThinkSwiss programme facilitates personal research experience in Switzerland

In 2009, the ThinkSwiss programme provided scholarships to over 30 students from the USA, enabling them to take part in two to three-month university research fellowships or attend an International Summer School in Switzerland. The ThinkSwiss programme not only encourages the development of long-term personal ties between Switzerland and the USA, it also helps Swiss universities recruit talented researchers from other countries and enhance their international profile.

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Green light for bilateral research cooperation with Brazil

The Brazilian Science and Technology Minister, Sergio Machado Rezende, visited Switzerland on 28-29 September 2009, accompanied by a delegation of high-ranking scientists. Minister Rezende, together with Swiss Federal Councillor Pascal Couchepin, signed a bilateral research cooperation agreement and corresponding action plan. A call for bilateral research projects will begin soon.

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Assessing compliance with Federal Quality Assurance Guidelines and impact of policy sector research findings

Policy sector research addresses society's questions regarding existing problems. Conducted in a targeted, practical and generally interdisciplinary manner, policy sector

research seeks to develop rapid solutions to specific issues arising within a complex environment. The Swiss Science and Technology Council (SSTC) is currently in the process of assessing compliance with Federal Quality Assurance Guidelines for Policy Sector Research and the impact of policy sector research findings.

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Swiss researchers succesful in bids for COST research grants

In 2006, the European Cooperation in Science and Technology organisation (COST) launched a new open Call for Action Proposals (CfP). Consolidated statistics are now available for the five CfP collections completed thus far. With 15 successful CfP bids, Swiss researchers have come out quite favourably in the statistics. Switzerland currently ranks fourth behind the United Kingdom, Italy and Germany.

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Clean technology: Swedish-Swiss Innovation and Cleantech Forum

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER), the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) and Swedish partners took part in the Swedish-Swiss Innovation and Cleantech Forum in Stockholm on 29–30 October 2009. The Forum drew approximately 150 participants from business, research and policymaking spheres.

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