

SATW Convention 2007

## The Academies as strong partners in Asia



An example of successful collaboration: the new Olympic stadium in Beijing, designed by Swiss star architects Herzog & DeMeuron.

China, India and Japan are of interest to Switzerland not only for economic reasons but also with respect to research and development. As well-connected partners, the Academies have a special role to play in this context.

«Switzerland's future lies in Asia!» With this bold statement, SATW President René Dändliker made it clear from the start why the SATW had given centre stage to relationships with Asia at its Annual congress 2007. Especially the three large countries China, Japan and India are of great importance for Switzerland. In 1995, for example, Switzerland's exports of goods to Japan alone stood at a value of 5.9 billion Swiss Francs.

### Education, research and development

China and India for their part are currently the two largest growth markets worldwide – offering according sales opportunities also for Swiss companies. Arthur Ruf, President of the SATW Committee on Foreign Relations (CFR), noted a further aspect: «Education, research and development are highly valued in Asian countries. Accordingly, they undertake great efforts in these fields.»

This aspect was given pride of place at the SATW Congress «Spreading Innovation between Asian Nations and Switzerland». Next to Academy members from China, Japan and India, the congress was attended by representatives of Swiss industrial corporations operating in Asia, as well as members of the two Leading Houses ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne, which coordinate scientific relationships with China respective India. It became clear that the scientific Academies play a central role in all three Asian countries. Amongst its affiliates, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) for example numbers not only various academic divisions with a total of 705 members, but also 89 research institutes with a total of 45000 employees and 31000 graduate students. This gives the CAS enormous weight in the Chinese research landscape.

This strong position of the Academies is precisely what constitutes a challenge for the SATW – but also for the other Swiss Academies –, explains Ruf. «It is self-evident for Asian Academies to seek contact with European Academies. If we want to work successfully with Asian countries, we must consider and meet their needs. More concretely, this means that the Swiss Academies must offer themselves up as active partners and points of contact. »

### Prompt implementation into products

Asian Academies are not only larger, but also very well-connected. This allows science and industry to share new knowledge more easily, and implementation into marketable products occurs more promptly. Ruf is convinced: «Close ties with industry are decisive for economic success. This is precisely why our Academies also have a special role to play.» In view of Asia's high-paced development, Ruf would welcome a better coordination of Switzerland's relationships with Asia. «Mutual consultation would be of benefit. And this is precisely where the Academies could play a much more active role than up to now.»

### Personal contacts are indispensable

Interview with CFR-President Arthur Ruf



## Personal contacts are indispensable

Those who wish to work successfully with Asian countries depend on personal relations. Mediating such contacts is one of the SATW's tasks: this is a conviction held deeply by Arthur Ruf, President of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

**Mr Ruf, you have gathered extensive experience in Japan and China yourself. Which aspects should one heed in order to achieve success in Asia?**

First of all, one must be conscious that countries such as China, India and Japan are themselves economic powers, with their own rules of the game which one must abide by – just as Asian companies must abide by our rules when operating here. People in Asia are willing to learn; they are hard-working and ambitious, and – especially in Japan – they tend towards perfectionism. Another important aspect is that people in Asia think in the long term. In this respect, they are probably closer to the European than to the American mentality. Finally, it is important to know that personal contacts are indispensable in Asia. Once established, a personal relation is likely to hold for a long time.

**What is your view of the relationship Switzerland currently entertains with Asia?**

By now, a number of activities exist on various levels, and it is not easy to keep track of them all: federal offices, cantonal administrations, universities, polytechnics, and obviously numerous corporations have

their own contacts with Asia. At times, a certain degree of coordination, especially in the field of scientific relationships, would be welcome.

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«A coordination of activities would be welcome.»

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**This is precisely the reason it was established that the ETH Zurich and the EPF Lausanne should respectively coordinate relationships with China and with India as Leading Houses.**

I am uncertain as to whether universities are really suited to this task, especially when it comes to involving the world of business. This came to the fore for example last year, when we organised a workshop on the topic of Process Engineering at the ETH jointly with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Without the SATW's assistance, much fewer top-class business executives would have attended the event.

**The SATW thus views itself as an opener of doors?**

Precisely. I conceive of the mediation of contacts with Asia as a central task of our Committee; on one hand within the Academies, on the other hand also with universities and other research institutions.

**Which concrete contacts has the SATW established?**

The Committee focusses on relationships with three countries: Germany, China and India. The SATW already concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the CAS in 1991. A number of concrete activities have resulted from this: having already co-organised the specialist conference «R'05 – Recovery, Recycling and Reintegration» in Beijing two years ago, this year we organised the conference «R'07 – Recovery of Materials and Energy for Resource Efficiency», held in parallel to the SATW Convention in Davos. Such events are highly valuable for establishing relationships and ensuring the fast transfer of technological advances.

Energy Position Paper

## Immediate renouncement of fossil energy required

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences will publish the Energy Position Paper in November. It contains an appeal to those holding positions of responsibility in business, administration, politics and science. It calls to tackle the efficient use and supply of energy in a consistent manner. The urgency of a renouncement of fossil energy and the extent of the task have by now become so great that Switzerland must act now. 46 researchers hailing from different disciplines have contributed to the Energy Position Paper. The lead writers – Christoph Ritz, Marco Berg and Eberhard Jochem – are affiliated to the SCNAT and the SATW.

[www.swiss-academies.ch](http://www.swiss-academies.ch)

Transferkolleg «Industrial Biotechnology»

## 16 projects worthy of support

The SATW Transferkolleg promotes cooperation between research and industry in the initial stage. Held for the fourth time, this year's edition focusses on the theme of «Industrial Biotechnology». Standing at 28, the impressive number of project applications received in total confirms that this field holds great potential. 16 projects were classified as promising and will benefit from financial support. Over the course of a two-day workshop, project applicants from the fields of research and industry are given the opportunity to present their projects to each other and to further develop them with the assistance of experienced coaches, a process which experience shows to be perceived as highly valuable. The SATW Transferkolleg is held in close coo-

peration with the Swiss Innovation Promotion Agency (CTI) and it is backed by the Swiss Biotech Association and Biotechnet.

e-democracy

## Giving priority to security over speediness

Next to e-health and e-education, the SATW's ICT Committee also concerns itself with e-society. In early October, it thus held a workshop on the issue «Democracy versus e-democracy?». By e-democracy, one understands the carrying out of democratic processes via the Internet, e.g. elections or polls. The Internet also assists decision making and opinion forming processes. Results obtained so far in the cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel and Zurich have been promising. In particular, young people and groups with little interest in politics make use of this orientation guide when choosing a candidate. Yet large parts of the population still have reservations when it comes to electronic voting (e-voting). Voters must be able to trust that ballot secrecy is respected. Transparency and data protection must therefore be given pride of place. It must also be clear that, while e-applications may complement traditional provisions and procedures, they cannot wholly replace them. Any development of new electronic services must take the individual as its starting point. Furthermore, concerns for quality and security must take precedence over those for speediness.

Year of Information Technology

## Patronage of «informatica08»

In 2008, the SATW, ICTswitzerland and SWICO will be holding the Year of Information Technology. All companies, organisations, educational institutions and individuals concerned with the promotion of IT in Switzerland are called upon to join this initiative and actively support «informatica08».

On 28 January 2008 at 4.00pm, «informatica08» will open at the Hyatt Park in Zurich with an IT summit. The «Day of Information Technology» will take place on 29 August 2008 in Zurich's Technopark. «informatica08» will close on 13 November 2008 at the EPF Lausanne with an Innovation Day.

[www.informatica08.ch](http://www.informatica08.ch)

**ICTswitzerland:** Umbrella association of Swiss IT and telecom organisations

**SWICO:** Swiss Association for Information, Communication and Organisational Technology

SATW Ceremony 2007

## Ten new individual members



Left to right: Alexander Zahnd, Corin Curschellas, Peter Vettiger, Heidi Vettiger, Mina Randegger, Johannes Randegger



Left to right: Heinrich Rohrer, Rose-Marie Rohrer. New members: Alexander Zahnd, Barbara Haering, Reza Abhari, Bruno Keller, Walter Gander, Peter Vettiger, Kathy Riklin, Kaspar Eigenmann, Jean-François Willemin (not present Michaël Unser)

SATW Evening Activity


## Company visit of Bühler AG

Most people do not realise how often they come into contact with products to which Bühler AG has contributed in one way or another. Bread rolls, chocolate, the colours of your newspaper, pasta: there is a bit of Bühler in all of them, for Bühler is the global market leader in the food industry, in chemical engineering and in die casting.

On 8 October, the SATW extended an invitation to an evening reception at Bühler AG. Participants were given an overview of the company by CEO Calvin Grieder. Stefan Scheiber, Head of Sales and Services, highlighted Bühler's relationship with Asia. Diethelm Boese, Head of Corporate Development, explained the meaning of innovation for Bühler. Afterwards, participants toured production, assembly and development, where a few secrets were unveiled.

# SATW

Schweizerische Akademie der Technischen Wissenschaften  
Académie suisse des sciences techniques  
Accademia svizzera delle scienze tecniche  
Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences

 Member of the  
Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences

# Agenda

## Committee on Ethics and Technology

Workshop «Converging Technologies»  
Monday, 19 November 2007,  
EMPA, St. Gallen

## Sportech\*

Interactive exhibition  
Wednesday, 21 November 2007, Aigle

## Transferkolleg 2007

Workshop «Industrial Biotechnology»  
29 & 30 November 2007, Muttenz

## Committee on ICT

Workshop «eHealth»  
4 & 5 December 2007, Konolfingen

## SATW Evening Activity\*\*

Company visit: Bioengineering AG  
Tuesday, 4 December 2007, Wald

## Energy Position Paper\*\*

Symposium and discussion  
Thursday, 10 January 2008, Berne

Further information

[www.satw.ch](http://www.satw.ch)

\* open to schools

\*\* open to the public

## Imprint & credits

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