

Chemistry Europe Fellows

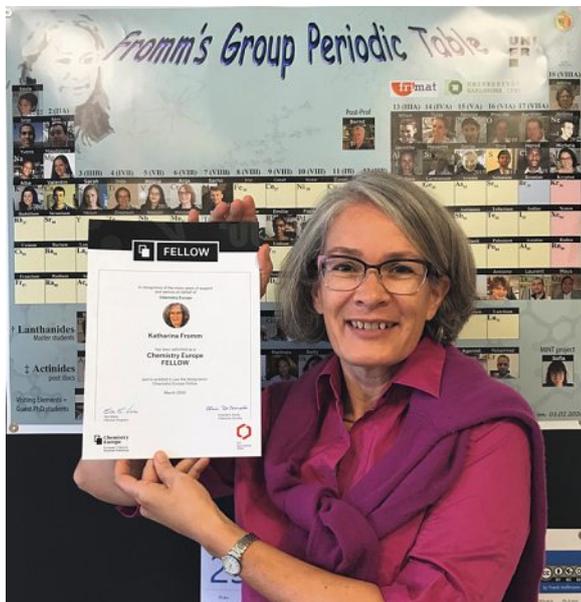
Katharina M. Fromm and Karl Gademann

Chemistry Europe comprises 16 chemical societies, including the Swiss Chemical Society, from 15 countries. It publishes a family of high-quality scholarly chemistry journals, covering a broad range of disciplines

The Chemistry Europe Fellows Program was established in 2015 (as the ChemPubSoc Europe Fellows Program). For the period 2018/2019, 37 European chemists were recognized for their outstanding support as authors, advisors, guest editors, referees as well as services to their national chemical societies (<https://chemistry-europe.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/fellows>).

The Fellowship is the highest award given by Chemistry Europe. New Fellows are announced every two years in the run-up to the biannual EuChemS Congress.

The Swiss Chemical Society and CHIMIA warmly congratulate Katharina M. Fromm (University of Fribourg) and Karl Gademann (University of Zurich) on their Chemistry Europe awards. Here they answer questions posed by **Catherine Housecroft** (University of Basel and new Editor-in-Chief of CHIMIA 2021) about their scientific careers and activities in support of the chemistry community.



Professor Katharina M. Fromm

Katharina M. Fromm was born in Germany and raised in France, Germany and the United States. After a European Matura and BSc studies in Germany, she pursued her trilingual studies of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering in Strasbourg (ECPM). She received her PhD from Karlsruhe University at age 25, followed up with postdoctoral studies in Tübingen (solid-state chemistry with Prof. Joachim Strähle), Strasbourg (supramolecular chemistry with Prof. Jean-Marie Lehn) and Karlsruhe (cluster and theoretical chemistry with Profs. D. Fenske and R. Ahlrichs). She moved then as ‘maître-assistante’ to Geneva for her habilitation, which she received in 2002. An Emmy Noether project (II) was granted to her by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, almost at the same time as she was offered a professorship in Erlangen

and a Swiss National Science Foundation professorship, with which she moved to the University of Basel. In 2006, she received a call to the chair of inorganic chemistry of the bilingual University of Fribourg. KMF acted as research councilor for the Swiss National Science Foundation from 2011–2019, was nominated the first Europe-based Fellow of the American Chemical Society, received the Prix Jaubert from the University of Geneva and became Fellow of the European Academy of Sciences, Fellow of Chemistry Europe (formerly ChemPubSoc) and, in 2020, Fellow of the Swiss Academy of Technical Sciences. She teaches in French, German and English, and her research activities reach from antimicrobial implant coatings *via* nanomaterials and bioinorganic chemistry of silver, to battery electrolyte additives and sensors. Since January 2020, she is Vice-President for Research & Innovation of the University of Fribourg.

Chemistry Europe

What was your first contact with what is now called Chemistry Europe? What does the connection to Chemistry Europe mean to you personally and your chemistry research?

I cannot really tell when I was first aware of Chemistry Europe. When I finished my PhD thesis in February 1994, the then called “ChemPubSoc” was in the making and thus I kind of grew up with this spirit when it was launched. I remember that it was “there” at the “Chemiedozententagungen” and at other (inter-)national conferences. So, it was a natural environment and fitted extremely well with my own international upbringing.

Given today’s worldwide situation, Chemistry Europe is more important than ever to show the European spirit, reflecting that Science takes place across borders of countries. It shows that national borders are meaningless when it comes to the advancement of research. I feel like a European chemist, if not even a world citizen. It is thus natural – a self-conception – to serve on international call committees, or to help evaluate proposals or institutions in *e.g.* France, Poland, Germany, Norway, Israel, Italy or Greece. And of course, the European meetings always feel like big family reunions – with Chemistry Europe being part of that.

25 years ago, Chemistry Europe started the journal Chemistry – A European Journal, and in 2019 it published over 9000 scientific articles. What does the journal mean to you in terms of bringing European science together?

Chemistry – A European Journal is a very important journal for me in which I could publish important own works since the beginning of my career. It is the ideal frame to discuss controversial results, as it was the case at the time (around the year 2000) with work on alkali calixarene complexes and to present reviews and novel work as I quite regularly did over the past years. *ChemEurJ* is a beautiful showcase for European research, which is by now appreciated around the world. It is a model journal which incited a number of sister journals for other world regions.

CHIMIA

How does CHIMIA work as a journal for the Swiss chemistry community?

Like *Chemistry – A European Journal* is a European showcase journal, *CHIMIA* does so for the Swiss Community. With its dedicated issues on one hand, and the local “politics” and “who

is who” and personnel news, it allows to keep up to date with the Swiss landscape. And since Switzerland is often compared to a huge research center, it is like a family newsletter. I am thus quite happy to regularly contribute to CHIMIA, and one of my publications in CHIMIA got cited more than 25 times, quite an exploit, I guess.

Swiss Chemical Society

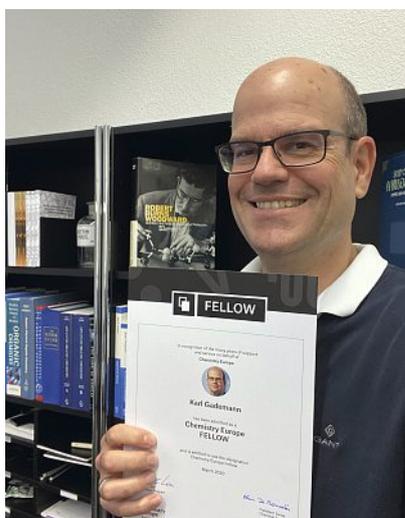
How does the Swiss Chemical Society (SCS) network with other European chemistry communities? How important are these networks to your research?

Switzerland is located quite at the heart of Western Europe and has one of the strongest research landscapes in Europe. It furthermore connects well to the chemical industry. Therefore, the SCS also plays an important role for the European activities of chemical societies. SCS further defends the interests of Swiss researchers at various levels. Not to forget the numerous conferences that SCS organizes or gives support to each year. For instance, my PhD students recently organized a one-day symposium with international speakers and were happy to receive a deficit guarantee from SCS. The annual conference is also the ideal showcase for Swiss chemistry and usually allows mixing with European guests.

Swiss community involvement

Are you active in other Swiss chemistry community organizations? What do you think are the advantages (disadvantages) for a researcher of being engaged in such activities?

Being active in many different research areas bridging from chemistry to physics, biology and medicine, as well as in science policy, I am involved in a number of other organizations. I served as research councilor for the Swiss National Science Foundation, on the board of the Swiss Society for Crystallography, or the board of the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences. At the local level, I am member of the Fribourg Chemical Society and founded the Fribourg Chaim Weizmann Lectures, which I organize on an annual level (except in this Covid-struck year). Of course, such commitments cost time and energy, but it needs engaged persons to keep our societies alive, to serve the community and for not falling into egoisms. And in the end, it is highly rewarding to organize such events, as they create great souvenirs for so many people, like the European Crystallography Meeting with over 900 participants which I organized in Basel in 2016.



Professor Karl Gademann

Karl Gademann (1972) was educated at ETH Zurich and Harvard University, where he worked with Prof. Dieter Seebach, Prof. Eric N. Jacobsen, and Prof. Erick M. Carreira. His previ-

ous professorial appointments include the EPFL in Lausanne and the University of Basel, where he worked as full professor and dean of research. Professor Gademann serves as a member of the research council of the Swiss National Science Foundation and just completed his four year term as chairman of the department of chemistry at UZH.

His work has been recognized by a number of international awards, including the Latsis prize, the Novartis Early Career Award, the Ruzicka Medal, The Liebig Lecture by the German Chemical Society, and the European Young Investigator Award. He delivered the Novartis Chemistry Lecture at the University of Illinois in 2016. In summer 2020, he was named as a Fellow of Chemistry Europe.

Chemistry Europe

What benefits does Chemistry Europe bring to Swiss academic chemists?

The publishing landscape is currently undergoing major changes, and I recognize the efforts of learned societies, such as the Swiss Chemical Society, in shaping this process. Chemistry Europe serves as the leading platform accelerating change, and Swiss chemists both from academia and industry display strong commitment in these societies.

How can Chemistry Europe develop its interactions with the Swiss scientific community?

Chemistry Europe was launched earlier this year, and the current difficult situation certainly impacts interactions within the scientific community. I trust that science and our society will soon return to increased personal interactions, which are of central relevance to the progress of science.

CHIMIA

CHIMIA is your chemical society's journal. What does the journal mean to you, your research group and the Swiss science community?

As a former Editorial Board member and a decades-long reader of CHIMIA, our valued member journal has a special place in my scientific library. I still read every issue of CHIMIA the day it arrives in my mailbox.

Swiss Chemical Society

In what ways does the Swiss Chemical Society (SCS) network with EU chemistry communities? Are there specific projects that you think require more support?

Switzerland as a country is central in Europe, and there are many interactions with European colleagues and organizations on all different levels. As outlined above, personal interaction can never be replaced and will be of crucial importance in shaping the European Research Area further.

Swiss community involvement

In what other Swiss chemistry organizations are you involved?

I am a member of the research council of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and serve in various functions and panels related to funding excellent science. On a different mission, I am member of the Editorial Board of *Helvetica Chimica Acta* – another great product of Swiss science!

How do you encourage your young research team to engage in activities that impact on the Swiss community as a whole?

I always encourage the next generation of scientists to participate in activities on the national and international level, from conferences and meetings organized by the SCS, the SCNAT, or the corresponding chapters for junior scientists. A strong network can only be built based on interactions, and the Swiss community is ideally suited for this purpose.