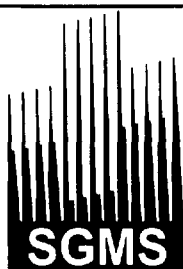


Swiss group for mass spectrometry  
Schweizerische Gruppe für Massenspektrometrie



Groupe suisse de spectrométrie de masse  
Gruppo svizzero di spettrometria di massa

# SGMS

The origin of the Swiss Group for Mass Spectrometry (SGMS) dates back to the early 1980s. In November 1981, Dr. *Hubert Milon* was working at the *Nestlé Research Center* in Orbe (Switzerland) and proposed to 'form a group which would permit an exchange of experience and ideas when facing a technical problem, when confronted with the need of a new instrument or starting a new technique'. Thus, background of the SGMS' foundation was the creation of an informal association with a very broad range of applications, and the corresponding document was signed by Prof. *H. Brandenberger*, Prof. *A. Buchs*, Prof. *W. Richter*, Dr. *B. Willhalm*, and Dr. *H. Milon*.

About one year later, on September 17, 1982, the first general assembly of this new society took place at Prof. *Urs Schlunegger*'s laboratories in the 'Institut für Organische Chemie' of the University of Berne. Here, the 35 participants consolidated the first statutes of the SGMS and elected the first committee, with Dr. *Hubert Milon* as president, Prof. Dr. *U. Schlunegger* as vice president, Prof. Dr. *W. Richter* in the role of the cashier, and Drs. *L. Rivier* and *P. Weibel* as revisors. Further members of the committee were Profs. *H. Brandenberger* and *A. Buchs* as well as Dr. *B. Willhalm*.

An initial problem of the SGMS may not be obvious to the reader residing in larger countries than Switzerland: the language. Switzerland knows four official languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansch, a local language. Members of the new society came from various countries, and – naturally – not everybody understood each other's language. Thus, English was chosen as the official language for the meetings of the SGMS. Already the very first 'SGMS Newsletter', appearing two or three times per year since, was published in English.

Nevertheless, already in 1983, the statutes of the SGMS appeared in French and German translations, and at the same time, the name of the society was fixed in four languages. The official logo of the SGMS was created in 1991.

A point that tends to raise a smile in the face of most SGMS members is the annual meeting and its location. While the American and German mass spectrometry society tend to come together at changing places, the SGMS has a fixed spot for its assembly on the Rigi mountain, situated high above the Vierwaldstättersee in the heart of Switzerland. Since the very first assembly on October 21/22, 1983, the meeting is known as 'The Rigi Meeting'.

A special detail of this location is that access to the hotel is possible only either by funicular or by cogwheel railway. Together with the fact that the participants live almost two days close together in the same area, a familiar atmosphere is perceived. This may be the reason why, in spite of the sometimes unstable economical situation of the local hotels, there seems to be no way to move the participants away from there – with only one exception.

This very only exception was the 10-years jubilee in 1992, which was held at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale in Lausanne (EPFL). Headed by its president Dr. *Stahl*, the meeting took three days and included a range of invited lecturers as well as an industrial exhibition. In contrast to this, the 'normal' Rigi meeting is generally scheduled over 1½ days. It always includes three invited plenary lecturers, a number of short presentations, and the annual general assembly.

In 1995, the SGMS becomes an Associated Society Member of the New Swiss Chemical Society (NSCS), which itself was founded in 1992 from the Swiss Chemical Society and the Association of Swiss Chemists.

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At present, the SGMS has 155 members. The last meeting was scheduled for October 23/24, 1997.

Readers interested in contacting the SGMS can do so by writing to the secretary:

Annemarie Weibel  
c/o MS Wil GmbH  
P.O. Box 4  
CH-9500 Wil  
Telefax: +41 71 912 12 97  
E-Mail: 101625.3564@compuserve.com

or to the actual president:

Dr. Laurent B. Fay  
*Nestlé Research Center*  
Vers-chez-les-Blancs  
P.O. Box 44  
CH-1000 Lausanne 27  
Telefax: +41 21 785 85 54  
E-Mail: Laurent.Fay@chlsnr.NestRD.ch

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Laurent Fay and Jörg Hau  
*Nestlé Research Center*

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