Community News

SCS Swiss Chemical Society

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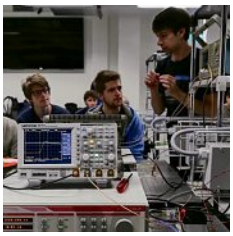
Editor-in-Chiefs Meeting of the ChemPubSoc Membership Magazines/Newsletters: March 23–24, Wiley-VCH Verlag, Weinheim

Under the organization of Dr. Vera Köster, Editor-in-Chief Chemistry Views, ten representatives of European Chemical Society journals met with the Editors of the ChemPubSoc journals for discussions and to exchange information about their products, challenges and their hopes and expectations for the future.

The attending Editors were:
- Prof. Gilberte Chambaud, France
- Dr. Gillian Harvey, Switzerland
- Dr. Symeon Kyriakidis, Greece
- Prof. Tamás Kiss, Hungary
- Prof. Bohumil Kratochvíl, Czech Republic
- Dr. Christian Remenyi, Germany
- Prof. Miguel A. Sierra Rodriguez, Spain
- David Spichiger, Switzerland
- Dr. Augusto Tomé, Portugal
- Prof. Ferruccio Trifirò, Italy

The meeting started with the opportunity for each representative to present their own Society's journal; the content, language, number of issues per year and the number of subscribers. Some scientific articles, news, general articles on history of chemistry/sciences and education were commonly occurring topics. It quickly became clear that CHIMIA was the exception in being produced only in English. All the other journals are published solely in the language of the pertinent country.
Presentations on a range of subjects by Wiley-VCH Editors gave an excellent insight into the history and philosophy of the ChemPubSoc consortium of journals and the daily business of running a large and successful publishing house.
Workshops on opportunities for collaboration gave rise to many ideas including an opinion piece by a Society representative to be published in all membership journals, identification of excellent young chemists in each country followed by an invitation to prepare an article in all member journals.
The day was concluded with continued hospitality by Wiley-VCH in form of a dinner in the pretty town centre of Weinheim allowing more time for discussion.
The next day was principally devoted to future perspectives for both the ChemPubSoc journals and the membership magazines with social media, print versus online, open access and open science giving rise to much intense discussions.
The meeting was a great success and it was generally agreed that it should be repeated, possibly on a two-year cycle. It is hoped that the discussed collaboration projects do come to fruition and that the European Chemistry Societies can become closer and more supportive of each other.

A New Doctoral Programme at EPFL for Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs



EPFLinnovators is a new programme designed to develop the innovation potential of EPFL's PhD students. The programme, which is geared towards the non-academic sector, is supported by the European Union's Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme, which is part of the Horizon 2020 framework.

One of EPFL's three missions is to promote the transfer of knowledge from research to industry. However, too many PhD students wait until the end of their studies to start considering career opportunities in industry or the creation of a start-up. That's why EPFL is launching EPFLinnovators, a programme that will provide new excellent PhD students with the training, experience and advice they need to become successful entrepreneurs.

Experience in the non-academic sector
36 participants will be selected among the PhD candidates of EPFL's 19 doctoral programmes to join EPFLinnovators. They will take additional classes and do a six-month to two-year work placement in a company. They will emerge from the programme with the scientific and entrepreneurial skills they need to become tomorrow's entrepreneurs.
After completing the programme, the PhD students will continue to receive start-up related support from EPFL, including contacts with investors and personalized guidance at EPFL Innovation Park. That's because the programme aims not only to bring out the PhD students' entrepreneurial spirit, but also to provide them with the tools they need to create successful start-ups after finalizing their PhD studies.
The EPFLinnovators programme received the financial support (€3.7 million) of European Union's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Horizon 2020 programme, which covers part of the PhD students' salary for up to 48 months.
Applications will be accepted from 1 November 2017 to 15 January 2018 and from 1 February 2018 to 16 April 2018. 18 applicants will be selected during each of the two rounds to fill a total of 36 places. All applications must be submitted online. More information is available on the Doctoral School's webpage.
Source: http://actu.epfl.ch/news/

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

Period: 25.02.2017– 24.03.2017

Lorraine Combettes, St Julien en Genevois (FR) – Boopathy Dhanapal, Winterthur – Alfredo Di Silvestro, Basel – Angelina Gigante, Geneva – Raphaël Jacquat, Cambridge (UK) – Kristina Jajcevic, Gaillard (FR) – Jacques Membrez, La Tour-de-Peilz – Alessandro Passera, Zurich.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Prof. Xile Hu wins ACS Outstanding Publication of the Year Award

Prof. Xile Hu, EPF Lausanne, has won the "2017 Organic Letters Outstanding Publication of the Year Lectureship Award" from the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry and Organic Letters.
This Award is given to scientists who publish a paper in Organic Letters that stands out in creativity and impact in the broader field of organic chemistry. Special consideration is given to the publication's originality and impact on the field.

Professor Hu was nominated for his work on the hydrosilylation of alkenes employing a nickel pincer complex. The award will be presented at a symposium in his honor at the fall ACS National Meeting, August 20, 2017 in Washington, DC.
Source: *https://actu.epfl.ch/search/sb/*

Md. Khaja Nazeeruddin elected RSC fellow and EURASC member

Prof. Khaja Nazeeruddin, EPF Lausanne has been honored by two distinct but almost contemporaneous recognitions of his research work.

The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) has elected Prof. Nazeeruddin to Fellow status, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the advancement of the chemical sciences.

The European Academy of Sciences (EURASC) has unanimously accepted the nomination of Prof. Nazeeruddin to its membership of the best European scientists in material science.
Prof. Nazeeruddin currently leads the "Group of Molecular Engineering of Functional Materials" at EPFL-Valais and has joint affiliations with universities in South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Brunei. His present research focuses on perovskite solar cells, CO2 reduction, hydrogen production, and light-emitting diodes. He is the author of more than 550 peer-reviewed papers, ten book chapters, holds over 75 patents and has more than 60'000 citations with an h-index of 116.
Source: *https://actu.epfl.ch/search/sb/*

Prof. Copéret receives the Wheland Award from the University of Chicago

Prof. Christophe Copéret, ETH Zurich, receives the Wheland Award 2017/2018 from the Department of Chemistry of the University of Chicago. The award is given biannually to a scientist who has made outstanding contributions to chemistry.

To honor the memory of George Willard Wheland, a member of the Department of Chemistry of The University of Chicago from 1937 to 1972, his former friends and colleagues created an award to be presented biannually to a scientist who has made outstanding contributions to chemistry. Prof. Copéret receives the Wheland Award for 2017/2018 giving the Wheland Award Lecture at the University of Chicago.
Source: *https://www.ethz.ch/news*

Prof. Shih receives the Victor K. LaMer Award from the ACS

Prof. Chih-Jen Shih, from the Institute for Chemical and Bioengineering (ICB) at ETH Zurich, is awarded by the American Chemical Society for his research in colloid and surface chemistry.

At the 91st annual meeting of the American Chemical Society Division of Colloid and Surface Chemistry in July 2017, Prof. Chih-Jen Shih will give the Victor K. LaMer plenary lecture. There he will receive the Victor K. LaMer Award for his outstanding previous studies on the surface properties of graphene and surface modifications strategies to create dispersions.
Source: *https://www.ethz.ch/news*

Three out of eight ERC Advanced Grants for ETH Zurich go to professors of the Department of Chemistry and Applied Biosciences

ETH researchers have received eight of the coveted Advanced Grants in the European Research Council's (ERC) latest call for proposals. For several scientists, this is their second such grant. ETH Zurich has been consistently ranked among the most successful institutions since the programme was launched ten years ago.

Excellence strategy takes effect
Detlef Günther, ETH Vice President Research and Corporate Relations, is especially pleased by the achievement of the successful ETH researchers: "Over many years, our researchers have been able to consistently compete with the very best and establish themselves internationally with their projects. This proves their tremendous scientific quality. But this success also demonstrates that talents can develop over the long term at ETH."
The eight projects at a glance:

The Chemistry ECR Grants go to Prof. Beat H. Meier, Prof. Frédéric Merkt and Prof. Renato Zenobi.

Prof. Beat H. Meier is a Professor of Physical Chemistry and specialises in investigating the atomic resolution structure of biomolecules using nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). In his ERC project, Meier wishes to develop this technology further, and in particular to determine the atomic structure of complex biological systems with a higher spatial resolution. Such systems are, for example, proteins that are inserted into biological membranes as well as amyloid proteins, which form fibrils and play a role in Alzheimer's disease. Meier wants to achieve the higher resolution by refining the mechanics for significantly faster sample rotation and by improving the radio frequency pulse technology.

Prof. Frédéric Merkt, Professor of Physical Chemistry, will use his ERC project to explore chemical reactions of charged atoms and molecules (ions) with molecules at extremely low temperatures, paying particular attention to quantum-physical effects. To date, it has been difficult to conduct experiments just above absolute zero (minus 273 degrees Celsius) with ions, as small stray electric fields can warm the ions at these temperatures. To obtain the measurements, Merkt and his research group will protect the ions and reactants from stray fields by placing them within the orbit of a highly excited (Rydberg) electron. This is Merkt's second ERC Advanced Grant; he received his first in 2008.

Prof. Renato Zenobi is a Professor of Analytical Chemistry. In his research, Zenobi develops and uses mass spectrometric and nano-analytical methods. One of these methods is tip-enhanced Raman spectroscopy, which was invented in his lab. In his ERC project, Zenobi aims to refine this spectroscopic imaging method to examine the nanostructure of sensitive two-dimensional molecular materials such as biological membranes or artificially produced, two-dimensional polymers, without damaging them during the measurement process.

Prof. Tilman Esslinger, Professor of Quantum Optics, has been awarded a second ERC Advanced Grant. In his new project, he is examining elementary transport mechanisms in a system that obeys the laws of quantum physics.

Prof. Mustafa Khammash is a professor of Control Theory and Systems Biology. He works at the interface of systems biology, synthetic biology and control theory.

Prof. Ralph Müller, Professor of Biomechanics, is interested in how mechanical vibrations influence bone development. His main focus is the understanding of how bones adapt and regenerate over the course of a lifetime.

Prof. Bradley Nelson is a Professor of Robotics and Intelligent Systems and an expert in microrobotics. With this, his second ERC Advanced Grant, he wants to develop microrobots made from soft, flexible materials that can change their shape and could be used in medical treatments.

Prof. Jörn Piel is a full Professor at the Institute of Microbiology. His group's main objective is to understand how bacteria generate bioactive natural products. These substances are the basis of many drugs, but are often produced at only small amounts in nature and are too complex for large-scale chemical synthesis.

Source: *https://www.ethz.ch/news*

JOURNAL NEWS

ChemistryOpen: Reduced Publication Charge

ChemistryOpen introduced a reduced article publication charge (APC) of 1'440 Euro for members of the ChemPubSoc Europe societies. This is to support Open Access publishing. Submit now! Kate Lawrence and her team are looking forward to receiving your next excellent manuscript.

More information:
http://www.chemistryviews.org/view/0/CPSE.html
http://www.editorialmanager.com/chemopen/default.aspx

ChemistrySelect: Now Indexed in Web of Science

Good news from ChemistrySelect: the journal has been accepted for indexing in Web of Science and is expected to receive its first partial Impact Factor in June 2018. Discover more about ChemistrySelect and enjoy free access to issue 1/2017.

More information:
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/slct.v2.1/issuetoc

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Source: *www.chemmanager-online.com*

Novartis' Zykadia Wins FDA Priority Review

February 27, 2017: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has accepted Swiss pharmaceutical major Novartis' supplemental New Drug Application (sNDA) for filing and granted priority review for the expanded use of Zykadia (ceritinib) as a first-line treatment for certain patients with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). It also has granted breakthrough therapy designation to the drug for the first-line treatment of patients with ALK+ metastatic NSCLC with metastases to the brain. Novartis said the sNDA submission for first-line use of Zykadia is based on the primary analysis of ASCEND-4, a global Phase 3 randomized, open-label, multicenter clinical trial which evaluated safety and efficacy of Zykadia compared to platinum-based chemotherapy, including maintenance, in adult patients with Stage 3B or 4 ALK+ NSCLC. In the study conducted at 134 clinical trial sites across 28 countries and randomized across 376 patients, the Swiss drugmaker said it was found that patients treated with first-line Zykadia had a median progression-free survival rate of 16.6 months compared to 8.1 months for patients treated with standard first-line pemetrexed-platinum chemotherapy with pemetrexed maintenance. FDA grants Priority Review to applications for drugs that treat serious conditions and, if approved, would provide a significant improvement in treatment safety or efficacy. For applications granted priority review it will take action within six months of submission instead of 10 months under standard review timelines. Breakthrough therapy designation is intended to expedite the development and review of drugs that treat serious or life-threatening conditions if the therapy has demonstrated substantial improvement on at least one clinically significant endpoint over an available therapy.

Novartis said it has received 13 breakthrough therapy designations to date. "We are committed to advancing our understanding of mutation-driven lung cancer, where there continues to be significant unmet need," said Vas Narasimhan, global head drug development and chief medical officer, Novartis. The priority review of Zykadia "brings us closer to delivering the right treatment to the right patient at the right time."

Sanofi and Lonza to Build Biologics Plant

February 28, 2017: French drugmaker Sanofi and Swiss fine chemicals producer and toll manufacturing specialist Lonza plan to jointly invest in a new €270 million large-scale mammalian cell culture facility for monoclonal antibody production at Lonza's Visp, Switzerland, site. The plant, which is expected to be fully operational by 2020 and employ 200 people, will be operated in the form of a 50:50 joint venture. It will be the fourth such facility Lonza has built, including one in the US and one in Singapore. The companies said the partnership will enable Sanofi to react quickly to fluctuations in demand in a short time frame, reinforcing its capability to launch high-quality, next generation biologic medicines and ensure consistent access for patients. At the same time it will provide Lonza with needed capacities to respond to growing manufacturing demands for large-scale mammalian cell culture based therapeutic proteins. Under the terms of the arrangement, Lonza will build the facility and will support the joint venture in operating it. The Swiss company will be able to use its half of the capacity to manufacture products for other companies, if it is not needed to do work for Sanofi. It will also be able to use any of Sanofi's capacity not being utilized for its own purposes. Marc Funk, COO Pharma & Biotech at Lonza called the strategic partnership "a clear win-win situation for all participants as it "will enable the development of further innovative business models based on the requirements of our customers." Funk said the agreement with Sanofi represents first module of its plan to address the long-term needs of the market needs by establishing a state-of-the-art strategic biologics manufacturing platform. "In addition to the investments we are making in building our own internal production capabilities, the joint venture between Sanofi and Lonza emphasizes our commitment to provide access for patients to high quality therapeutic monoclonal antibodies," said Philippe Luscan, Executive Vice President Global Industrial Affairs at Sanofi.

Lucscan said around 60% of the French company's pipeline is made up of biologics, including monoclonal antibodies, dedicated to disease areas such as cardiovascular, immunology and inflammation, neurology and oncology.

Mundipharma to Launch Biosimilar Truxima in Europe

February 28, 2017: UK pharmaceutical group Mundipharma is gearing up to launch Truxima (rituximab), a biosimilar from South Korea's Celltrion, for the treatment of certain cancers and inflammatory conditions, after authorization was granted by the European Medicines Agency. Mundipharma has exclusive rights to market and distribute Truxima in the UK, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands following an agreement with Celltrion last December. Truxima is the first biosimilar monoclonal antibody to get approval in Europe for treating cancer, including diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, follicular lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. It is a biosimilar of Swiss drugmaker Roche's blockbuster drug Mabthera, which was reported to be the world's top selling oncology drug in 2015, costing healthcare systems more than $7.1 billion annually. The drug can also be used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis. Mundipharma said that as Truxima is intended to cost less than Mabthera, it is hoped the resulting cost savings could free up healthcare budgets to allow patients access to other cancer medicines. In a March 2016 report, QuintilesIMS Institute estimated that, in total, biosimilars could potentially save European healthcare systems about €15 billion over the next five years. "For healthcare systems burdened with high-cost oncology treatments, we are pleased to provide an option that has the potential to offer significant savings whilst ensuring patients retain access to high-quality and effective treatments," said Celltrion's chairman, Jung-Jin Seo. Celltrion partnered with Israel's Teva last year to commercialize Truxima in the US and Canada. Truxima is the second biosimilar monoclonal antibody to be marketed and distributed by Mundipharma's network in Europe, following the launch of infliximab in 2015. Antony Mattessich, managing director of Mundipharma International, said the group is constantly seeking opportunities to develop and commercialize sustainable, responsible medicines and is looking forward to further expanding its portfolio in this rapidly growing area.

China Reviewing ChemChina-Syngenta Deal

March 8, 2017: ChemChina confirmed on Mar. 6 that the government in Beijing has accepted its application for regulatory approval of the company's planned $43 billion takeover of Swiss agrochemicals Syngenta in February, according to news agencies. Only days earlier, reports were in circulation quoting China's former commerce minister, Gao Hucheng, as saying the government had not received a formal filing for China's largest overseas acquisition. Chinese authorities appear to have offered conflicting statements. Gao told Reuters the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) would not start considering any submission until regulators in other countries had given the green light, although a ChemChina spokesman said the ministry had already accepted it. Gao stepped down from the commerce post in late

February, and the news agency said his remarks were likely to stir fresh speculation among Syngenta investors about the Chinese regulatory process. An international business publication reported in January that ChemChina had previously filed and then withdrawn the filing, a strategy sometimes employed to gain time. Analysts for investment bank NSBO, Mario Russo, said in a note investors were worried that potential domestic political interference in China could potentially slow the deal. However, he told Reuters that Chinese antitrust authorities would likely approve the transaction, as it is of strategic importance to the nation's economy. In mid-February, Syngenta CEO Eric Fyrwald said the US regulatory authority, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) had asked for more time to review the Chinese takeover; however, he said the Swiss company did not expect the extended probe to prevent the deal from closing in the first half of 2017. ChemChina filed for US approval in January. A Syngenta spokesman told the news agency Bloomberg the Chinese merger still stood a chance to win US approval before the Apr. 12 deadline for a decision by the European Commission. He added that the merger partners have proposed remedies to allay any antitrust concerns.

This transaction has already been cleared by US national security authorities, removing what had been seen as a major hurdle. The EU is also said to be close to giving the green light, as the portfolio has few crucial overlaps in the European market. The companies are said to have offered concessions in January to secure clearance. Divestments from Syngenta's businesses in Europe are expected, along with small divestments from some units in the US. Recent speculation has it that the EU is also close to approving the Dow-DuPont merger, after these companies offered remedies. Bayer is proceeding cautiously in both the US and Europe and has given its deal – the most controversial of the three – until the end of 2017 to be completed.

FDA Approves Novartis Breast Cancer Drug

March 22, 2017: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Novartis' new drug Kisqali (ribociclib) as an initial treatment for postmenopausal women with a type of metastatic breast cancer known as HR+/HER2-.The regulatory authority acknowledged that the kinase inhibitor has been shown to slow the progress of the disease by blocking two proteins that can stimulate growth and division of cancer cells. In a four-week regime, Kisqali – which was developed by the Swiss drugmaker in cooperation with Astex Pharmaceuticals, a subsidiary of Japan's Otsuka Group – is taken for three weeks followed by a one-week break. Parallel to this, patients also take either letrozole, an older cancer drug, or another aromatase inhibitor over the entire four-week cycle. A four-week treatment with Kisqali in the US will cost $10,950 for the strongest dose of 600 mg, with the price decreasing parallel to the strength of the dose. Novartis said it will offer patients financial assistance to pay for the treatment, and depending on arrangements with health insurers, they may be able to forego copayments. This is an important therapy for those who have limited options, it said. The company is currently conducting additional studies for treatments with Kisqali in combination with other treatments and in pre-menopausal women. It said two are late-stage studies, with results expected to be published in late 2017 or early 2018. In an earlier study with 668 women funded by Novartis, the drugmaker said it found that Kisqali and letrozole together reduced the risk of death or the cancer worsening by 44%, compared with those receiving only letrozole. Kisqali can have serious side effects, ranging from potentially fatal abnormal heartbeat, serious liver problems and severe infections. In similar oncology news, US drugmaker Eli Lilly said a combination of its experimental breast cancer drug abemaciclib and another widely used treatment was shown to slow disease progression in a key study involving patients who had relapsed or did not derive enough benefit from anti-estrogen therapy. It is also conducting trials comparing the use abemaciclib in combination with other treatments. Abemaciclib, for which the FDA granted breakthrough therapy status for breast cancer in 2015, is also being tested for use in lung cancer. Lilly said it plans to submit an application to market th drug as a monotherapy in this year's second quarter and as a combination therapy in the third quarter.

BASF Sells Leather Chemicals Unit to Stahl

March 24, 2017: After previous unsuccessful efforts to divest its leather business, BASF has found a buyer in the Netherlands-based Stahl Group. To facilitate a deal, the German chemical giant has agreed to take a 16% minority stake in the leading supplier of process chemicals for leather products and performance coatings in which French private equity investor Wendel and Swiss specialty chemicals producer Clariant currently hold stakes. The transaction is due to conclude in the 2017 fourth quarter, subject to regulatory approval. Following the deal with BASF, Wendel's share of Stahl will fall from 63% to 73% and Clariant's stake shrink to 19% from 23%. The remaining shares are in private hands, including those of Stahl managers. As part of the agreement, BASF said it has agreed to supply "significant volumes" of leather chemicals to Stahl, leveraging mid- to long-term supply agreements. Along with BASF's global leather chemicals business, Stahl will also pick up a production site in L'Hospitalet, Spain and 210 employees, some 110 of are based in Asia. BASF's leather chemicals business, currently headquartered in Singapore, is part of its Performance Chemicals division and active along the entire industry value chain. The four-way partnership "is the right step for BASF's successful leather chemicals business," said its managing board member Michael Heinz. "With complementary strengths, BASF and Stahl are creating a leading company in leather chemicals with a strong focus on innovation," he added.