



## Report of the Round Table regarding the Swiss representations in international bodies 30 April 2010

Time/place of the meeting: Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences SCNAT, Berne  
30 April 2010, 11.45 – 13.15h

Present: - SER: Deputy Director Jürg Burri (JB)  
- SNF: Paul Burkhard (PB)  
- CRUS: Raymond Werlen (RW)  
- SCNAT: Jürg Pfister (JP), Hans-Ruedi Ott (HRO)  
- CHIPP: Martin Pohl (MP), Ueli Straumann (US), Jean-Pierre Ruder (JPR)

MP opens the meeting by thanking the participants for attending the meeting and presents the underlying problem regarding the identification and the role of the Swiss representative in international bodies, specifically in bodies discussing the funding of new projects and the contributions of the individual participating states (see slides 1).

JP, HRO and PB fully share the CHIPP analysis and see the need for a more coherent approach. HRO notes that the same issue had been discussed without success 5 years ago in the SNF. HRO and PB would in principle like to open the discussion also to other disciplines, but agree that Particle Physics (PP) could serve as a pilot. For RW a new process must be transparent and accessible to all institutions. He mentions that the issue of Swiss participation in international infrastructure projects has also to be seen in relation with the discussion about the particularly costly domains in the new law for the promotion and coordination of higher education institutions (Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der Hochschulen und die Koordination im schweizerischen Hochschulbereich). JB is of the opinion that the flow of information between the PP community and the SER is excellent, since SER representatives are participating in certain CHIPP meetings. He also underlines the openness and the longstanding and extensive record of the SER for mandating experts for international committees.

MP shows the distributed responsibilities of the Swiss actors sitting around the table (see slides 2) and passes the floor to US for showing with a few examples that new projects are emerging and that there is a need in the near future to define a solid mechanism for identifying the Swiss representatives (see slides 3). He mentions that the CHIPP idea for a new budget line (FOLIS) had been presented in September 2009 to State Secretary Dell'Ambrogio.

In the ensuing discussion, PB expresses his astonishment that some of the FOLIS project ideas are not included in the SER Roadmap for Large Research Infrastructures. HRO comes back to his earlier intervention regarding enlarging the topic of discussion and mentions that for instance the neutron scattering community would certainly also need an access to the FOLIS funds (if they materialise). PB wonders whether the new funding line would not benefit from a better legal foundation if it were to be structured as 'Begleitmassnahme' mirroring what exists already for space research and for the Swiss participation in the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research of the EU. JB states that the BFI bill to Parliament is structured according to the actors in the field of education, research and innovation (and not according to fields of research); therefore it is anyhow a bit strange to identify funding lines for specific research domains. He does not see the possibility of creating a new 'Begleitmassnahme' because the existing ones are coupled to a governmental participation in an international undertaking, however he confirms that the matter is under consideration. MP puts an end

to this debate, since FOLIS as such is not the topic of the today's Round Table group. For him, the important element in international projects is their scientific quality, which is ensured via international evaluation committees providing the necessary legitimacy for the project to be accepted at national level without another evaluation.

MP then sketches possible solutions consisting in the creation of a permanent information platform for exchange, concertation and early warning, consisting of all the actors involved in the matter: Confederation, SNF, SCNAT, Universities and Institutes of Technology and CHIPP (see slides 4).

HRO is not convinced that this would already solve the problem of identifying the person who could for example sign a MoU. JB informs about the ongoing discussion at the SER consisting of transferring responsibility for international activities to the funding agencies like the SNF. JP underlines the necessity of having an early warning system allowing for a long preparation time at national level. He goes on by offering the good services of the SCNAT for setting up and regularly hosting a Round Table. All participants agree with this proposal and thank the SCNAT for its offer.

**Conclusion:** Once per year, the institutions having participated in today's Round Table will meet to discuss individual projects under preparation at international level and the possible Swiss participations therein including the identification of the appropriate Swiss representative and his mandate. The SCNAT is the convener of these meetings and will host them at its premises. The participating institutions will contribute with all the information they have collected within their organisation and will share this knowledge with the Round Table. However, the problem of how the identified representative(s) is (are) legally appointed and the mandate confirmed still needs to be solved.

18 May 2010

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