2017 Annual Report of the ETH Board about the ETH Domain

New record number of students and doctoral students

In 2017, 31,293 students and doctoral students were enrolled at one of the two Federal Institutes of Technology, i.e. 1,000 more than in the preceding year and 10,000 more than ten years ago. Thus the ETH Domain makes a great contribution to the education of urgently needed specialists for industry, for SMEs and government authorities in Switzerland. Also, its institutions are extremely sought-after partners in the transfer of knowledge and technology. In 2017 alone, they concluded more than 500 new cooperation agreements with the private sector.

Berne, 2 May 2018 – The fact that the number of students and doctoral students is increasing year after year bears witness to the great attraction of the ETH Domain (2017: +3.1%). The biggest increase in the number of students in 2017 was registered in IT (+7.5%) and engineering sciences (+4.1%). In 2017, 6,925 students were awarded the academic degrees of a Bachelor, Master or Doctor (2016: 6,745).

More and more women are studying and working in the ETH Domain

The proportion of women among students and doctoral students increased once again and rose to 30.6% (2016: 30%). Among the members of staff, it increased to 34% (2016: 33.6%). The lowest percentage of women is registered among the professors, although a trend towards more women is discernible here, too. If ten years ago, the proportion of women amounted to 10.3%, it is now 14.9% (2016: 13.9%). With regard to the professors newly appointed in 2017, it amounts to 29.5% (2016: 24.1%). It can therefore be expected that the percentage of women among professors will continue to grow in the future.

Driving force of digitisation

The institutions of the ETH Domain play an important role in the digitisation of Swiss business and society. Indeed, digitisation constitutes the focal point of the four research areas which the ETH Board has specified as strategic priorities for the ETH Domain, namely Data science, Health, Advanced Manufacturing and Energy. However, there are also numerous applications of digitisation in other areas. For instance, drones can be used in agriculture to monitor the development of crops in order to optimise cultivation. In the field of construction, the world's first building is being erected on Empa's land in Dübendorf which has not only been designed and planned digitally, but is largely being built by means of digital processes, robots and 3D printers.

23,000 jobs thanks to spin-offs from the ETH Domain

The education of specialists, and research at a top international level, are among the ETH Domain's core competencies and constitute one of the central functions assigned to it by the Confederation. Above and beyond this, its institutions are important actors in the transfer of knowledge and technology. This results in innovations in Switzerland, improves the country's competitiveness and ultimately preserves jobs and prosperity. In the ETH Domain, for instance, 600 spin-offs were set up, which created approx. 23,000 jobs. On average, one spin-off is founded every week, and a patent application is filed every second day (2017: 206).

Continuing to defend the leading position in the future

According to the international rankings, the institutions of the ETH Domain are in excellent positions. Thus ETH Zurich is again among the top ten of the QS World Ranking and the THE World Ranking. EPFL remains in first place among the universities established in the last 50 years. The four research institutes PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag are among the world's best in their respective fields. However, other countries are making massive investments in education, research and development, and this has already had its first effects. Thus China applied for more European patents in 2017 than Switzerland for the first time, and Chinese universities are improving their position in international rankings. If the ETH Domain and thus also Switzerland want to defend their leading position, this will require continuing adequate and stable funding by the Confederation, as well as excellent framework conditions. This

includes an international and open Switzerland which is capable of attracting and retaining the best talents, as well as the autonomy of the institutions of the ETH Domain.

2017 Annual Report available in the internet

The Annual Report 2017 of the ETH Board about the ETH Domain gives an account of the deployment of funds and provides various performance indicators in the fields of teaching, research, and knowledge and technology transfer. It can be downloaded from www.ethboard.ch.

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The ETH Board is the strategic management and supervisory body of the ETH Domain. The ETH Domain is made up of the two Federal Institutes of Technology, i.e. ETH Zurich and EPFL, as well as the four federal research institutes PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag. The members of the ETH Board are appointed by the Swiss Federal Council. The ETH Board supervises the development plans of the institutions, is responsible for strategic management accounting and ensures coordination. It draws up the budget and the financial statements of the ETH Domain and coordinates the value maintenance and continued functionality of the properties. It is the authority responsible for appointments and represents the ETH Domain before the federal authorities. A staff unit assists the ETH Board in the preparation and implementation of its business.