



SWISS MISSION
TO THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

SwissCore

Swiss Contact Office for
Research and Higher Education

SwissCore

and

the **Swiss Mission to the European Communities**

kindly invite you to a

Swiss Science Briefing

on

How to Build a World-Class University

with

Patrick Aebischer

President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne, EPFL

and

Nikolaus G. van der Pas

Director General for Education and Culture, European Commission

Thursday, 22 April 2004, 12.00h – 14.00h

Swiss Mission to the EC, Place du Luxembourg 1, Brussels



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Swiss Science Briefing
22 April 2004

SwissCore
Swiss Contact Office for
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Programme

Thursday, 22 April 2004, 12:00 – 14:00

- 12:00** **Sandwich lunch**
- 12:30** **Welcome**
Dante Martinelli
Swiss Ambassador to the European Communities, Brussels
- Introduction**
Martina Weiss
Head of Office, SwissCore
- 12:40** **How to build a world-class university**
Patrick Aebischer
President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne
- 13:05** **Comment from an EU-Perspective**
Nikolaus G. van der Pas
Director General, DG Education and Culture; European Commission
- Panel discussion** with the speakers
Moderated by Heidi Diggelmann
President of the National Research Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation
- Coffee**
-

RSVP until 13 April 2004

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Universities are located at the crossroads of research, education and innovation and thus a key actor in the process of reaching the Lisbon target. This position requires a profound discussion about the role of universities in Europe, which the European Commission has supported with a number of communications and conferences.

The **Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL)** is a prime example of a small but very flexible and dynamic university. Founded as “Ecole spéciale de Lausanne” in 1853 it has not only continuously adapted to, but also shaped an ever changing environment. Today, it is one of the most performing Universities in Switzerland and Europe.

Taking into account and anticipating international developments in the last few years, EPFL has experienced major rearrangements. Twelve standard “departments” were replaced by five “schools”, backed up by interdisciplinary programmes which encourage research at the interface of traditional disciplines. Entire scientific areas have been reorganised and combined with the University of Lausanne, thus creating and enhancing synergies on the level of both research and education. New scientific co-operations have been established. The success of Alinghi, which won the America’s Cup 2003 and for which EPFL was the official scientific advisor, is certainly not the last joint-venture generating wider interest.

EPFL hosts over 80 nationalities on its campus and 50 % of its teaching staff are of foreign origins. And while most European technical universities have seen their numbers of students level off or even decline in the past few years, there has been a substantial increase at EPFL over the last ten years.

In this Swiss Science Briefing, we will discuss how a successful strategy to build and sustain a world-class university can be implemented, what obstacles need to be overcome and what conditions are necessary for a university to position itself successfully on the national and international level.



Patrick Aebischer is President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) and professor for neurosciences. He was trained as an MD (1980) and as a neuroscientist (1983) at the universities of Geneva and Fribourg in Switzerland. From 1984 to 1992, he worked at Brown University in Providence (Rhode Island, USA), first as an Assistant, then as Associate Professor of Medical Sciences and from 1991 as chairman of the Section of Artificial Organs, Biomaterials and Cellular Technology. In the fall of 1992, he returned to Switzerland as a Professor and Director of the Surgical Research Division and Gene Therapy Center at the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois in Lausanne. He was nominated for his current position as President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne in 2000.



Nikolaus G. van der Pas is Director General of the DG Education and Culture in the European Commission. During his career with the Commission he had been i.a. Member of President Delors' Cabinet, Chief-Spokesperson of the European Commission and responsible for the accession negotiations with Sweden and for relations with the New Independent States. Before the nomination to his current position in 2000, he had been Director General of the DG Enlargement. N. van der Pas has an academic background in commercial sciences and international relations.



Heidi Diggelmann is President of the Research Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation. She was trained as an MD in Berne, Switzerland, and held various academic positions in Lausanne, Chicago and Zurich.
