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Mission of Switzerland to the European Union

**SwissCore**

Contact Office for European Research  
Innovation and Education

Swiss Science Briefing 2021

# Research Careers in the Light of COVID-19

## How can science funders provide support?

**07 July 2021 – 15:00-16:30**

Online Event (free of charge, registration mandatory)

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& EXCELLENCE.**

## Event Summary

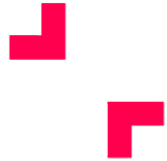


The current Covid-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented mobilisation of the scientific community and research funding. Researchers adapted their projects, the European Commission and national funders carved out new instruments and calls within days, and funding agencies implemented short-term measures to extend deadlines and prolong projects. Thanks to all these efforts, it was possible to increase knowledge about COVID-19 and its causing pathogen SARS-CoV2 and create effective vaccines in record time.

However, despite the boost and visibility the pandemic has provided for science, it has also severely affected researchers' careers in a way that will last beyond the actual sanitary crisis. Laboratories in non-COVID related areas had to close temporarily and researchers reverted to teleworking. Some of them had to shoulder additional tasks like home schooling or caring for elders. Others had to cancel their field work or study periods abroad. All of this had an impact on researchers' productivity in terms of results, publications or promotions.

In this event, we will provide a glance at the impact of COVID-19 on young researchers with some first results from the Swiss Career Tracker Cohorts Study, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). In the subsequent panel, we will elaborate on how an international research funder at EU level like the European Research Council (ERC) and a national funder like the SNSF react to the crisis in a mid-term perspective with their measures and decisions. The ERC Scientific Council published a statement on 21 April 2021 announcing the development of a tool to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on applicants' productivity, and the implementation of measures starting with the work programme 2022. The SNSF on their side has been monitoring calls for projects for irregularities since the outbreak of the pandemic, and is working on analyses particularly with regard to possible impacts on research careers of additional care responsibilities. A representative of the young researchers' community will add their respective view to the discussion. This first hand input may help identify areas where further investigation and action is needed, and create the base for a continued dialogue for the benefit of the research community as a whole.

# Event Agenda



**From 14:50**    **Log-on**

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- 15:00            Welcome
- Matthias Egger**  
President of the National Research Council, Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)
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- 15:10            Input presentation
- Swiss Career Tracker Cohorts Study**, funded by the SNSF  
**Dr. Janine Lüthi**, Senior Researcher at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Bern, Switzerland
- 15:30            Panel discussion with perspectives from:
- Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourguignon**, President ad interim, European Research Council (ERC)
- Prof. Matthias Egger**, President of the National Research Council, Swiss National Science Foundation
- Prof. Stéphanie Gauttier**, Chair of the Policy Working Group of the Marie Curie Alumni Association, Assistant Professor at Grenoble Ecole de Management
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## Speakers

**Janine Lüthi** is a senior researcher at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Bern. She obtained her PhD from the University of Bern in 2017 and has since been working in various projects on career paths, higher education, gender equality, and discrimination. She has specialized in surveys, monitoring and evaluation. Since 2017, she has been part of the team designing and implementing the "Career Tracker Cohorts", within a project mandated by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

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**Jean-Pierre Bourguignon** is President ad interim of the European Research Council since 29 July 2020. He was ERC President between 2014 and 2019. In 2013, he became Directeur de recherche emeritus at CNRS. Director of the Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques in Bures-sur-Yvette (1994-2013), he also taught Mathematics at École polytechnique (1986-2012). A graduate from École Polytechnique (class 1966), he holds a PhD in Mathematical Sciences from University Paris VII (1974). His research concerns differential geometry, global analysis and mathematical aspects of theoretical physics. He was president of the European Mathematical Society (1995-1998). Member of the Academia Europaea, he holds Honorary Doctorate degrees from Keio University and Nankai University.

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**Matthias Egger** is the President of the National Research Council at the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). Since 2002, Matthias Egger has been a professor of epidemiology and public health at the University of Bern. Until 2016, he headed the university's Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine. He has also been a Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Bristol in the UK since 2002. In 2017, he was elected President of the National Research Council of the SNSF. Between April and July 2020, he led the scientific task force advising the Swiss government on the COVID-19 pandemic. He is currently working on projects involving vaccination against Ebola, studies on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and cancer in southern Africa, as well as methodological projects.

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**Stéphanie Gauttier** is Assistant Professor at Grenoble Ecole de Management in France, Chair of the Policy Working Group of the Marie Curie Alumni Association, and Vice-Chair of the COST action on Researcher Mental Health (CA19117). Having received her PhD in 2017, Stéphanie is currently a PI on several projects, which started during the pandemic, from the EU Shift2Rail to the French PHC programs. She runs a peer-to-peer mentoring network within MCAA and co-supervises PhD and DBA students. Through these different positions and activities, she has gained insight into the impact of COVID-19 on wide researcher populations as well as on her own career.

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