

Swiss Hydrological Commission CHy

Opening of the commission's office on 5 June 2009

The Hydrological Commission (CHy) of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) can look back on a varied history. Its precursor was established in 1863 already, only to be dissolved in 1915 (Perret, 2001). After having been re-established in 1947, the Hydrological Commission went through a time of prosperity that came to a provisional end in 1991 with the integration of the Commission into the new Swiss Society of Hydrology and Limnology (SGHL/SSHL; Schram, 1994). After the Commission re-emerged in 1998, it spent many years re-defining itself and searching for a new orientation. This has now led to the creation of a professionally operated office for CHy, inaugurated on 5 June 2009 on the occasion of a conference entitled "Snow, Ice and Water in the Alpine Region – more topical than ever".

At the inauguration, the current president of CHy, Rolf Weingartner, re-affirmed the goal of giving "Swiss Hydrology" a firmer basis in research and tertiary education as a transdisciplinary science. The Commission will aim at improving the position of Swiss hydrology at the national and international levels, promoting innovative projects and offering a first port of call for practitioners. CHy will carry out the basic duties assigned by the Swiss Academy SCNAT; in addition, it will play a stronger role as the National Committee of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS).

Thus it was logical for the President of the IAHS, Arthur Askew, to offer a welcome address (read with authenticity in his absence by Anne Zimmermann, CDE) that wished CHy and its new office the best of success. He asked the audience to keep in mind that a commission's success depends entirely on the continual commitment of each of its members.

CHy's new office is its "conscience" and thus the port of call for all activities in the field of hydrology in Switzerland, warned Heinz Wanner, President of the Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research. He summarized his experience as president of numerous scientific commissions in four clear messages that contained the following wishes for the new Executive Director, Bruno Schädler:

- A lot of spirit and creativity;
- Only little time spent on paper work and meetings;
- Tenacity in asking for requested contributions and dealing with financial matters;
- A lot of joy and satisfaction!

Helmut Weissert, President of SCNAT's Platform Geosciences, held the concluding speech. He underlined that hydrology is the link between the different geosciences: it leaves a mark even in geological formations such as fossil raindrops and wavelets in marine deposits. Based on experience with Earth's history, the Hydrological Commission is undoubtedly predestined to look with a sharp eye into the future.

Bruno Schädler, (*Translation: Anne Zimmermann*)

CHy's website: <http://chy.scnatweb.ch>

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