

Dear Reader,

This Newsletter is intended for all SPS members, researchers, industries, students, interested specialists and physics friends. Feel free to share this Newsletter within your community, and follow this [link](#) if you want to add a person to our mailing list.

If you wish to give your contribution with news or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at: [margherita.boselli@cern.ch](mailto:margherita.boselli@cern.ch)

Kind regards,

Margherita Boselli

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## WHAT'S NEW IN SWITZERLAND

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### Great Success of the Joint Annual Meeting 2025 of the Austrian and Swiss Physical Societies

The Joint Annual Meeting of the Austrian and Swiss Physical Societies has just successfully concluded in Vienna.



Hosted by the University of Vienna, the event took place from **18–22 August** in the magnificent main building and welcomed more than 600 participants from Austria, Switzerland, and several Central European

countries as part of the *CMinCE initiative*. It was a week full of stimulating talks and engaging events.

The meeting opened on Monday with an *Energy Day*, followed in the afternoon by a symposium on *100 Years of Quantum Physics* and the 4th edition of the *Women in Physics Career Symposium*. During the subsequent General Assembly (GA), the Society elected **Michel Calame** as its new President and **Teresa Montaruli** as Vice-President, after she had completed her two-year mandate as President.

The GA also elected two new honorary members: **Prof. Leonid Rivkin** and **Dr. Christophe Rossel** (more details will be given in the latest *SPG Mitteilungen*).

The day concluded with a public lecture by **Thomas Feurer** on the European XFEL.

The main conference began on Tuesday, featuring a rich program with plenary talks, up to ten parallel topical sessions, poster sessions, an award ceremony, and more. Highlights included a second public lecture on Tuesday evening by **Claus Beisbart**, held in the historic university building that now houses the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), and Wednesday's *Symposium on ERC Funding in Quantum Science*. This culminated in a keynote by Nobel Laureate **Serge Haroche** and a panel discussion, *From Blue Sky Research to Quantum Technologies*, dedicated to the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.

Throughout the week, all winners of the SPS and ÖPG awards, as well as the Charpak–Ritz Award, won by **Nicolas Sangouard**, presented lectures on the research for which they were honored.

Detailed reports on the Joint Annual Meeting and on the SPS award winners will appear in

the upcoming *SPG Mitteilungen* Nr. 77, together with a selection of extended abstracts from plenary talks—offering members who could not attend a glimpse of what they missed.

Many thanks to all participants, the local organizers, and everyone who contributed to the success of this flagship event. **See you next year!**

*Image: Serge Haroche during his lecture. Photo from SPS.*

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## In Memoriam: Herwig Schopper (1924–2025)

On August 19, 2025, at the age of 101, the distinguished physicist [Herwig Schopper passed away](#).

Schopper was both an outstanding scientist and a skilled diplomat, who played a decisive role in shaping fundamental physics in Europe.

He began his research career in Germany, obtaining a PhD in Optics from the University of Hamburg in 1951. He also had the opportunity to study under eminent physicists, including **Lise Meitner**, during his stay at the Royal Institute of

Technology in Stockholm. From the outset, he contributed to the development of major European physics infrastructures, in particular the **DESY Research Center** and **CERN**.

From 1981 to 1988, Schopper served as **Director-General of CERN**. During his mandate he promoted the construction of **LEP**, the Large Electron–Positron Collider, the largest accelerator ever built at the time.

In 1983, under his leadership as CERN Director-General, the SPS experiments UA1 and UA2 discovered the **W and Z bosons**, a milestone recognized with the Nobel Prize in Physics awarded to **Carlo Rubbia** and **Simon van der Meer**.

Later in his career, Schopper combined his scientific expertise with his diplomatic skills to promote the creation of **SESAME** (Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East), of which he was a co-founder and the first President of the Council.

Herwig Schopper remained deeply engaged with the physics community throughout his life, offering insight and vision for the future of the field until his very last days.

As an honorary member of the SPS, Herwig Schopper will be remembered with a personal obituary in the upcoming *SPG Mitteilungen* Nr. 77.

*Image: portrait of Herwig Schopper, photo from CERN.*



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## SCNAT report on Nuclear Energy: New nuclear power plant in Switzerland not before 2050

[A new report by the Extended Energy Commission of the Swiss Academy of Sciences](#) (SCNAT) highlights the uncertainties surrounding potential new nuclear power plants in Switzerland. Even if the current ban were lifted, it is highly unlikely that a new plant could be operational before 2050, as numerous political, legal, and economic hurdles could further delay the process.



Nuclear energy offers clear advantages: it produces very low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, requires little space, and provides reliable electricity during winter. However, it also carries the risk of rare but severe accidents and faces significant societal and financial challenges. The authors conclude that, given the high costs, building new nuclear power plants in Switzerland's liberalized, renewables-driven market would be unrealistic without substantial state support.

The report further notes that, without an electricity agreement with the EU, Switzerland would need to invest in additional, costly domestic backup capacity to cover unexpected

nuclear plant outages. In Switzerland, only Generation III/III+ reactors would currently be considered for new construction, as the technology readiness of small modular reactors and Generation IV designs remains relatively low.

*Image from SCNAT.*

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## Training on modern physics for high-school teachers

**SCNAT, the Swiss Quantum Initiative, and the Commission Romande de la Physique** are organizing a training session for upper secondary school teachers on integrating quantum mechanics, general relativity, and cosmology into the physics curriculum: *“De l’infiniment grand à l’infiniment petit avec les élèves de secondaire II.”*

During the training, participants will benefit from the first-hand experience of teachers and researchers who developed two educational projects to introduce high school students in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino to quantum physics and general relativity.

The training will take place on **October 3, 2025, from 09:00 to 16:00 at the University of Geneva**. Participation is free of charge, and transport costs can be reimbursed. The registration deadline is **September 15, 2025**. All information is available [here](#).

The trainers are **Chiara Caprini, Nicolas Brunner, Augustin Baas, and Alice Gasparini**, former SPS Chair for Physics Education and Outreach.

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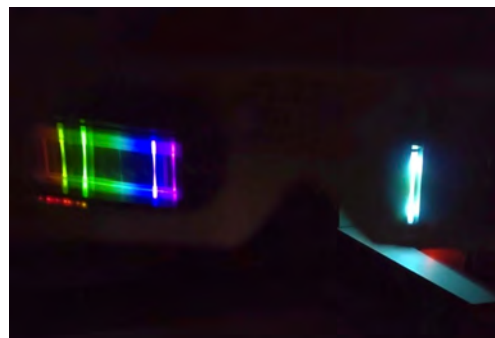
## Internation Year of Quantum Science and Technology

To mark the centenary of quantum mechanics, the United Nations has declared **2025 as the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology**. Throughout the year, events are being held worldwide to promote awareness and understanding of this transformative field.

In Switzerland, the program of quantum-related events has been particularly rich—and it is still ongoing. The **University of Zurich** offers a wide range of activities; to stay updated, you can consult their dedicated [page](#).

Meanwhile, the [Sciencescope at the University of Geneva](#) will soon open registrations for its winter semester workshops, including a [newly developed session on quantum physics](#).

*Image from Physiscope*



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The Swiss Physical Society (SPS) unites persons interested in physics from university, schools, research, development and industry. The SPS promotes the scientific exchange of ideas in Switzerland and with its international environment.

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