

# Press release

SCHWEIZERISCHE STUDIENSTIFTUNG  
FONDAZIONE SVIZZERA DEGLI STUDI  
FONDATION SUISSE D'ETUDES  
FUNDAZIUN SVIZRA DA STUDIS

WSS  
WERNER SIEMENS - STIFTUNG

## 1000 Highly Gifted Young People for the Future of Switzerland

The Swiss Study Foundation received a donation of CHF 10 million for the promotion of young talents in the STEM-sector

Zurich, 16th September 2015

**The Swiss Study Foundation (SSF) will receive a donation in the amount of CHF 10 million from the Werner Siemens Foundation. With the funds that will be distributed over a period of ten years, the SSF will newly be able to sponsor approximately 1000 highly talented students every year – thus a number that is considerably higher than in the past. The majority of the funds will be used for the benefit of students (male and female) in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). With this step the two foundations underline the importance of the technical and scientific subjects for the future of Switzerland.**

The Swiss Study Foundation established in 1991 at present supports on average approximately 650 excellent students at universities and technical colleges per year nationwide. As from 2016 this number can now be increased to 1000 young women and men. This is made possible by a donation of the Werner Siemens Foundation (WSS) in the amount of CHF 10 million to be distributed over a period of ten years. The WSS is a foundation steeped in tradition that supports trendsetting techno-scientific projects of the highest standing.

„For both foundations this is a strategic partnership and a lighthouse project” says the SSF President of the Foundation Board Prof. Dr. Antonio Loprieno, who until mid-2015 was the rector of the University of Basel and has newly been elected to the university council in Zurich. The promotion of the young talents is warranted through high-level training programs that supplement the students’ normal courses as well as through networking opportunities, individual counselling and financial support.

### **A Positive Signal for STEM**

The Study Foundation will mainly apply the additional funds for the promotion of talents and activities in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). “We want to send a signal and act as multipliers” states Prof. Dr. Peter Athanas, member of the WSS Board of Trustees and new member of the Foundation Board at SSF. The background: If a country without its own natural resources wants to hold its ground in an accelerated global competition, it needs a strong scientific elite and powerful capacity for innovation in

technology. “Universities and businesses need to be able to rely on a sufficient number of managers and young talents of the highest quality” says Peter Athanas.

### **Strengthen Switzerland’s Capacity for Innovation**

Already today, approximately 40 percent of the students sponsored by the SSF are active in the STEM subjects. In a national comparison this is far above average – the overall share of the STEM subjects in university degrees is around 28 percent. “Our goal is to draw additional talents in this direction” declares Prof. Dr. Cla Famos, Director of the Study Foundation.

As from 2016 the Study Foundation offers the highly inter-disciplinary program “Mobility – Infrastructure – Innovation” that is also financed with the WSS donation to sponsored students to further strengthen the STEM-sector. The program includes three summer academies per year. Their possible focuses, such as the energy turnaround, artificial intelligence, transport networks of the future and urban development emphasize the social relevance of the STEM initiative of the two foundations.

#### ***For media follow-up questions***

Prof. Dr. Cla Famos, Director Swiss Study Foundation

[Cla.Famos@studienstiftung.ch](mailto:Cla.Famos@studienstiftung.ch)

+41 44 233 33 00

#### ***Information on the Swiss Study Foundation, Zurich (www.studienstiftung.ch)***

- Since 1991 it sponsors top-performing, widely interested students at universities and technical colleges, who thanks to their personality, creativity and intellectual skills are expected to excel in science, business, culture and politics.
- Highly discerning selection process – per year only 6 to 7 percent of the over 1500 already pre-selected candidates are accepted; permanent performance reviews also during the studies
- Scholarships for highly gifted students from families with limited financial resources
- The universities and technical colleges in Switzerland have entered into institutional partnerships with the Study Foundation (to complement and enrich their own excellence promotion programs)
- Key Figures 2014: 660 sponsored fellows, of which
  - 332 women and 328 men
  - 177 PhD students
  - 135 at universities in the French and Italian part of Switzerland
  - 63 at universities abroad
- Strong voluntary commitment of the experts from universities and the business community
- Is under the supervision of the Federal Department of the Interior in Berne

#### ***Information on the Werner Siemens Foundation, Zug (www.wernersiemens-stiftung.ch)***

- Foundation (not associated with Siemens AG)
- Concentrates its charitable activities on education and schooling in the techno-scientific domains
- Is under the supervision of the Federal Department of the Interior in Berne