

N/réf : SW/AR

**Procès-Verbal de la 334^{ème} séance de l'Assemblée d'Ecole
du mardi 08 novembre 2022 : séance conjointe
entre l'Hochschulversammlung ETH Zürich et l'Assemblée d'école EPFL**

Présences Aleksandra Radenovic, Ens
Antoine Hoffmann, CI
Antoine Moix, E
Consuelo Antille, CAT
Evangelos Belias, CI
Franz-Josef Haug, Ens
Frédéric Dreyer, CAT
Marco Picasso, Ens
Maria Sivers, CI
Marta Divall, CAT
Pamina Winkler, CI
Sandrine Gerber, Ens
Tugdual Kerjan, E

Kristin Becker, Déléguée des 2 AE au CEPF
Sabrina Wuilleret, Assistante administrative AE

Excusés Louis Bardel, E
Marcia Gouffon, CAT

Absents Frédéric Rauss, Mediacom

From HV: Dagmar Iber (Prof, president)
Yvonne Ogg (Peko)
Lea Lebars (student)
Pascal Bleuler (Phd)
Christopher Sauder (Peko)
Emir Isman (student)
Jasper Boulwood (student)
Daniela Stark (Peko)
Nils Jensen (Peko)
Viola Vogel (Prof)
Daniela Kalbermatter (Prof)
Johannes Köhler (Prof)
Tobias Neef (PhD)

Excused Jannik Kochert (student)

Morning session

11:00-12:00 **How does EPFL work? How does AE function?** In the comparison of ETH HV. *Presented and Moderated by Aleksandra*

To explain some of the structural differences between the two schools, first historical and political contexts were extensively discussed before we moved to detailing commonalities and differences between ETH-HV and AE. The major difference in the governance structure is that ETH has departments with an elected rector. EPFL has schools led by Deans appointed by the EPFL President (based on the selection committee

proposition) and they have a lot of power. The structure at ETH favors transversal communication and facilitates direct contact with the concerned person/people. At EPFL there is an existing union structure. Depending on the issue/matter and if you know who to address, the communication at EPFL can be very direct and efficient (e.g. AE with VPs, AVPs) but for some issues, communication can be intricate (e.g. teaching vs research depending on the affiliation of school/institutes). As both School Assemblée (HV and AE) are governed by the same laws and regulations, the [ETH law](#), the [Ordonnance sur le domaine des EPF](#), and the [Ordonnance sur l'EPFZ et l'EPFL](#), our rights and obligations are the same but to the bit different governance structure their implementation differs slightly implementation (see above comment on the structure). In particular, for the AE (due to the existence of the Schools at EPFL) on EPFL AE is to ensure the functioning of school councils Both School Assemblies play an active role in deciding on policy/by-law changes of the ETH/EPFL regulations (consultation process). The members of AE are elected by a voting process managed/supervised by AE. In contrast, the HV consists of delegates of each of the four bodies, which the respective bodies have selected independently. In the continuation of the meeting, the consultation process at EPFL has been explained, in terms of procedures in place, outcomes and examples. Measures that were suggested to increase participation include the listing/marketing of the changes to make aware community that their voices are heard and on some occasions, implemented in the final versions of the by-law documents. (slides from Aleksandra available on the google drive [Link](#))

12:00-12:30 **How to increase the participation of the EPFL and ETHZ communities? What mission and potential power the two AEs can have and how everyone can contribute?** *Moderated by Pamina*

This part was skipped but discussed and compared with the applied practices/strategies (1st session)

Afternoon session

14:20-16:25 (including a 15 min refreshment break at 15.45-16:00) **Define a transversal theme for the Dialog 2023 + invited persons (deadline Nov 9th) for 14.6 (ETH) and 21.6 (EPFL)**

The proposal from ETH Board staff communicated by Kristin Becker:

Transversal theme

Institutional appointment processes for leadership positions at ETH Zurich and EPFL and at the Research Institutes

Appointment procedures for heads of departments/Deans and other leadership positions (VPs, VPAs) at ETH Zurich and EPFL and heads of research units at the Research Institutes

Not within the scope are appointment procedures that fall under the responsibility of the ETH Board (i.e. the procedures for appointing the Presidents of ETH Zurich and EPFL) and procedures that involve the ETH Board as part of the ordinary decision-making processes (executive Board members & professors at ETH Zurich and EPFL).

This theme was discarded, as a transversal theme for HV and AE but it was agreed to use it strategically as the individual theme **for the EPFL AE** and rephrased to: **How to ensure transparency and inclusive governance at EPFL? For the preparation of this discussion the AE can/will follow up with HV for input, as the topic is relevant for both institutions.**

Theme for ETH Zurich & EPFL

Development of student numbers and maintaining the quality of education

Measures planned by the schools to maintain quality in the light of the student number increase

In the discussion we agreed to make this topic more general and to raise the concerns how we can manage to guarantee our current standards/(excellence*) in research, education and innovation despite probable budget cuts but increasing student numbers and increasing need of workforce filled by EPFL and ETHZ alumni (students, PhDs, postdocs)

Final proposition of ETH School assemblies for the *Transversal theme*

Growth of ETH and EPFL with stable budget and increasing costs:

- **How to maintain excellent education, research & innovation?**
- **How do you advise us to manage the growth pressure under the current and upcoming budget constraints?**

*we agree that the term excellence is not well defined

From the point of view of the external board members, what societal, political and cultural changes would we need in Switzerland to tackle this issue?

We agreed that we will prepare for the dialogue on our side a slide listing retention measures to keep workforce in CH.

Strategically it was suggested that the HV selects *the evaluation of administration growth at the ETH*. **For the preparation of this discussion the HV can/will follow up with AE for input, as the topic is relevant geopolitical situations**

16:25-18:05 Discussion with Michael Käppeli (*find below a selection of the questions and responses*)

- Dagmar Iber raised the question/suggestion on what would be the best actions from **AE and HV** in supporting ETH board in front of the government to defend the budget:

How can we best serve the ETH-Board and support their efforts in maintaining and securing funding from the Swiss government?

Response: there will be less growth than before due to the current economic and geopolitical situation. Demands are increasing but the budget is limited.
Suggestions from M. Käppeli included

- 1) presenting the challenges of academic institutes to politicians, communicating with the parties, public, press.
- 2) write a public letter.

Action: ETH School assemblies will draft the letter to SBFI/SEFRI/ERI
<https://www.sbf.admin.ch/se/home/bfi-politik.html> and to Guy Parmelin

- **How can we support ETH Board ?**

Response: We don't need more facts and figures from you. Politicians are not interested in details.
Michael Käppeli: Suggestion: You may better prepare to discuss these issues on the Dialog meetings (45 mn per School each year) in proposing a response to and have clear positions (agree and disagree in proposed subjects).

- **Shall we discuss on what fraction of the budget goes to administration, as our perception is that of significantly increased over the years?**

Response: yes, 'it's reflected and perception).
'It's not ETH Board deciding how the budget is divided, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the institutions (presidencies).

- **Role of ETH board as check and balance?**

Not really – presidents have the power.

- **In order to serve the ETH board - in your opinion and experience what is the role of scientists in politics? Is it most efficient to keep an academic approach, an advisory or an activist one?**

Response: Your role is to educate and inform the public take inspiration from several positive examples of communicators during COVID crisis.

- **What measures ETH board can take to prevent unfounded negative publicity for open access publishing in general caused by so-called predatory publishers (some based in Switzerland)?**

Response: We will look into this.

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