

# Conference Report

## Swiss Snow Symposium 2020

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The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Swiss Snow Symposium (SSS), the traditional yearly event organized by the Swiss Young Chemists' Association (SYCA), took place from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 in the beautiful scenario of Saas-Fee (VS).

The SSS 2020 brought together 35 participants from all over Switzerland (ETH Zurich, EPF Lausanne, the Universities of Zurich, Basel, Fribourg and Geneva), including a special guest: the President of the Swiss Chemical Society, **Dr. Alain De Mesmaeker** (Syngenta). Thanks to the generous support from the SCS Foundation (Prof. Dr. Hans Peter Lüthi), participation to the SSS 2020 was free of charge for the Alfred Werner Scholars – an initiative which has been confirmed already for the next year.

The scientific program featured seven invited lectures (with speakers from academia, industry and scientific publishing), seven contributed talks and a poster session.

On Friday, after the words of welcome from **Dr. Guido Panzarasa** (ETH Zurich), President of SYCA and Chair of the SSS 2020, the Symposium was kicked-off by **Prof. Dr. Paul Dyson** (EPF Lausanne), who shared his knowledge on how to write a successful scientific proposal. Then, it was the turn of **Dr. Jean-Baptiste Langlois** (Novartis) to give insight on the drug discovery process, and especially about his research on protease-activity inhibitors.

The talk of **Prof. Dr. Victor Mougél** (ETH Zurich) demonstrated how the electrochemical conversion of carbon dioxide into useful products can be achieved using bioinspired electrodes. Inspiration from nature was an important theme also in the talk of **Prof. Dr. Christof Sparr** (University of Basel), where the science of catalytic cascade reactions gave rise to the artistic beauty of complex molecular architectures.

On Saturday, thanks to the beautiful weather, and in the best tradition of the SSS, the morning and early afternoon could be dedicated to snow activities, such as skiing and snow-shoeing, but also to a relaxing stroll around the village.

The scientific program was then started by **Dr. Maud Reiter**, from Firmenich, who enriched her talk on the development of sustainable approaches for the industrial synthesis of odorous

molecules, and especially of the long-sought artificial muguet, by a perfume-tasting experience. **Dr. Richard Smith** (Wiley-VHCA) gave advice on how to write a successful paper, based on his experience as managing editor of *Helvetica Chimica Acta*. Last but not least, **Dr. Daniel Seeliger** (Boehringer-Ingelheim) gave a taste of the power of computational methods, especially of molecular dynamics, to help the difficult process of drug discovery.

The variety of topics discussed in the invited lectures was mirrored in the contributed talks and posters: from supramolecular chemistry to materials, from polymer chemistry to catalysis, and even systems chemistry.

Two prizes (of 100 CHF each), sponsored by Helvetica, for the Best Contributed Talk and Best Poster Presentation were assigned to **Laurent Severy** (University of Zurich, 'Host-guest interactions on electrode surfaces for immobilization of molecular catalysts'), and to **Charlotte Kress** (University of Basel, 'A macrocyclic Au-atom acceptor'). The winners received also a small cadeau from Firmenich.

Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to everybody who contributed to the success of the event. See you next year!

Thanks a lot also to our sponsors and partners that supported the event and made it possible to offer the weekend at a reasonable prize for our community members:



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### Delegate Assembly of the European Young Chemists' Network (EYCN)

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The 15<sup>th</sup> Delegate Assembly (DA) of the European Young Chemists' Network (EYCN) took place in Sitges, Spain, on January 26–29, 2020 and it was organized in collaboration with the Catalan Chemical Society. **Dr. Jovana V. Milic** (EPFL) and **Amin Hodai** (EPFL), represented the SYCA at this event.

During the DA, EYCN Delegates and the current board members presented their activities performed within the last year. Moreover, this event hosted a number of special guests including **Prof. Javier García Martínez**, the President of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), and **Prof. Pilar Goya Laza**, the President of the European Chemical Society (EuChemS). While Prof. Javier García Martínez talked about the novel ways of auto-

mation in chemical sciences, Prof. Pilar Goya Laza gave a speech on the role and actions of EuChemS. Besides, **Dr. Haymo Ross** (the Editor of *Chemistry—A European Journal*) discussed the publishing metrics and challenges faced in this direction.

The SYCA Delegates has maintained their roles to continue as the Leader of the Networks team and a member of the Global Communications team, respectively. The Networks team is dedicated to increasing the impact of the EYCN through its activities and international partnerships with academia, industry, and governmental bodies, while connecting and supporting young chemists. In addition, the Global Communications team focuses on global outreach to expand the contact of the EYCN beyond Europe.

The Swiss Chemical Society was elected to host the next DA in 2021 in Fribourg, Switzerland. The SYCA will mainly organize this event in collaboration with the EYCN. We believe that this event will be a great opportunity for the Swiss Chemical Society for enhanced visibility within Europe and beyond.

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