

Materials Chemistry Highlights

Division of Materials Chemistry

A Division of the Swiss Chemical Society

A New Chapter for Swiss Materials Chemistry

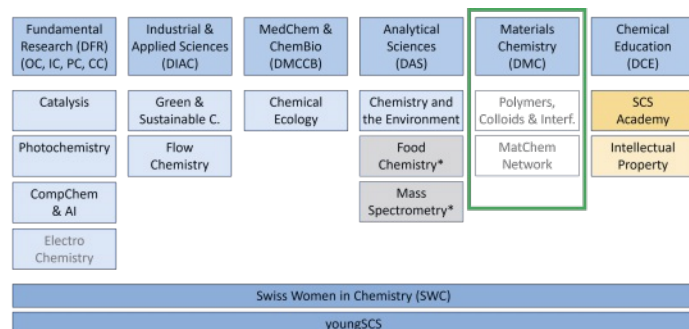
Jovana V. Milic* and Simon C. Boehme*

*Correspondence: Prof. J. V. Milic, E-mail: jovana.milic@unifr.ch; Dr. S. C. Boehme, E-mail: sboehme@ethz.ch

Abstract: The division dedicated to materials chemistry at the Swiss Chemical Society (SCS) has been recently restructured by merging the Division for Polymers, Colloids, and Interfaces (DPCI) with the Materials Chemistry Network (MatChem). This column provides more insights into the process while outlining the vision and activities of the newly established SCS Division of Materials Chemistry (DMC).

Keywords: Materials chemistry network · Polymers, colloids, and interfaces · Swiss Chemical Society divisions

This article marks the first edition of the CHIMIA column on Materials Chemistry Highlights, commemorating the newly formed Swiss Chemical Society (SCS) Division of Materials Chemistry (DMC; Scheme 1).^[1] In this column, we discuss the motivations for establishing the DMC, its new board, and what the division represents for the Swiss research landscape in the field of materials chemistry.



* Independent societies (institutional member of the SCS)

Scheme 1. The organizational chart of the SCS, with the new SCS Division of Materials Chemistry (DMC; indicated by the green box), which was created by merging the Division Polymers, Colloids, and Interfaces (DPCI) and the Materials Chemistry Network (MatChem).

The motivation for establishing the new SCS division is shaped by the history of materials chemistry research developments within SCS. Specifically, in 2004, the Swiss Polymers and Colloids Society became part of the SCS as a Division for Polymers, Colloids, and Interfaces (DPCI) with an independent board. Since 2011, the DPCI has been fully integrated into the SCS. In 2016, to recognize the increasing interdisciplinarity in materials chemistry research, a new SCS initiative emerged to extend the division's activities into materials chemistry. While the initiative was not realized at that time, in 2019, a renewed effort to

include some of the interdisciplinary Swiss materials chemistry research into the SCS framework led to the establishment of the SCS Materials Chemistry Network (MatChem), with the SCS Spring Meeting 2019 at Empa Dübendorf as its inaugural event. However, the unfolding of the ongoing COVID pandemic significantly slowed down the progress of emerging activities over the next two years following the formation of the MatChem network. The first Swiss Symposium of Materials Chemistry finally took place on June 14, 2023, at the Empa Akademie in Dübendorf, symbolically marking the beginning of the new chapter for MatChem (Fig. 1).^[2]

The symposium brought together about 80 participants from academia and industry across Switzerland for a day of networking and exchange of ideas in materials chemistry. The event was organized by Prof. Maksym Kovalenko and Dr. Simon Böhme, president and vice-president of the MatChem network, respectively, with the support of the SCS Office in Bern, David Spichiger and Céline Wittwer. The participants were inspired by a



Fig. 1. Impression from the 1st Swiss Symposium on Materials Chemistry (MatChem) on 14 June 2023 at the Empa Akademie Dübendorf with about 80 participants from academia and industry. Top: Opening by the MatChem network's president, Prof. Maksym Kovalenko, ETH Zürich (left), and the keynote by Prof. Bettina Lotsch, Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research in Stuttgart, Germany (right). Middle and bottom: Networking with early-career researchers and other participants within the MatChem community. Copyright, Swiss Chemical Society.

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Please contact: Dr. Simon Boehme (sboehme@ethz.ch) and/or Prof. Jovana V. Milic (jovana.milic@unifr.ch)

keynote lecture by Prof. Bettina Lotsch (Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research in Stuttgart, Germany) on the fascinating science and applications of optoelectronics and optoionics. This was followed by a series of engaging talks covering a broad range of topics in materials chemistry, from synthesis to spectroscopy and device applications, including molecular materials, semiconductor quantum dots, quantum materials, and batteries. The stage was open to both early-career and established researchers, with 32 poster presenters, 6 junior presenters, and 6 invited speakers. Two presentation prizes were awarded to Florian Schenk (group of Prof. Maksym Yarema at ETH Zürich) for the best oral contribution and to Dietger Van den Eynden (group of Prof. Jonathan De Roo at the University of Basel) for the best poster award. The symposium provided ample opportunities for reviving connections and establishing new collaborations (Fig. 1), stimulating the initiative for another edition of the event.

The indications of a growing materials chemistry community further motivated the decision to merge the DPCI and MatChem network into a newly formed Division of Materials Chemistry (DMC) at the 33rd SCS General Assembly meeting on April 14, 2023.^[3,4] The inaugural DMC meeting took place on October 23, 2023, at the House of Academies in Bern (Fig. 2), establishing a new DMC board, including both DPCI and MatChem network former board members as well as new representatives from the Swiss materials chemistry community (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Board meeting of the new Division of Materials Chemistry (DMC) at the House of the Academies in Bern on October 2023.

This involved Prof. Maksym Kovalenko (ETH Zürich and Empa Dübendorf), who was appointed DMC president, and Dr. Sara Fornera (Sika Zürich), who was appointed DMC treasurer. Other board members include Dr. Simon Böhme and Prof. Athina Anastasaki (ETH Zürich), Prof. Jovana V. Milić (Adolphe Merkle Institute, University of Fribourg), Prof. Tiffany Abitbol (EPFL, Lausanne), Prof. Greta Patzke (University of Zürich), Prof. Christof Brändli (ZHAW Winterthur), Prof. Bastian Brand (ZHAW Wädenswil), Dr. Maryna Bodnarchuk and Dr. Dorina Opris (Empa, Dübendorf), and Prof. Fabian von Rohr (University of Geneva). The extended board will also involve members Prof. Jonathan De Roo (University of Basel), Dr. Maarten Nachtegaal (PSI Villigen), Prof. David Tilley (University of Zürich), Prof. Paolo Arosio (ETH Zürich), Prof. Holger Frauenrath (EPFL, Lausanne), Dr. Laurent Sagalowicz (Nestlé, Lausanne), and Prof. Raffaella Buonsanti (EPFL, Sion).

Following the IUPAC definition of materials chemistry,^[5] the mission of the DMC will be to promote and support the applica-

tion of chemistry to design, synthesis, characterization, processing, understanding, and application of materials, particularly those with useful or potentially useful physical properties. This has been translated into a vision to foster an international network of materials chemists and scientists working in related fields and facilitate contacts with leading experts while organizing symposia, seminars, and advanced training courses and workshops, enabling networking and encouraging the exchange of ideas. This will involve some of the main activities of the division, including organizing a biannual MatChem Symposium and Swiss Soft Days several times yearly. Moreover, the DMC will promote and chair the MatChem sessions at the SCS Fall Meeting while partnering with other organizers of related events. The division will also collaborate with chemical societies across the world, organizing joint events while providing educational opportunities to community members and informing the community via social media, the DMC newsletter, and this *CHIMIA* column.

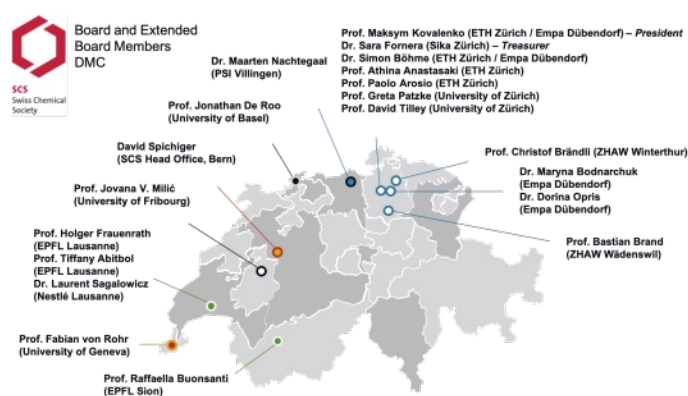


Fig. 3. Board and extended board members of the SCS Division of Materials Chemistry (DMC) across institutions in Switzerland.

DMC board members Simon Böhme and Jovana V. Milić will remain the contact persons for the new *CHIMIA Materials Chemistry Highlights* column and broader communication, together with Athina Anastasaki, sharing views and emerging opportunities in materials chemistry research in Switzerland and internationally. We invite the community to engage with the DMC by connecting and contributing to the activities, as well as sharing their ideas and perspectives. We look forward to the continuation of this new chapter for materials chemistry in Switzerland!

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- [1] <https://scg.ch/networks> (accessed on December 27, 2023)
- [2] <https://matchem23.scg.ch/> (accessed on December 11, 2023)
- [3] D. Spichiger, *CHIMIA* **2023**, 77, 5, A357.
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