

Conference Report

Chemistry Olympiad DACH Event 2024

Dominic T. Egger*

*Correspondence: D. T. Egger, E-Mail: d.egger@olympiad.ch

Abstract: At the first Chemistry Olympiad DACH Event, 22 high school students from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland came together in Munich for one weekend in September. The main goal of this event was the exchange amongst the chemistry-fascinated participants from the three neighboring countries. The Swiss Chemistry Olympiads plan to continue our collaborative efforts with the organizers of the Chemistry Olympiads in Germany and Austria in the future.

Keywords: Chemistry Olympiad · Extracurricular education · Swiss students

From the 13th to the 15th of September 2024, a total of 22 students from the national Chemistry Olympiads in Germany (D),^[1] Austria (A),^[2] and Switzerland (CH)^[3] met for the very first Chemistry Olympiad ‘DACH’ event in Munich, Germany. The idea for such an event dated back to the International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO) 2022. Due to traveling restrictions at the time, a joint ‘remote participation’, in the international competition from the teams of Germany, Austria and Switzerland was organized at the University of Basel.^[4]

The association of the Swiss Chemistry Olympiads (SwissChO) is not only tasked with the selection and preparation of Switzerland’s brightest chemistry students to participate at the annual IChO competition, but also an equally important mission statement of ours is to facilitate the exchange amongst like-minded young scientists during their high school years. Therefore, we hoped to repeat a get-together with our neighboring countries on a smaller scale and decoupled from the international competition.

The main goal of this inaugural DACH event was to foster the exchange and knowledge-transfer amongst the participating students. The 8 participants of the Swiss delegation for this event were recruited from the pool of finalists of the 2024 SwissChO.^[5] Thereby, our focus was put on involving students who are eligible to participate again in the on-going national selection and could therefore also potentially represent Switzerland at the 57th IChO in the United Arab Emirates in July 2025.^[6]

Some of the highlights of our trip to Munich involved a guided city tour by night and visits to Schloss Nymphenburg and the vast scientific exhibitions of the Deutsches Museum. Moreover, the participants had many opportunities to get to know each other outside of the official program.

For decades already, the Swiss delegation has collaborated with the teams from Germany and Austria at IChO when it comes to the translation of the official exam problems from English to German. But we believe there’s plenty more opportunity to learn from each other now and for the future, *e.g.* when it comes to drafting exam problems or planning Chemistry Olympiad specific teaching. As such, our joint event also offered a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the ties between the organizers of the respective national Chemistry Olympiads.

One could even imagine initiatives towards more joint preparation for IChO as well. The Scandinavian countries *e.g.* host the annual Nordic Chemistry Olympiad (NChO), where their IChO delegations meet and further prepare for the international competition.^[7]

In summary, we look back to a successful first instance of this Chemistry Olympiad DACH event and we hope to continue and intensify our collaborative efforts with the Chemistry Olympiads of our neighboring countries in the years to come.

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- [1] German Chemistry Olympiad, <https://www.scienceolympiaden.de/icho>, accessed Nov. 19th, 2024.
- [2] Austrian Chemistry Olympiad, <https://www.oecho.at/>, accessed Nov. 19th, 2024.
- [3] Swiss Chemistry Olympiad, <https://chemistry.olympiad.ch/de/>, accessed Nov. 19th, 2024.
- [4] D. T. Egger, C. S. Balmer, P. O. Willi, *CHIMIA*, **2022**, 76, 876, <https://doi.org/10.2533/chimia.2022.876>.
- [5] Press release of SwissChO about the 2024 national final, <https://chemistry.olympiad.ch/de/news/news/medaillen-dank-guter-chemie>, accessed Nov. 18th, 2024.
- [6] Official webpage of IChO 2025, <https://icho2025.ae/>, accessed Nov. 18th, 2024.
- [7] Nordic Chemistry Olympiad (NChO) <https://foreninger.uio.no/kjemiolympiaden/skandinavisk/>, accessed Nov. 18th, 2024.



Participants of the Chemistry Olympiad DACH event 2024 on their visit to Schloss Nymphenburg in Munich. Photo: Förderverein Chemie-Olympiade e.V.