

Annual Report 2018/19 of the Board
 to the Assembly of Delegates

Board activities

By the Co-Presidents of actionuni, Salome Adam and Suzana Atanasoski, and the extended board of actionuni.

Reporting period: 8th June 2018 to 12th May 2019

1 Interna

Overview of all activities June 2018 – April 2019:

08.06.2018	SAR Plenum
29.08.2018	swu Delegation Lehre
04.09.2018	Board Meeting
05.09.2018	Sitzung VSS Actiouni swissfaculty
13.09.2018	Treffen mit Swissuniversities
14.09.2019	SAR Plenum
20.09.2018	Mitwirkungstreffen-Participation
27.09.2018	Skype Meeting Secretariat Eurodoc
29.10.2018	Conference: Open Data and Data Management - Issues and Challenges
06.11.2018	Board Meeting
15.11.2018	SHK
16-17.11.2018	Eurodoc Workshops
21.11.2018	swu Delegation Lehre
21.11.2018	Conference: Beyond impact factor, h-Index and university rankings: Evaluate science in more meaningful ways
29.11.2018	Qualität geht alle an! Wie Mitwirkung an den Hochschulen gelebt und gestaltet wird
29.11.2018	Jahrestreffen mit SNF
05.12.2018	Swiss Accreditation Council Vertreterinnen Treffen
06.12.2018	AAQ-Workshop
07.12.2018	SAR Plenum
24.-25.01.2019	Symposium on Doctoral Supervision at ETH Zurich
31.01.2019	Board Meeting
06.02.2019	swu Delegation Lehre
15.02.2019	Roundtable: «Empfehlungen für eine wirksame Förderung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften für die nächste BFI-Botschaft zuhanden des SBF1»
21.02.2019	SHK
13.03.2019	Workshop "Good Practices der Mitwirkung"
14.03.2019	Board Meeting
22.03.2019	Ständetreffen

27.03.2019	Task Force Migration swissuniversities
01.-04.04.2019	Eurodoc conference and annual general meeting in Brussels
08.05.2019	Treffen mit Swissuniversities
10.05.2019	Swissuniversities Netzwerktreffen Lehre

2 Representations / Invitations

Salome Adam (co-president) was invited by Eurodoc and Wiceprzewodnicząca Krajowej Reprezentacji Doktorantów to organise a Workshop on “*Quality in doctoral training & accreditation*”. The workshop took place on 16 November, in Warsaw, Poland.

On 21 November 2018, co-president Salome Adam represented actionuni on a panel discussion on “*How to include students, non-professorial academic staff, professors, administrative staff and representatives from practice into internal quality assurance and how can participation of those groups in decision making processes in an independent and efficient way be ensured?*”. Moreover, Carla Duss (representative of actionuni in the Swiss Accreditation Council) and Andrea Zimmerli (former board member of actionuni) lead a discussion table on the perspective of non-professorial academic staff in the quality management system in general and the accreditation process in particular. A short report can be found [here](#).

Hannah Schoch (UZH), Daniel Degen (PH Luzern), Harald Voelker (UZH) and Florian Lippke (UniFri) represented actionuni at the Roundtable: «Empfehlungen für eine wirksame Förderung der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften für die nächste BFI-Botschaft zuhanden des SBFJ» The roundtable took place on 15 February 2019 in Bern. During a detailed discussion of the draft positions of actionuni were raised and SAGW promised to integrate them in the next draft which will be sent out in the second half of 2019. The arguments put forward by actionuni were considered to be plausible by all participants.

Lena Hehemann (extended board member actionuni) is representing actionuni in the working group participation. The group is composed by members of actionuni, VSS and swissfaculty and meets regularly. The main goal is to develop certain standards for participation within the different kinds of universities using best practices as examples. The group is working “on behalf” of swissuniversities and will be presenting its ideas at swissuniversities Netzwerktreffen Lehre in May 2019. A Workshop on “Good Practices der Mitwirkung” was hosted on 20 March 2019 in Zurich.

Since 1.5 years, a swissuniversities task force on visas and work permits looks into problems international students and doctoral researchers have when studying or researching in Switzerland. The task force plans to submit their recommendations by spring 2020. Salome Adam (co-president) represents actionuni.

The SNF has appointed Gilles Kratzer (University of Zurich), Melanie Röthlisberger (University of Zurich) and Nino Wili (ETH Zurich) as [Open Access Ambassadors](#) of actionuni. The Open Access Ambassadors will support the SNF in promoting its Open Access Policy to researchers

in Swiss higher education institutions. For May 2019, the three OA ambassadors are jointly organizing a Postdoc Meetup! together with the Graduate Campus (UZH) inviting PhDs and Postdocs to a 1-hour session on Open Science principles, Open Access at the UZH and the Open Access Strategy of the SNF. Representatives of both the UZH (Hauptbibliothek UZH, André Hoffmann and Eva-Marie Lang) and the SNF (Tobias Philipp) will give short introductions before the floor is opened up for discussions. Melanie Röthlisberger has additionally volunteered to become Open Science Ambassador of Switzerland with Eurodoc and is undergoing training in the spring 2019 organized by Eurodoc for the ~30 European OS-ambassadors."

3 Media Coverage

Actionuni's position paper was launched on our [website](#) on February 17, 2019. Former co-president Florian Lippke (UniFri) and co-president Salome Adam (UZH) are both listed as media contacts.

Co-president Salome Adam (UZH) was invited to a one-on-one debate with Prof. Dr. Adrian Aguzzi (UZH) for the SRF broadcast Kontext on the topic of misuse of power and mobbing at universities. This event was broadcast on the 19th of February 2019 and can be found [here](#).

Co-president Salome Adam (UZH) was invited to comment in the *Zürioberländer News* on the recent cases of mobbing and plagiarism at EMPA, the independent materials, science and technology research institute of the ETH domain. This article was published on the 23rd of February and can be found [here](#).

Co-president Salome Adam (UZH) was interviewed by *zürjost* on the topic of ETH President Joël Mesot's press release in relation to episodes of abuse and misconduct at ETH Zurich. The article was published on the 14th of March and can be found [here](#).

Lauriane Nallet-Koshroffian (UZH) was appointed as social media coordinator in February. She posts since then on our [Twitter channel](#) and [LinkedIn profile](#).

4 Further Networking

The annual meeting with the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) took place on 19 November 2018, see section "SNSF" below.

Since 2015, actionuni attends twice a year a joint meeting of swissfaculty, VSS and swissuniversities.

This year we met two more times with swissfaculty and VSS, to prepare the meetings with swissuniversities. The main topic was participation and collaboration.

Representatives of the Swiss Accreditation Council and members of the VSS, actionuni und swissfaculty met on 5 December 2018, to discuss the future cooperation with respect of the

council. The representatives decided to exchange before the council meetings and to coordinate the inputs. Further, the future rules of conduct regarding decisions of the Swiss Accreditation Council were discussed. The proposed ethics commission was not put in place by the accreditation council, but the rules of conduct were discussed. As a result, the council decided, that an affiliation with a university remains for five years after a member of the council has left the university.

5 Consultations

Actionuni was asked to provide feedback on the revision to ETH rules of employment. Our official response can be found [here](#). The main points are the following:

- criticism on the plan to increase the flexibility concerning contract duration for PostDocs and Assistant Professors. A minimum of four years in the first contract should be ensured.
- salary equality within ETH needs to be ensured by the ETH-Rat, also in case of private third party funding.
- professors may be employed beyond retirement age. However, we demand a new (young) professor must be employed nevertheless.
- participation must be ensured and voting rights for delegates of the Hochschulversammlung sustained.
- if a new HR information system is being introduced, data must not be used for any other purposes (e.g. research) without consent of the employees.
- video surveillance data must not be used for other than its intended use

Actionuni was also asked to provide feedback on the new EHB ([Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung](#)) law. Our official response can be found [here](#). The main points are the following:

- adding a passage on freedom of teaching, learning and research in the law
- to assure that also universities of teacher education can continue to conduct research in professional training and education.
- to increase participation rights of students, non-professorial academic staff.

Swiss National Science Foundation

By the actionuni representative to the SNSF Council, Katharina Prautsch

1. Feedback to the new funding instrument “Practice-to-Science” for FH/PH researchers

Actionuni and its members have been asked to provide feedback to the new funding instrument Practice-to-Science which is going to be implemented in 2020. The pilot “Practice-to-Science” enables qualified experts with proven practical experience to be employed at professorship level at a FH or PH. The aim is to reinforce the dual, science-based and practice-oriented profile of FH and PH and support their efforts to develop research capacity.

2. *actionuni-SNSF annual meeting took place on the 19th of November*

During the meeting topics raised by actionuni members were discussed, as well as their opinion on the strategic priorities of the SNSF Multi-Year program 2021-2024. Main points of discussion were following:

- a. Mobility as a selection criterion is obsolete
- b. Stronger promotion of Post-Docs
- c. Centralized evaluation strategy of SNF funding applications starting 2021
- d. Continued promotion of women in research
- e. Promotion of intersectoral mobility
- f. Improvements made in the generation of tenure track assistant professorships

For the complete report Katharina Prautsch can be contacted.

3. *SNSF- Stiftungsrats meeting on the 29th of March and discussion of the Multi-Year Programme 2021-2024*

Strategic priorities relevant for the Mittelbau are:

- a. Foster excellence through diversity
 - i. Assessing researchers' qualifications and achievements:
Research indicates that evaluation of the track record (the evaluation of the scientists' qualifications and record of accomplishments) is susceptible to be gender biased. The SNSF will investigate if and how the assessment of track records can be improved to better support the objectives formulated in DORA and to make the evaluation fairer and more balanced.
 - ii. Promoting women in research
The representation of women in research is substantially lower in Switzerland than in many other countries. Across disciplines, women drop out of science more frequently than men do. Within its remit, the SNSF aims to be an even stronger voice for women in research. Its existing measures focus on the postdoctoral level. In the future, the SNSF will also provide grants for female doctoral candidates in the MINT disciplines and the life sciences.
→ Doc.Mobility Fellowships will be discontinued, but Doc.CH will be extended to the MINT disciplines and the life sciences, albeit only for women.
 - iii. Strengthening use-inspired research at the universities of applied sciences (FH)
the SNSF supports the FH's own efforts to develop research capacity and to conduct use-inspired research. For the next funding period, the SNSF intends to specially encourage health and engineering research at the FH through a temporary funding measure.
- b. Strengthen international leadership through collaboration
A new scheme for medium-size research consortia proposed for the next funding-period will fill the gap between the SNSF's funding portfolio for small and large project fundings. The scheme will be open to all disciplines and research institutions. Consortia should comprise at least five research groups and may include a certain number of international research groups.

A second line of development concerns collaboration between academics and societal actors. Stakeholder involvement, i.e. patient-associations, may for example contribute to the definition and prioritization of biomedical research questions.

- c. Enhance the value of science for society/ science communication
 - i. Facilitating research-based innovation
To support the uptake of research results, the SNSF cooperates with Innosuisse in funding projects at the interface between research and science based- innovation through BRIDGE. In the 2021-2024 funding period BRIDGE will be developed and extended to all disciplines.
 - ii. Connecting researchers and potential users of research
The SNSF will promote “implementation networks” that bring together researchers and potential users of research

Further, following challenges in Swiss research are identified and efforts will be continued in improving those situations:

- a. A “publish or perish” culture persists
Today scientists are under great pressure to publish as many results as quickly as possible, sometimes at the expense of their relevance. The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment DORA, which the SNSF signed in 2014, aims to correct wrong incentives and to ensure the fair and transparent evaluation of researchers. The SNSF aims at being a driver for change by redefining quality standards for researchers competing for funds across Switzerland. It strives for a more diverse research culture and a broader understanding of excellence, which rewards all important contributions by researchers to science and beyond.
- b. Continuing uncertainty in the European context
In the Multi-Year Program, the SNSF assumes a full association of Switzerland to Horizon Europe, and the SNSF is actively contributing in close coordination with the SERI to efforts to achieve this goal. It is, however, well aware of the existing risks and remains ready to react in the event of a non-association.
- c. Infrastructure requirements for open science are increasing
Demand for services to collect, store and share data is increasing massively. The SNSF will continue its efforts in the transition to open science, including easy access to research data and publication of research findings for all. It will also seek to intensify its contribution to coordination and quality assurance of data infrastructure.

For more information and questions, Katharina Prautsch can be contacted.

Swiss Conference of Higher Education SHK/CSHE (Hochschulkonferenz und Hochschulrat)

By the actionuni representatives to the SHK/CSHE, Andrea Tamas and Lena Hehemann

The SHK (www.shk.ch) represents the uppermost political organization of higher education in Switzerland. In accordance to the Swiss federal constitution, the federal councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann and the cantonal governing councillors for education and research

develop and determine federal and cantonal mutual decisions on higher education policies. Since the first SHK meeting in 2015, actionuni has one seat in the SHK with advisory vote. Attendance of the SHK offers personal contact with policy-makers and committee organizers.

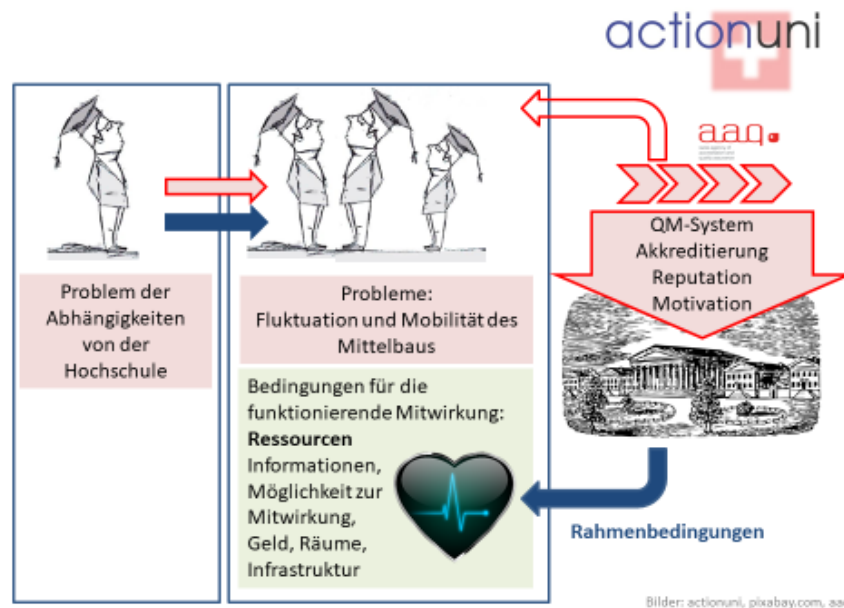
During the reporting period, the SHK has held two meetings (15 November 2018 and 21 February 2019). The main discussion topic at both meetings was the planning of the upcoming development of the 2021-24 federal message on education, research and innovation (ERI). A first draft, prepared by swissuniversities, was discussed in February. One important topic is digitalisation, which is and will be a priority in the coming years. The SNSF has already launched a national research programme on digitalisation and the topic is one of five priority topics for the next ERI message. Also, special programs for the development of careers of young scientists are suggested to be continued in the next ERI message. Further topics are: health professions and medicine, synergies between universities, and the reduction of university drop outs.

Swiss Accreditation Council

By the actionuni representatives to the Accreditation Council (SAC/SAR), Florian Lippke and Carla Duss

Initiated by the new law of the Higher Education Sector (HEdA / HFKG / LEHE), the Swiss Council of Accreditation (SAC) was constituted in order to surveil and guide the measures taken by the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Insurance (AAQ) and started its work in January 2015. For the second period 2019-2022 Carla Duss and Florian Lippke are acting as representatives. Carla Duss was nominated from a shared list with the students' union and is therefore holding a split-mandate. Both are full – hence voting – member. During the reporting period, the SAR had four meetings and one workshop seminar (8 June 2017, 14 September 2017, 06/07. December 2017 and 22 March 2018). Substantial steps in the process of accreditation were initiated, evaluated and decisions were taken by the SAR as the final decisive board. The main tasks and achievements of the SAR can be categorized by four main focal points: Organization of the Accreditation Council (SAC), legacy procedures of quality assurance, accreditation according to HEdA and quality audits mandated by third parties.

Actionuni participated with a roundtable in the discussions of AAQ's Institutional Accreditation Day in November 2018. The event was used to point at the multiple dependencies of non-professorial academic staff on their universities and the necessity of an appropriate framework and funds to ensure an independent functioning of the representation of this core group of employees of institutions of higher education. Due to the input of actionuni representatives at the roundtable and in the discussions, Christoph Grolimund, director of AAQ, concluded in his final statements, that a participation of the non-professorial academic staff in the groups of experts in the institutional accreditation process is a goal that should be pursued.



Bilder: actionuni, pixabay.com, aaa

Swissuniversities-Delegation Lehre

By the actionuni representative, Antoine Chollet

Actionuni (as well as VSS) is only an observer in this delegation of Swissuniversities. One position for the Mittelbau was assigned only last year.

The most important achievement for this year in the swissuniversities delegation was to have the possibility to nominate a deputy-delegate for the non-voting delegates (i.e. Actionuni and VSS).

This year the 20th anniversary of the Bologna Declaration (Swissuniversities organized a roundtable on the topic in Bern) was the main topic of discussion, "Kompetenzorientierung in der Lehre", "Weiterbildung", and digital skills in learning, to name the most salient topics. These discussions were not supposed to be implemented, and no executive decisions were taken, the delegation being basically a discussion group. Our presence in this delegation can still be useful, for example to get some data and hints about future decisions.

Eurodoc

By actionuni representatives to Eurodoc, Salome Adam, Carmen Faso, Rashmi Rai-Wat and Aliaksei Andrushevish

This past year, Eurodoc's activities have mainly focused on the topics of Open Science and Copyright law, with minor emphasis on pension schemes for early career researchers (ECRs) and ECR mental health.

In the [Eurodoc open letter to EU Parliament on the Copyright Directive](#), Eurodoc expressed major concerns on the issue of text-and-data mining of copyrighted works and the extensive rights given to publishers for restricting online access to press content.

A major topic of involvement for Eurodoc this year was the implementation of [Plan S](#). Plan S is an initiative for open-access science publishing that was launched by Science Europe on 4 September 2018. It is an initiative of "cOAlition S", a consortium launched by the European Research Council and major national research agencies and funders from twelve European countries (Switzerland is NOT included). The plan requires scientists and researchers who benefit from state-funded research organisations and institutions to publish their work in open repositories or in journals that are available to all by 2020. Eurodoc co-wrote and signed a [joint statement in support of Plan S](#) on the 24th of September 2018.

Further activities include the report published by the Eurodoc Doctoral Training workgroup on [transferable skills and competences for ECRs](#) and the first [Eurodoc conference on Citizen Science](#).

Salome Adam (co-president) was coordinator of the Eurodoc working group accreditation. She organised top skype sessions and a workshop on "*Quality in doctoral training & accreditation*" which was held in Warsaw on the 16th of November 2018 in collaboration with Eva Hnatkova, former vice-president and now newly-elected Eurodoc president.

Carmen Faso answered Eurodocs' annual questionnaire on details of actionuni and its aims. Unfortunately, in accordance with the provisions of the EU General Data Protection Regulations (which replaces the previous Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC), Eurodoc members have the right to access their own data but results of the Annual Questionnaire cannot be shared externally.

The Eurodoc conference 2019, which was organized in collaboration with Focus Research, took place in Brussels on the 1st and 2nd of April 2019. The conference's title was "Employability of PhDs: Valorise Your Skills and Reach Your Full Potential!" Most early-career researchers (ECRs) must continue their professional career outside of academia and therefore, governments and universities continue to invest in the development of high-quality doctoral training and career development services. This year's conference has focused on career development of young researchers and the role they can/should play in innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship within the wider society.

Main topics this year were sustainable innovation, intersectoral mobility as career booster, open access, collaboration with industry and other non-academic partners as well as research community building topics. Amongst the highly qualified PhD speakers were also representatives from industry and European education institutions. The audience gave new insights and many opportunities to discuss these topics covered from different perspectives and led to promising approaches for innovative solutions. Opportunities for networking ensure ongoing discussion and activities related to the topics discussed. It also made Eurodoc, its National Associations and all their efforts more visible. actionuni was represented by Aliaksei Andrushevich and Rashmi Rai-Rawat.

As for the topic of equality, a new aspect was raised with the focus on safe environments. It was stated that female young researchers are often facing unsafe working environment. Within the topic of valorising a PhD for industry and society, many concerns were raised about the current situation in the doctoral education. Mainly discussed topics were the value and

competences of PhD study for individuals and society. An interesting experience of new and flexible learning paths can be seen in academic entrepreneurship and intersectoral mobility. Finally, increasing popularity of entrepreneurship and start-up ideas among PhD candidates and ECI have been discussed on the example of EIT industrial doctorate approach and student-entrepreneurship @ KU Leuven. The frustration about academic future could be transformed into market opportunity for sustainable innovation where ECI should look for career alternatives in possibly starting their own initiatives, companies and NGOs.

All the event pictures are stored at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kWvOjY3rfJPHfEGsgKEm988vCOBcKEc?usp=sharing>

The [Eurodoc Annual General Meeting started](#) (Day 1) with the discussion of last year's board's and administration's activities. We can definitely agree with the statement made by Eva Hnatkova (president of Eurodoc 2019 – 2020) to summarize all these activities: "In the last years, Eurodoc has increased its visibility as well as collaboration and engagement with the partners and key stakeholders" (cited).

The day continued with the presentation of the Eurodoc annual activities and financial report, discussions on the financial statement, which were concluded by a voting process. We finished this first day with several workshops on equality, media activities and how to coordinate a working group.

On the second day we started with a strategic discussion on Eurodoc's annual goals. These goals included improving the financial situation, visibility and internal structures. In addition, the new priority topics were defined, which are: Open Science, Mental Health, Research Integrity, Democracy and Sustainability in Research, and Pensions for Early-Career Researchers.

After voting on these annual goals, the board and administration were elected. Regarding the annual goals for the new administration, Eva said: "This year we are going to raise awareness and develop policies and outputs on crucial topics for early career researchers, such as career planning and development; doctoral training; equality, democracy and sustainability; mental health in academia; Open Science and research integrity" (cited).

"Eurodoc will continue with all activities started by the previous administrative board to increase our visibility and create a trustworthy and professional image of Eurodoc to be and remain a relevant stakeholder and partner. Within the organization we are going to develop a transparent internal management, including the transfer of knowledge", Eva added. (cited). Actionuni is welcome to be represented in the upcoming term (2019-2020) as well. The position of coordinator of the Eurodoc working group on finances is still open.

We would like to thank the whole Eurodoc board and administration for all their contributions and we wish the best to all new and re-elected board and secretariat members for next year.