

Welcome Address

Prof. Dr. Heidi Wunderli-Allenspach

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to welcome you today at the ETH Zurich for the 26th Conference of Rectors and Presidents of European Universities of Technology.

Obviously Konrad Osterwalder should be standing here as acting Rector and interim President of ETH. However, he had to join an unforeseen political meeting with our minister of education and members of the parliament in Berne. He will hopefully arrive here within the next half hour.

In this situation he asked me whether I would be available for the address of welcome to this gathering that is near to his heart. I am delighted and honored to take care of it.

My name is Heidi Wunderli-Allenspach. I was nominated by a majority of my colleagues in June and have been elected yesterday as the new Rector of ETH starting September 1st, 2007.

It is the privilege of ETH to host this years meeting of the "Horvat-Club". And it is a great opportunity for me to get to know my colleagues at this early moment. From what I heard ETH has a longstanding dedicated commitment to this special group of leaders of European universities. And what I also learned very soon: The informal meetings that seem to be famous for minimal administrative load and optimal exchange of relevant information are strongly related to the name of Manfred Horvat. Also this year he was the driving force behind this organization. Many thanks for bringing people again together with a great program for today and tomorrow!

The close co-operation between the leading Technical Universities in Europe is of utmost importance. The topic of this year's meeting "University-industry co-operation" is a current issue. As we know the big problems today only get a chance of being solved if experts

collaborate within Europe or even world-wide. The Horvat-Club provides an important tool to establish the necessary networks.

You visit ETH in a special moment. We are happy to announce that the leadership problems that dominated the discussions last year could be solved within a reasonable amount of time and – most important – without jeopardizing the dynamics and performance of our university. This was only possible due to a motivated professorate that took responsibility in a critical moment.

A new president has been elected some weeks ago. It is Ralph Eichler, an eminent physicist with ample management experience and, as a professor of ETH, a good knowledge of our culture. I am looking forward to collaborate with him.

The major remaining problems are not within ETH but have to be solved at a higher level of politics. At ETH we are glad to go back to the core business: excellent research and teaching, and we count on politics to back us.

With this I would like to close and hand over to Elmar Ledergerber, Mayor of Zurich. Please.