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Empa and Credit Suisse launch the 2nd Swiss NanoConvention on 28th/29th June 2007 in Bern

The Nano-Dialog continues...

«I very much hope that the NanoConvention becomes an annual event,» commented Peter Gehr of the University of Bern after the first NanoConvention in June 2006. His wish was Empa's command, as the saying goes. On 28th and 29th June 2007 all those with an interest in nano-topics are invited to the «Swiss NanoConvention 2007», to be held in the Kursaal Bern. According to Empa-CEO, Louis Schlapbach, the event is intended to strengthen and encourage the nano-dialog in Switzerland above and beyond the constraints of disciplinary borders. In addition, it should not only act as a platform for fascinating lectures and interesting discussions but also serve as a "contact exchange and science market place".

Whether it is window panes that never get dirty, ultra-flat screens that display razor-sharp images or «nano-spheres» that someday will be able to deliver medicines to a particular, targeted organ – nanotechnology has many faces, which is one of the reasons it is considered a key technology of the 21st century. Optimistic proponents even compare it, given its breadth of possible applications, with technological phenomena such as electricity, the computer or information technology. So what effects can we expect nanotechnology to exert on science, the economy, health, the environment and our society in general? «That's exactly what we want to talk about during the NanoConvention,» says Schlapbach. «And in order to look a bit further ahead we have tried to bring together all the movers and shakers from research, industry, the insurance and finance sectors, from politics and administration and from the social sciences. I think we have been successful in doing so, at least as far as the list of invited speakers is concerned.»

A program studded with heavyweights: a Federal Councilor, international nano-tech gurus, star philosophers ...

The three topics «Fascination», «Innovation» and «Safety» form the cornerstones of this year's NanoConvention. The latest results from the nanosciences as well as the newest nanotechnology applications and their practical implementations will be considered in depth during various «Topical Sessions». The risks and benefits will be discussed and bolder spirits will dare to offer predictions of what the future might bring. The many-faceted interplay between technology – in this case nanotechnology – and society will be examined and elucidated from various points of view.

This year the conference will be inaugurated by Swiss Federal Councilor Pascal Couchepin, who in his capacity as head of the Interior Ministry is responsible for research and education at the national level. A

further highlight is the participation of the US-chemist George Whitesides from Harvard University. He is one of the most important personalities in nanotechnology, according to Hans-Joachim Guentherodt, President of the Swiss NanoConvention Advisory Board and former head of the «Nanoscale Science» National Competence Center at Basel University. «It is due to his interest in micro- and nanotechnology that a great deal of progress has been achieved in the development of functional materials and in the life sciences,» says Guentherodt.

The famous writer and thinker Peter Sloterdijk will discuss the relationship between humankind and technology as seen through the eyes of a philosopher. He is well known for setting controversial contemporary questions in a historical context, as well as for his “zeitdiagnostischen” reflections – diagnoses of present moments – where he gets to the very nub of questions concerning technical and technological issues in society. Other prominent speakers are the American toxicologist David Warheit of the DuPont Haskell Lab and Werner Bauer, the head of research at Nestlé.

In addition part of the conference program is dedicated to the aspect «Nano and Finance». For Arthur Vayloyan, member of Credit Suisse’s Private Banking Management Committee, the event is yet another milestone in the financial institution’s efforts to illuminate nanotechnology and its market potential from different points of view. « To be able to offer our clients appropriate investment opportunities while at the same time being fully aware of the risks involved, Credit Suisse, as a global financial services company, aims to recognize at an early stage innovative and future oriented investment trends.» Credit Suisse is the main sponsor of this year’s Swiss NanoConvention.

Editor:

Manuel Martin, Communications, Tel. +41 44 823 49 09, manuel.martin@empa.ch

Contact address and further information:

Empa
NanoConvention
Ueberlandstrasse 129
CH-8600 Dübendorf

Switzerland
Tel +41 44 823 49 09
Fax +41 44 823 40 31
nanoconvention@empa.ch
www.nanoconvention.ch



Stimulating discussion and networking – as at last year’s NanoConvention – will be the trademark of this year’s event too.



Numerous fascinating and instructive talks followed by animated discussions will ensure that the NanoConvention achieves its aim of being the Swiss «contact exchange and science market place» in nanotechnology.



This year, too, renowned international personalities from various backgrounds – from research via industry all the way to philosophy – will give talks at the NanoConvention. Seen in the photograph are the key speakers of last year’s event: Harald Krug, Don Eigler, Louis Schlapbach and Ortwin Renn.