

10 YEARS OF SUPPORTING CANCER RESEARCH

1997


– 2007

IN THE BEGINNING WAS A VISION

After 30 years of a successful and exciting career in the banking world, I came to a momentous decision in 1997: From that point on, I wanted to apply my time and energy to a charitable endeavour that would allow a portion of my personal resources to be employed in a sustainable manner. A stint as a volunteer with the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in London provided me with the decisive idea: I resolved to immediately lend my support to the cause of worldwide cancer research. The motivation that spurred me on at the time and that still forms the basis for my actions today was delineated in the editorial I wrote for the first Annual Review of SWISS BRIDGE, which reads as follows:

“For some time, private wealth has been on the rise while the power of institutions to instigate change has declined. Yet paradoxically, we still expect institutions to be successful in making progress in many different fields, not least in the field of health care. The solution is clearly apparent: If there is to be continued progress in the fight against diseases and towards better health, private individuals will have to step up their contributions. It is easy to see that individuals with superior material resources should bear a higher responsibility. Generosity on the part of those who are better off in support of the necessary medical research efforts will also appease the envy of those who have profited less from economic growth. These considerations have led me to bring together financially independent individuals and private-sector businesses to support the fight against cancer on the basis of our common resources and experiences.”

Today, ten years later, we have achieved success with SWISS BRIDGE, and my service with the foundation is a great source of fulfilment. Yet it is important that we do not rest on our past accomplishments because our work is far from over. To this end, SWISS BRIDGE will continue to build bridges between investors and researchers in the years ahead and remain committed to our one goal: the worldwide fight against cancer.



Thomas Hoepli
Managing Director and Co-Founder of the
SWISS BRIDGE Foundation



HOW SWISS BRIDGE CAME ABOUT

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In order to satisfy the high-level demands of the financial industry with its strict controls, a high priority was placed on transparency when the foundation was being formed. In addition, the foundation was to be set up in a way that would garner broad acceptance in the financial world, which would be crucial for its success. The organisation of the foundation was therefore not only to consist of a Board of Trustees but also was to be complemented by a Scientific Committee, a Board of Patrons and a circle of supporters, all composed of high-profile individuals.

And here is a description of how the various entities of SWISS BRIDGE are set up today:

The Board of Trustees

For the Board of Trustees, it was very important to us that we involve leading representatives from Swiss cancer organisations as well as recognised personalities from the field of banking. Hence, the Board of Trustees is composed of at least two representatives from the Swiss Cancer Research foundation or its umbrella organisation Oncosuisse, a representative of the International Union Against Cancer in Geneva as well as two banking representatives and an attorney. This committee is to be clearly structured, operationally effective and flexible.

Prof. Urs Metzger, Medical Director of Triemli City Hospital in Zurich and in 1997 the chairman of the Swiss Cancer Research, was the first chairman of our foundation. His support along with the dedication of the foundation's secretary at the time, Markus Wieser, helped the foundation get off to a successful start.

Prof. Metzger was followed by Prof. Jean-Marie Haefliger (†) of the Cantonal Hospital of Neuchâtel and then chairman of Swiss Cancer Research. He presided over SWISS BRIDGE from 1998 through the end of 2000.

Prof. Giorgio Nosedà took over the chairmanship of SWISS BRIDGE in 2001 when the foundation Oncosuisse was being formed as an umbrella organisation of the most important Swiss cancer organisations. Prof. Nosedà will be stepping down as chairman of Oncosuisse in 2007 on account of his age, but will remain available to SWISS BRIDGE for the time being in his capacity as chairman.

The Scientific Committee

A leading role in the formation of this important committee was taken by Rolf M. Zinkernagel, professor at University Hospital Zurich. Prof. Zinkernagel provided us with access to internationally active European researchers. Under his leadership, the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD were given out for the first time.

Prof. Paul Kleihues, Director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (an institute of the WHO) in Lyon, took over leadership of the Scientific Committee in 2000 and continued in this capacity through 2002.

Prof. J. Gordon McVie, former director of the largest English cancer institute that was later merged with the Imperial Cancer Research Foundation, is the current head of the Scientific Committee, which he oversees with his considerable knowledge, tremendous dedication and his delightful Scottish humour.

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The Board of Patrons

To furnish the burgeoning foundation with the necessary recognition and appropriate weight, figures from the fields of business, science and politics were invited to join the newly established Board of Patrons. Dr. Egon P. S. Zehnder lent his valuable support from the start by establishing contact between SWISS BRIDGE and numerous key personalities.

From the very beginning, we have been able to count on the cooperation and involvement of two outstanding researchers who were later honoured with the Nobel Prize: Sir Paul Nurse, President of Rockefeller University in New York, and Prof. Rolf M. Zinkernagel of University Hospital Zurich, have been members of the Board of Patrons since the organisation's founding. Prof. Umberto Veronesi, one of the most prominent European oncologists and former Italian minister of health, also immediately agreed to become involved as did Prof. Arnold Koller, then President of the Federal Council. Werner H. Spross (†), widely known and cherished as "the nation's gardener", was likewise on the Board of Patrons from 1999 until his death in the year 2004. Two banking representatives, Dr. Pierre Lardy from Geneva and Dr. Giorgio Ghiringhelli, President of the Ticino Banking Association, rounded out the committee in its initial configuration.

Prof. Urs Metzger, who stepped down from the Board of Trustees in 2004 at his own request, was appointed to the Board of Patrons with thankful acknowledgement of the services rendered as a trustee. Finally in 2004, Peter Eckert, COO of Zurich Financial Services, brought his financial industry expertise to the organisation with his decision to join the Board of Patrons.

The supporters and friends of SWISS BRIDGE

To cover the costs of public relations and administration expenses of the newly formed foundation, we asked friends and colleagues to make contributions. For two reasons, we decided to keep the costs for public relations and administration separate from the general funds for cancer research: First, we became aware of the continually rising costs of the organisations engaged in charity work. Second, we wanted to give the bankers, our agents, a simple answer when it came to the question of "what really makes it into research" posed by potential donors. "Researchers obtain the full amount without any deduction for expenses." The fact that this has been possible for ten years is the result of the loyal network of supporters and friends of the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation.

Special thanks are extended to the Credit Suisse Group, Banca del Gottardo, Coutts Bank von Ernst as well as the Linkgroup, all having made several substantial contributions. In the early days of SWISS BRIDGE, Werner H. Spross (†) offered to bring together a group of friends to make substantial contributions on an annual basis to cover the costs of the foundation. We called this group the "Inner Circle" of supporters and friends of the foundation. People belonging to this circle are: Dr. Thomas W. Bechtler, Hesta AG (Zug), Bruno Bettoni, Allreal Holding AG (Zug), Jean-Pierre Cuoni, EFG International (Zurich), Michael Ringier, Ringier Verlag AG (Zurich), Hermann Strittmatter, GGK (Zurich), and Heinrich Wegmann (Winterthur).

Many thanks to Dr. Jürg Conzett for providing us with offices on Verena-Conzett-Strasse in Zurich.



From left to right:

- 1 Dr. Egon P. S. Zehnder, Prof. Arnold Koller, Prof. Urs Metzger
- 2 Prof. Giorgio Nosedà, Thomas Hoepli, Prof. Umberto Veronesi
- 3 Prof. Giorgio Nosedà, Prof. J. Gordon McVie
- 4 Supporters and friends of SWISS BRIDGE: Hermann Strittmatter, Werner Spross (†), Prof. Urs Metzger and Bruno Bettoni

The SWISS BRIDGE Golf Trophy for supporters and friends of the foundation

Starting in the first year of existence of SWISS BRIDGE, we invited friends, supporters and those who wanted to become one to a round of golf on an autumn day to benefit the foundation. Each player's contribution of 1,000 francs at the same constituted an important contribution toward the costs of the foundation. In the years since, some 70 golfers have gathered for this annual social sporting event that has become a tradition. Over the course of the decade, we have been able to enjoy the hospitality of some of the most beautiful golf clubs around Zurich: Bad Ragaz, Goldenberg, Hittnau, Niederbüren, Rheinblick, Schönenberg, Sempachersee and Wylihof.

For the current anniversary year, the SWISS BRIDGE Golf Trophy will again be taking place at the Hittnau Golf and Country Club: Following the previous gathering there in 2002, this year's event on 21 September 2007 will be returning to the renowned club, which, let it be noted, favoured us with the proceeds from a special memorial event held at the club in 2005.

Golfers who would like to support the foundation with a contribution are cordially invited to register for the event.

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5–7 Supporters and friends of the foundation at the SWISS BRIDGE Golf Trophy event



Dr. Egon P.S. Zehnder



Prof. Urs Metzger

INTERVIEW WITH TWO INDIVIDUALS FROM THE EARLY DAYS

Ten years ago, you met Thomas Hoepli for the first time: What were your initial thoughts?

Dr. Egon P.S. Zehnder: Sitting opposite me was a man with a tremendous aura, full of energy and with an inner fire whom I immediately believed capable of achieving something big. His idea of a fundraising platform to benefit worldwide cancer research made a lot of sense. Yet what I found was even more convincing were Thomas Hoepli's enthusiasm and his visionary plans.

Prof. Urs Metzger: As chairman of Swiss Cancer Research at the time, I was already aware that bankers handle and administer large amounts of money. But it came as quite a positive surprise that one of these bankers would lead us to extensive funds for the fight against cancer. As I came to know Thomas Hoepli, I saw him as a man who was up to the task, which is why I offered him the full support of Swiss Cancer Research.

What were your hopes at the time?

Prof. Urs Metzger: My hope was that bankers and their private clients from all over the world would increasingly support cancer research and that Thomas Hoepli would succeed in getting his professional colleagues to act as agents on behalf of the cause. Hence, it seemed logical to me that he wouldn't just be targeting Swiss research alone as the sole potential beneficiary but that he instead wanted to facilitate the support of research worldwide.

Dr. Egon P.S. Zehnder: My wish was that Thomas Hoepli would lead the foundation for at least five years. I hoped that he would succeed in his ambitious plan to cover the costs of public relations and administration of the foundation through his circle of friends and supporters. It was my pleasure to provide the foundation with my own personal network to recruit private individuals and companies for the fulfilment of these goals.

Have your hopes been fulfilled to date?

Dr. Egon P.S. Zehnder: Thomas Hoepli has already carried the sceptre of the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation twice as long as I'd hoped back at the beginning. I'm thrilled when I see what he has achieved with this organisation built up from nothing. I'm pleased to be associated with this innovative foundation.

Prof. Urs Metzger: What better could happen to us than to have a man come to us offering a fundraising concept and at the same time putting himself forward to head it? The many millions of Swiss francs that have been generated with the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation and invested in important cancer research projects worldwide have exceeded my initial hopes many times over. I am proud to have been the first chairman of this foundation and to continue to be associated with the foundation as a member of the Board of Patrons.

The first years

The first three years of existence of SWISS BRIDGE were primarily focused on generating awareness of the foundation among banks, asset managers and attorneys. The ambitious goal of covering costs within the circle of supporters and friends required particular effort. First, contact was made with the target audience in German-speaking Switzerland. When the time came to launch the foundation in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino, the CEO of a major bank in the region warned us not to come knocking again without having the annual report in Italian. Hence, our Annual Review has been published in four languages starting in 1999.

The SWISS BRIDGE approach

The idea of the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation is based on the agency principle. We present our idea to asset managers and advisors of wealthy individuals and institutions in the hope that they will convey our request to their clients. Here are two examples:

In spring 2000, we held a presentation for bankers in Geneva. Three years later, an asset manager came to us asking whether SWISS BRIDGE would be able to support extensive cancer research projects in Brazil. Following intensive discussions and clarifications, an agreement was reached with potential donors and the national cancer institute in Rio de Janeiro providing for the support of four important areas of research including a national DNA bank with five yearly contributions of over 1 million Swiss francs each. Now three years into the projects, the European experts have attested to the exemplary management and outstanding results the local researchers have achieved.

In 2004, we were contacted by an attorney in Basle to enquire regarding support of cancer research projects in Switzerland. He had heard that the administrative costs of SWISS BRIDGE were very low and that these were covered by friends and supporters of the foundation. From this bequest of over 1 million Swiss francs, we have been able to finance important projects over the last years that were submitted for the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD and recognised with a prize.

The 2000 charity auction in Zurich

On 23 May 2000, we held a charity auction in Zurich that raised our visibility as an organisation while making a sizeable contribution to the cause of cancer research. With the help of Phillips International auction house as it was still called back then, Coutts Bank (Switzerland) AG, Zurich, and the tireless dedication of the auctioneer Stefan Puttaert, we were able to auction off paintings, sculptures, porcelain objects, an Isfahan carpet, hotel vouchers, jewellery and air tickets. The proceeds from the auction were transferred to the Research Fund of the Cancer League of the Canton of Zurich, the Swiss Cancer Research foundation as well as the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation.



THE SWISS BRIDGE AWARD

In autumn 1999, the Board of Trustees was shown a concept for the annual awarding of a prize for cancer research in the form of project contributions directed to researchers. It took some courage to present the financiers with a guarantee concept according to which, in a worst case scenario, they would need to cover a large percentage of the 500,000 Swiss francs in prize monies themselves. But the plan worked out: SWISS BRIDGE received sufficient donations and the guarantors did not have to put in any of their own funds. In the following years, they were again willing to give a guarantee backed by their own resources. In the meantime, the flow of donations became sufficient enough following the initial three-year start-up period and the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD can now be run without the need for these guarantees.

The winners of the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD 2000 to 2006

In the first six years, prize monies totalling 4 million Swiss francs were distributed.

- 2000 Dr. Maria Blasco,
Spanish National Cancer Centre (CNIO), Madrid
Dr. Edgar Goldgar,
International Agency for Research on Cancer,
Lyon
- 2001 Dr. Silvia Franceschi,
International Agency for Research on Cancer,
Lyon
Dr. Pier Paolo Fiore,
Istituto Europeo di Oncologia, Milan
- 2002 Dr. Giulio Spagnoli,
University of Basle
Dr. Francesco Bertoni,
Istituto Oncologico della Svizzera Italiana,
Bellinzona

- 2003 Dr. Gerhard Christofori,
University of Basle
Dr. Josef Jiricny,
University of Zurich
- 2004 Prof. Anne-Lise Borresen-Dale,
Institute for Cancer Research, DNR, Oslo
Dr. Rune Toftgard,
Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm
Dr. Brian Hemmings,
Friedrich Miescher Institut, Basle
Dr. Reto Obrist,
Foundation biobank-suisse, Berne
- 2005 Prof. Stefano Piccolo,
University of Padua, Italy
Dr. Oscar Fernandez-Capetillo,
Spanish National Cancer Centre (CNIO), Madrid
- 2006 Prof. Matthias Egger,
University of Berne
Dr. Manuel Esteller,
Spanish National Cancer Centre (CNIO), Madrid
Dr. Zdenko Herceg,
International Agency for Research on Cancer,
Nyon

1 million francs for the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD 2007

For the current anniversary year, it is our goal to offer double the prize money for what is probably the largest and most cherished cancer research prize in Europe. We plan to award half of it in Switzerland and the other half to three or four international research teams. The large prize amount is being enabled through contributions from a number of other foundations. The Stambach foundation in Basle has helped underwrite such research contributions for years now. We invite other institutions and donors to contribute to the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD.



From left to right:

- 8 Guilherme Kurtz, Project Coordinator, Rio de Janeiro
- 9 Hector Seuanez, Principal Investigator, Rio de Janeiro
- 10 Charity auction catalogue 2000
- 11 Prof. Gordon McVie, 2003 award winner,
Dr. Gerhard Christofori, Prof. Giorgio Nosedà,
Thomas Hoepli

This saves these donors from having to conduct a time-consuming evaluation process and thus ensures that their funds reach promising projects without having to go through the administrative effort. Needless to say, the progress of these projects will be monitored by SWISS BRIDGE.

The presentation of awards

The SWISS BRIDGE AWARD is given out each year as part of a gala celebration or other major event. In 2002, we put on a true multimedia show with the award ceremony taking place simultaneously in Zurich and Lugano and being broadcast via video conferencing. In Zurich, the laudatory speech was given by Prof. Zinkernagel and in Lugano by Prof. Cavalli.

The highlight of the award ceremony in the last few years has been the speech by Prof. McVie honouring the winners. His Scottish humour, his expressive way of speaking and his ability to make complicated medical processes easily understood by laypersons are always met with considerable applause.

As an illustration, here is the presentation he gave in 2006:

SEED or SOIL – Genes or Jeans?

The question that first comes to a patient's mind when diagnosed with cancer is "Why me?" "What have I done in my life to deserve cancer?" "What is the cause of my cancer?" "Is it something I have eaten? Is it something I have drunk? Is it that I smoke too much? Did I catch cancer from somebody else? Was it hereditary? Does it run in my family ... is it my parents giving me some bad genes?"

The fundamental question is how much of cancer is genetic? Well all of it, actually! Cancer is a disease of damaged or missing genes. But that doesn't mean that cancer runs in families. Actually the majority of cancers are linked to the "soil" or the environment! In other words an individual's life style, "the soil" is more important than a history of cancer in the family, "the seed".

What have "genes" and "jeans" in common? Apart from these two words sounding the same when spoken, there is a scientific link between malfunction or failure of sperm containing genes in the male and wearing tight clothes in the shape of jeans! There was an observation made many years ago that when a Scottish regiment of soldiers switched from wearing the traditional kilt (skirt to you!) to tartan trews (trousers to you!), they became less fertile.

This prompted a randomised trial of the two forms of dress in the Scottish Army which proved that the observation was correct. The explanation given was that wearing tight trousers, such as "jeans" raised the temperature of the scrotum (the sac which houses the testicles, which in turn contain the sperm and their "genes") from the usual 36 degrees Celsius to body temperature (37 degrees Celsius). The sperm didn't function so well, and neither did the "genes".



There are some cancers caused by genetic damage, passed on from parent to child. For instance BRCA1 and BRCA2 are genes which, if damaged in the mother's egg after fertilization by the father's sperm, can go on to cause breast and other cancers in the daughter.

However, despite the headlines in newspapers dedicated to a breast cancer and gene therapy and wonder cures, these genes cause only five to six percent of breast cancers. So, what about the other 95 percent? There will certainly be other genes involved in the predisposition to breast cancer, but they probably remain irrelevant – unless triggered by a lifestyle component. This could be early onset of menstruation, a high-fat diet, obesity or failure to have children. None of these so-called lifestyle factors contributes individually to more than a few percent increased risk of breast cancer but a cluster of them could be seriously threatening, given a predisposing genetic background. It is also possible to inherit genes which protect you against breast cancer and only this month CASP8 was revealed in an article following 20,000 women in Europe to endow a lowering of risk by about ten percent. Nature Genetics: <http://www.nature.com/naturegenetics>

A similar tale can be told for lung cancer, we know that smoking causes lung cancer but why don't all smokers get lung cancer? It would appear that you're born with genes that can predispose you to getting lung cancer should you take up smoking. You might also be lucky enough to inherit genes which are responsible for neutralising the effects of cigarette smoke, thus protecting you from getting lung cancer even if you smoke 60 fags each day.

Finally, the most obvious genetic link to predisposition of cancer given a particular lifestyle is the nastiest form of skin cancer – melanoma. If you're genetically brown- or black-skinned, you are highly unlikely to get melanoma

even if you lie in the sun for days on end. If however, like me, you come from the North of Europe: pale-skinned, tall, light-haired, blue-eyed and covered in freckles, then slight exposure to sunshine or even a sun bed could dramatically increase the risk of skin cancer.

So the answer to seed or soil – is a little bit of both! Cancer cells have damaged genes so it can be called a genetic disease. Very few people inherit cancer-causing genes but most people inherit genes which predispose them or protect them from different cancers. Those who have the predisposing genes should be careful about their lifestyle. Those born with protective genes, for instance for lung cancer, should not think they can safely smoke because those genes will not stop the damaging effect on the heart and you may die of a heart attack.

Prof. J. Gordon McVie

From left to right:

- 12 2006 SWISS BRIDGE AWARD winners, Prof. Matthias Egger, Prof. J. Gordon McVie, Prof. Giorgio Nosedà
- 13 Music being performed at the 2006 awards ceremony, guild house "Zur Meise"
- 14 SWISS BRIDGE AWARD 2006 certificate
- 15 Prof. J. Gordon McVie





Prof. Anne-Lise Borresen-Dale



Prof. Stefano Piccolo



Prof. Matthias Egger

INTERVIEW WITH THREE WINNERS OF THE SWISS BRIDGE AWARD

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In 2004, you received the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD for the project “Identification of Genotypes Influencing the Global Tumour Expression Profile Leading to Elevated Breast Cancer Risk, Tumour Aggressiveness and Therapy Resistance”. What was your first reaction?

Prof. Anne-Lise Borresen-Dale, Oslo: I was honoured and very happy, both for me, my research group and the colleagues involved in this project. With this generous funding we could continue with full strength our project on identifying genes important for breast cancer risk and breast cancer treatment. I am impressed by the mission of SWISS BRIDGE, its organisation and size.

In 2005 you received the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD for the project “Control of TGF-beta Signaling by Smad4 Ubiquitination in Cancer.” Did you know the background of this foundation then?

Prof. Stefano Piccolo, Padua: I was aware that the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation supported cancer research proposed by young European scientists through the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD 2005. However, I did not know until I went to Zurich about other projects the foundation is supporting, such as the Brazil project, and that the foundation is a private initiative.

In 2006 you received the SWISS BRIDGE AWARD for the project “HIV-related Lymphomas in the Era of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy”. Were you surprised?

Prof. Matthias Egger, Berne: I was absolutely delighted when the good news arrived, and I think there is always an element of good luck involved, particularly in the case of this highly prestigious and competitive award. I had asked a large number of people to participate in the project and to provide data on their patients, and I was very relieved that bothering everyone during their summer holiday had been worthwhile in the end!

How important was this project contribution to you and what do you expect to achieve with the funds received?

Prof. Matthias Egger: It was crucial. The funding provided through SWISS BRIDGE will help us establish the collaborative network and assemble a unique, very large database of HIV-infected patients who developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma or Hodgkin disease – increasingly common diagnoses among people with HIV. We hope to contribute to a better understanding of the incidence of NHL and HD in these patients, the risk factor associated with developing these conditions, and the factor determining outcome.

Prof. Anne-Lise Borresen-Dale: First, to receive such recognition is an incitement to the whole research group to continue to work hard to reach our goals of identification of genes and genotypes that can be used in clinical management of breast cancer patients. Second, this funding gave us the opportunity to utilise some of the more advanced technologies and thus place our research in the frontline. One highly profiled paper has been published and several others are in line thanks to the support of SWISS BRIDGE.

Prof. Stefano Piccolo: I consider the award a major achievement of my career. It has been crucial to pursue original avenues of investigation, giving us the freedom to investigate “riskier-than-usual” research directions. Obviously, we are now pleased that this turned out productive. We expect to translate our studies from a purely mechanistic perspective to one closer to the cancer patients.

SWISS BRIDGE IN THE MEDIA



«Swiss Bridge» kämpft gegen den Krebs

NEUE STIFTUNG / Die die Kassen für die aufwendige Forschung gegen den Krebs zu finanzieren, geht «Swiss Bridge» jetzt über.

BASEL. Hansjakob Müller, Professor am Universitäts-Krebslabor Basel, interessiert zu dem 50-jährigen Schweizer Finanzier Thomas Hoeppli, der die Stiftung Swiss Bridge gegründet hat. Die Stiftung Swiss Bridge ist eine gemeinnützige Stiftung zur Förderung von Krebsforschung und Krebsvorsorgeprojekten weltweit.



Media interest in SWISS BRIDGE has been positive in the past ten years. Numerous newspapers, magazines and television programmes have reported on the foundation.

THE FUTURE OF SWISS BRIDGE

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We are heading into the second decade of SWISS BRIDGE with enthusiasm and conviction and with ambitious goals we aim to pursue with all our energies:

– The conferral of the **SWISS BRIDGE AWARD**, having distributed a total of 4 million Swiss francs through 2006, should continue to be given high priority.

– The **biobank-suisse**, which was formed following lengthy negotiations in December 2005 as the national Biobank of Oncosuisse, the umbrella organisation of Swiss cancer institutions, and the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation, is to continue to be supported and promoted by our foundation. The Foundation biobank-suisse has the goal of providing researchers in Switzerland with high-quality biological data. We are convinced that the Swiss research infrastructures will be further reinforced by this tool. In late 2006, a pilot project was set up to test the efficacy of the structures of the Foundation biobank-suisse. Upon completion of the pilot project, the structures will then be utilised for the actual network of the foundation. To keep administrative effort at a low level, only a few centres are participating in this pilot project. Care was taken to ensure that the participating Biobanks exhibit varying structures (specific tumour banks, large general Biobanks) and represent the different national languages. This ensures that all potential challenges can be recognised and corresponding solutions can be defined for these areas. In this pilot project, the Foundation biobank-suisse is concentrating on breast cancer. This form of cancer was selected because numerous samples are already available, thereby enabling the quick collection of a relevant number of samples. Tissue is being taken up from existing collections along with new tissue samples collected in 2007. A portion of the samples consists of tissues that are stored unfixed and shock-frozen at –80 degrees Celsius or in liquid nitrogen while another part is comprised of formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded tissue. All these samples are identified with the data corresponding to the person from whom they were taken. As soon as a certain number

of samples and the associated person-related data have been collected, a concrete study project will be conducted.

– The **Instituto Nacional de Câncer (INCA) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**, has been supported by SWISS BRIDGE for three years thanks to prestigious donors who have issued annual funding for carrying out important research projects. A four-person research team from Europe visited the institute in autumn 2006 and was able to assess the progress of the projects in a two-day workshop with the researchers of the INCA. The unanimous statement of our researchers that “the projects are being conducted at a high scientific level and represent considerable financial value” gives us the certainty that we have been able to achieve something valuable for the Brazilian population and for international cancer research efforts. In particular, the development of a national tumour and DNA bank has worked exceptionally well. Prof. Gordon McVie, head of the European research group, recommends continuing support for the project beyond the originally planned five years. In order to do so, however, we need additional generous donors.

Outlook

To guide the SWISS BRIDGE Foundation toward new goals in the second decade, we will soon need to bring a new person on board within the organisation. In the next years, we would like to introduce a successor for the position of managing director who will take over the reins starting in 2010. A career in banking is a solid foundation for this function. Even more important, however, is being socially engaged and demonstrating a tireless commitment to the matter at hand. This will allow SWISS BRIDGE to continue to provide the world’s cancer researchers with meaningful support in the years ahead. So that cancer can one day be treated, healed or even prevented in all its manifestations.

ORGANISATION

Members of the Board of Trustees

Prof. Dr. Giorgio Nosedà, Chairman of Oncosuisse, Berne
Albert Keller, banker, Uitikon-Waldegg
Bruno Meili, Managing Director of
Swiss Cancer Research, Berne
Ms. Isabel Mortara, Executive Director, International
Union Against Cancer (UICC), Geneva
Heinz Roth, banker, Uitikon-Waldegg (from 2006)
Dr. Claude Thomann, Attorney-at-Law, Berne

Members of the Board of Patrons

Dr. Egon P.S. Zehnder,
Egon Zehnder International AG, Zurich
Peter Eckert, Chief Operating Officer,
Zurich Financial Services, Zurich
Dr. Giorgio Ghiringhelli, President of the Ticino
Banking Association, Lugano
Prof. Dr. Paul Kleihues, former head of the
Scientific Committee
Prof. Dr. Arnold Koller, former Federal Councillor,
Appenzell
Dr. Pierre Lardy, banker, Geneva
Prof. Dr. Urs Metzger, Medical Director,
Triemli City Hospital, Zurich
Sir Paul Nurse, President of the
Rockefeller University, New York
Prof. Dr. Umberto Veronesi, Scientific Director
of the European Institute of Oncology, Milano
Prof. Dr. R. M. Zinkernagel,
University Hospital Zurich

Head of the Scientific Committee

Prof. Dr. J. Gordon McVie, Scientific Directorate, European
Institute of Oncology, Milan

Management

Thomas Hoepli, Managing Director and Co-Founder, Zurich
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