

Conference Report

Swiss Snow Symposium, Saas Fee, 22.–24. January, 2016

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From the 22nd to the 24th of January 2016, more than 60 young chemists gathered in Saas Fee (Canton Wallis) for the 14th edition of the Swiss Snow Symposium. As with previous years, the event was met with great anticipation with the prospect of interesting talks, good snow and beautiful sunshine.

Following a welcoming aperitif and a delicious dinner, the first of our invited speakers, **Prof. Stephan Willitsch** from the University of Basel, gave a captivating insight into his research on Cold and Controlled Molecules and Ions. Prof. Willitsch presented detailed theory and interesting applications of cold molecular ions from his research illustrating exotic chemical processes that occur close to absolute zero on the temperature scale. His presentation was followed by a fascinating talk given by **Dr. Basile F. E. Curchod**, from the theory department of the Max Planck Institute of Microstructure Physics (Halle, Germany), designed to introduce the non-specialists to the ideas and methods of theoretical and computational photochemistry. It was a challenging topic for many but a thought-provoking subject especially for the more experimental chemists attending. Friday evening concluded with four PhD talks given by Kristina V. Goncharenko (University of Basel), Hristo Varbanov (EPFL), Evgeny Smirnov (EPFL) and Augustin A. S. Tchawou (ETHZ) who presented their excellent research.

Saturday enabled the participants to enjoy the beautiful slopes of Saas-Fee in glorious sunshine. After a fantastic day in the snow, the symposium continued with the next invited speaker,

Dr. Cédric Invernizzi from the Spiez Laboratory. The talk allowed the participants to truly understand the extent of the dual use problem and the subsequent power of misrepresentation of research in the media. The talk was immediately followed by a poster session which gave the participants the opportunity to present and share their work in a more informal setting. After an enjoyable dinner, **Dr. James W. Walton** took to the stage as our after-dinner speaker. He captured the imagination of the crowd with both witty comparisons of Northern England and Switzerland as well as diverse applications of his novel ruthenium complexes. The final session of PhD talks took place after a short break with Andrea Pannwitz (University of Basel), Mathieu Marmier (EPFL) and Nicolas Luisier (EPFL) presenting their outstanding research. The 14th edition of the Swiss Snow Symposium concluded with the annual prize giving in which awards were presented to the best Ph.D. talk, Andrea Pannwitz (University of Basel), the best poster, Mickael Montandon-Clerc (EPFL) and the runner-up poster, Giacomo Cecot (EPFL).

The SYCA would like to thank the four invited speakers: **Prof. Stephan Willitsch**, **Dr. Basile F. E. Curchod**, **Dr. Cédric Invernizzi** and **Dr. James W. Walton** for their outstanding talks and our generous sponsors, without whose kind contributions the symposium could not take place.

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