

## Press Release

Donation from the Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation

# New ETH chair of Physical Activity and Health

Zurich, 9 December 2014

ETH Zurich and the Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation are set to expand their research and teaching collaboration. ETH Zurich will establish a new chair to study how physical activity affects human physiology and long-term well-being. The Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation is supporting the creation of the Chair of Physical Activity and Health with 10 million Swiss francs over a 10-year period.

Physicians agree: People who exercise stay healthier for longer. Regular sport protects against cardio-vascular diseases and diabetes and reduces the risk of certain types of cancer. Physical activity can also have a positive effect on cancer treatment and improves the effectiveness of antidepressants. Exercise is one of the factors that has the greatest influence on our health, and yet little is known about the mechanisms behind it. To improve research in this field, ETH Zurich is establishing a new Chair of Physical Activity and Health. The ETH Zurich Foundation will receive funding from the Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation, which is providing 10 million Swiss francs over 10 years to establish the new ETH chair.

Schulthess Clinic, which is supported by Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation, and the Department of Health Sciences and Technology (D-HEST) at ETH Zurich already collaborate extensively on developments in medical technology and biomechanics. The chairs of Orthopaedic Technology and Cartilage Engineering both have ties with Schulthess Clinic. The new chair will also cooperate closely with Schulthess Clinic on teaching and research, such as by conducting clinical studies. It will focus on issues that are directly relevant to humans and therefore benefit healthy people as well as patients. To this end, the new chair will establish links with existing translational research at ETH Zurich to adapt findings from molecular studies and animal models for human medicine.

### **Strengthening the exchange of knowledge**

"By expanding research on exercise, we are establishing yet another important cornerstone in health research at ETH Zurich and strengthening the exchange of knowledge with important clinical partners", says ETH President Ralph Eichler. Thanks to Schulthess and other partners, ETH Zurich has been able to establish and expand research and teaching in the health sciences field in recent years.

ETH Zurich's D-HEST and Schulthess Clinic have set out the general conditions of their collaboration in a memorandum of understanding. For example, D-HEST Master's students will have the opportunity to conduct research at the clinic, while specialists and researchers from the clinic will contribute their expertise to the department's teaching, thereby expanding the course offering. Clinic staff may also apply for authorisation to teach as senior lecturers.

"Signing the memorandum of understanding is the result of our institutions' successful five-year collaboration in research and science", says Franz von Meyenburg, president of the Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation. The partnership to establish the Chair of Physical Activity and Health aligns perfectly with the foundation's objectives, he added, and benefits all parties.

### **Strengthening the existing network**

A strong network is already in place, with more than 50 professors in the field of medical technology and health and the increased networking between ETH Zurich, the University of Zurich and the university hospitals as part of the Hochschulmedizin Zürich (University Medicine Zurich) partnership. The new chair will serve to further strengthen this network. Schulthess Clinic will also provide the new professor with access to the clinic's research group and to research institutions of international sports associations.

With this close collaboration, the partners are aiming to interweave basic research and application more effectively. The findings on the effect of sport on human physiology could one day help tailor exercise therapies to individual patients as a means of alleviating complaints as well as preventing disease. The new chair will be able to establish links with the strong basic research in this field, which already has strong support through bodies such as the Chair of Neural Control of Movement at the Institute of Human Movement Sciences and Sport at ETH Zurich. The Chair of Physical Activity and Health should be filled at the end of 2015.

[www.schulthess-clinic.ch](http://www.schulthess-clinic.ch) →

[www.ethz.ch/en](http://www.ethz.ch/en) →

[www.ethz-foundation.ch/en](http://www.ethz-foundation.ch/en) →

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## Schulthess Clinic

*Schulthess Clinic in Zurich is one of the leading orthopaedic clinics in Europe with over 850 employees. Its primary objective is to relieve people from pain and restore their mobility. As a specialised clinic, it focuses on orthopaedic surgery, neurology, rheumatology and sports medicine. The clinic is home to the Swiss Olympic Medical Centre and the FIFA Medical Centre of Excellence. It has been run by the non-profit Wilhelm Schulthess Foundation since 1935.*

## ETH Zurich

*ETH Zurich is one of the world's leading international universities for technology and the natural sciences. It is well known for its excellent education, ground-breaking fundamental research and for implementing its results directly into practice. Founded in 1855, ETH Zurich today has more than 18,000 students from over 110 countries, including 3,900 doctoral students. It offers researchers an inspiring working environment and students a comprehensive education. Twenty-one Nobel Laureates have studied, taught or conducted research at ETH Zurich, underlining the excellent reputation of the university.*

## ETH Zurich Foundation

*The ETH Zurich Foundation is an independent, private and non-profit foundation with the mission of promoting teaching and research at ETH Zurich. Through its activities, the ETH Zurich Foundation supports ETH Zurich in maintaining and developing its leading position among the world's top universities. Federal funding is supplemented by private financing*