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The Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation sponsors a new professorship at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute with 14 million Swiss francs

With an amount totalling 14 million Swiss francs, the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation is sponsoring a new professorship in 'Epidemiology and Household Economics'. The professorship at the University of Basel will be based at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH). A new research programme on 'Health economics and human behaviour' at the life science location Basel will be launched together with the professorship.

Healthcare systems are complex. Medical, economic, socio-cultural or political factors amongst others influence the health of human beings and societies. Given the increase in economic pressures, the question of whether countries should bring their leverage to bear with a view to improving the health of populations in an efficient manner is acquiring greater urgency.

The 14 million Swiss francs generously donated by the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation spread over 10 years is set aside for comparative studies in this subject area within the context of the programme 'Health economics and human behaviour'. The new professor in 'Epidemiology and Household Economics' will combine epidemiology in an interdisciplinary approach with economics and social sciences. In so doing, new quantitative models and concepts will be developed with the aim of reinforcing healthcare systems. The focus will be both on weaker healthcare systems in the south and on highly developed healthcare systems in countries such as Switzerland. Thanks to new scientifically validated concepts and models, the programme will provide a sustained impulse to the strengthening of healthcare systems worldwide.

This is the second time that the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation has sponsored a professorship at the University of Basel following its sponsorship of a 'Research Professor in Paediatric Pharmacology at the University Children's Hospital. This makes it one of the largest sponsors of the university centre Basel. 'Strengthening the university centre Basel with a unique professorship is something that is fully in line with the foundation's philosophy', says the chair of the foundation board Gabriel Eckenstein. 'The entire foundation board was enthusiastic about the idea of this professorship'. The foundation is especially interested in global healthcare problems in low-income regions around the world. It will support the Swiss TPH and the University of Basel over a period of 10 years in order to attain a certain degree of sustainability.

Thanks of the University of Basel and the Basel-Stadt government

'Thanks to the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation the University of Basel can now invest in a field of life sciences that is of central importance for the future', says Prof Andrea Schenker-Wicki, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Basel. 'The fact that the donors are consciously supporting the interdisciplinary approach of the research shows that our full-fledged university in Basel offers the right conditions for tackling the major challenges facing society', says the Vice-Chancellor.

In the opinion of the Basel Executive Council member and Director of Education Christoph Eymann, the professorship sponsored by the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation perfectly rounds off the programme offered by the Swiss TPH. Following the initial phase the joint sponsorship, which will now be submitted to both governments, will lay the bases for the long-term integration

of the professorship into the Swiss TPH. 'On behalf of the Executive Council I warmly thank the foundation for this donation, generous and carefully coordinated with the Swiss TPH', says Executive Council member Christoph Eymann.

'This endowed professorship will give us the opportunity at Swiss TPH and at the University of Basel of developing an area of research and implementation that is both innovative and promising for the future', says Prof Marcel Tanner. As a former director of the Swiss TPH he was able to launch this initiative together with the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation. 'We are immensely grateful to the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation for their generous donation, which is aimed at strengthening healthcare systems.'

The Eckenstein-Geigy professorship will be awarded through a regular appointment procedure at the Faculty of Philosophy and Natural Sciences at the University of Basel with an international call for candidates. The post is due to be filled in the first half of 2016.

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About the Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation

The Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation was initiated by Matthias and Jeannine Eckenstein-Geigy and launched by Matthias and his children Corinne, Dominik and Gabriel in 2007. The foundation promotes the region of Basel by supporting research, culture and education. The sustainability of projects with the focus on future generations is essential. The foundation also invests in companies and institutions committed to furthering the foundation's interests.

About Swiss TPH

The Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) is the largest institute in Switzerland engaged in the area of public and global health. Through research, teaching and implementation programmes, the Swiss TPH contributes to improving health worldwide. A particular focus of its activities concerns low-income countries. Its core subject areas include infectious diseases caused by poverty (malaria, tuberculosis, worm disease), healthcare systems and their development and the effects of environmental factors on health. The Swiss TPH is an institution under public law associated with the University of Basel.

About the University of Basel

The University of Basel, founded in 1460, is the oldest university in Switzerland. As a university specializing in research with a broad educational programme, it offers students from Switzerland and from around the world excellent study conditions up to bachelor, master and doctorate levels. The university has a wide spectrum of subject areas and stands out in five core areas: life sciences, visual studies, nanosciences, research on sustainability and energy and European and global studies. The University of Basel is regularly ranked as one of the 100 best universities in the world.