

Meeting of the ETH Board of 10/11 July 2019

## ETH Board dismisses professor at the Department of Physics

**After a thorough examination of the facts of the case, the ETH Board decided to accede to a request for dismissal of a professor submitted by ETH Zurich and considers the accusations against the professor to be justified. The ETH Board and the institutions of the ETH Domain advocate respectful interpersonal relations in the ETH Domain. Further measures for the promotion of this culture are in the pipeline.**

Bern, 15 July 2019 – ETH Zurich submitted a request for the dismissal of a professor to the ETH Board in March 2019. The ETH Board granted the person concerned the right to be heard, assessed her statements for the attention of the ETH Board, as well as any earlier statements and examinations in detail, and dealt with the individual arguments. After a detailed discussion, the ETH Board has now decided at its meeting of 10/11 July 2019 to accede to ETH Zurich's request for dismissal of 12 March 2019. It has provided the person concerned with the detailed reasons for this decision prior to the publication of this media release.

### **Respectful relations as the basis of good cooperation**

The ETH Board bears a great responsibility for the employees of the ETH Domain and must grant them protection and care. Respectful relations are the important basis of good and successful cooperation. In the case of a conflict, various contact points are available to employees. In the interest of all those concerned, an amicable solution should be found as early as possible. In the present case, this failed, much to the ETH Board's regret.

### **Dismissal is justified**

The ETH Board is made up of personalities with broad-based knowledge and experience. At present, the ETH Board consists of six women and four men from academia, society and business. Beth Krasna is the interim President of the ETH Board and has been a member of this body since 2003. "In such difficult decisions under personnel law, the point is to protect the young researchers who are strongly dependent on professors while defending professors' interests against possibly unjustified accusations by students or doctoral students," says Beth Krasna. In this case, the ETH Board considers the numerous accusations against the person concerned to be justified and incompatible with the expectations of the supervision of doctoral students and of the culture in the ETH Domain.

### **Reinforcement of a culture of mutual respect and leadership competencies**

The ETH Board encourages the institutions of the ETH Domain to implement measures for the reinforcement of diversity, leadership competencies and a culture of mutually respectful relations. At present, ETH Zurich is in the process of extending the multiple supervision of doctoral students that is already practised at several departments of ETH Zurich throughout the university by 2020. The Executive Board of ETH Zurich recently approved a concept for the development of a leadership culture. At the same time, a new "Leadership and Personnel Development" Vice-Presidency is being added to the Executive Board. Further measures include the extension of coaching and consultation facilities for executive staff. Thanks to internal monitoring of supervisions, misconduct can be detected earlier. In terms of diversity, an increase in the proportion of women among the professors is of great significance. Various programmes of the institutions of the ETH Domain assist women in their career development.

### **Improvement of processes for labour disputes**

It is important that labour conflicts are recognised early and can be resolved quickly. The major contact points must be known to all employees. As ETH Zurich recently announced, it is reorganising the ombudsman's offices and, above and beyond this, has defined several measures in the "Leadership" project, which has been ongoing for some time. The ETH Board supports this course of action and the measures taken by the Executive Board of ETH Zurich.

**Enquiries**

Gian-Andri Casutt, Head of Communication

Phone +41 (0)44 632 20 03

Mobile +41 (0)79 636 94 64

[gian.casutt@ethrat.ch](mailto:gian.casutt@ethrat.ch)

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**ETH Board, Haldeliweg 15, CH-8092 Zurich, [www.ethboard.ch](http://www.ethboard.ch)**

The ETH Board is the strategic management and supervisory body of the ETH Domain. The ETH Domain is made up of the two Federal Institutes of Technology, i.e. ETH Zurich and EPFL, as well as the four federal research institutes PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag. The members of the ETH Board are appointed by the Swiss Federal Council. The ETH Board supervises the development plans of the institutions, is responsible for strategic management accounting and ensures coordination. It draws up the budget and the financial statements of the ETH Domain and coordinates the value maintenance and continued functionality of the properties. It is the authority responsible for appointments and represents the ETH Domain before the federal authorities. A staff unit assists the ETH Board in the preparation and implementation of its business.