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SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF STS-CH, 2002-2003

- 1 Communication and Networking
 - 1.1 Mailing List
 - 1.2 Webpage
 - 1.3 Networking Activities

- 2 Activities and Events in the Second Year of STS-CH
 - 2.1 Members and Accounts
 - 2.2 Discourse, Politics, and Bioethics (Basle, June 2002)
 - 2.3 Iconoclashes: Guided Visit of Exhibition (Karlsruhe, July 2002)
 - 2.4 Workshop Series: "Information Technology, Expert Cultures, and Work Practices" (Zurich and Lausanne, April-June 2003)

- 3 Projected Events and Activities
 - 3.1 Co-organization of Annual Conference of Swiss Academy for Humanities and Social Sciences: "Technology Studies: Between Reflection and Documentation" (Berne, November 2003)
 - 3.2 Spring School for Science and Technology Studies: "Sites of Knowledge Production" (Basle, March 2004)
 - 3.3 Teaching Activities in the Field of STS in Switzerland
 - 3.4 Joint Conference with the GWTF, Germany

The report is a collaborative product. Section 1.1 has been written by Christoph Müller, section 1.2 and 3.3 by Bruno Strasser, section 2.3 by Priska Gisler, and the remainder of the report by Martin Lengwiler and Martina Merz.

1 COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

1.1 MAILING LIST

The idea to set up a mailing list for people studying issues of Science, Technology, and Society in Switzerland goes back to the first Spring School on STS in Zurich, March 1999. The mailing list was installed in September 1999. Technically, it runs on a "majordomo" program that is kindly hosted by the central informatics service of the University of Zurich (id.unizh.ch). It is maintained by Christoph Müller. In the first two years of the list, the number of subscribers grew constantly by about 50 new members a year. In 2002, the list welcomed 25 new subscribers with a total of 173 subscribers at the end of 2002. STS_L is a "low traffic" list, with an average of about 10 messages per month, most of them announcing conferences (Call for Papers) or job offers. The list is thus mainly used for broadcasting.

The mailing list is a vital tool for building a web of STS scholars in Switzerland. Its main purposes are (a) to exchange information and distribute announcements, (b) to discuss STS issues, and (c) to

establish connections between different STS research projects, especially in Switzerland. In addition, it serves as the main medium for the STS-CH association to announce information to and among its members.

The STS list welcomes new members and submissions concerning news, events, research projects, abstracts, book reviews, calls for papers, conference information and discussions about issues related to Science and Technology Studies (STS). To subscribe (i.e. add yourself to) the STS_L list, send a message to majordomo@id.unizh.ch, with the body of the mail saying: subscribe STS_L youremail@address (e.g. subscribe STS_L Jim.Knopf@univevey.ch).

1.2 WEBPAGE

The objective of setting up a web site for the association is to facilitate the circulation of information among members, and, more generally, to increase the visibility of the association. The STS-CH website – www.sts.unige.ch – is organized around four sections: events (forthcoming and past events), people (a directory of members), places (a directory of STS programs in Switzerland) and links (links in the field of STS). It also includes a description of the association and of the field of STS.

The website of the association has been updated irregularly this year. Difficulties of internal communication have limited its utility to communicating up to date information with the members. A revised work flow as well as design of the site is under way to improve its usefulness.

1.3 NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

In December 2001, members of the association's board have participated in the elaboration of a proposal for a **National Research Programme** (NRP) "Science, Technologie et Société en Suisse (STS-CH) / Wissenschaft, Technik und Gesellschaft in der Schweiz (WTG-CH)". The proposal was submitted to the Swiss National Science Foundation in December 2001. Unfortunately, the authors of the proposal were informed in Summer 2002 that the proposal had been rejected by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Contact has been established (respectively intensified) with the following **associations and organizations** in Switzerland and abroad:

- Committee for sociology of science and technology, Swiss Sociological Association
- Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW, cf. 3.1 below)
- Sektion Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie
- Gesellschaft für Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung (GWTF), Germany (cf. 3.4 below)

2 ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS IN THE SECOND YEAR OF STS-CH

2.1 MEMBERS AND ACCOUNTS

STS-CH is a predominantly (with exceptions) academic association with **members** from various disciplinary backgrounds (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences). In our second year, due to a reduced number of public events, we attracted only a few new members. Nevertheless, STS-CH is a growing association. By 12 May 2003, the date on which we concluded the accounts of 2002/03, STS-CH had 75 members, i.e. 17 more than at the end of our first year. The 75 members included 3 sponsoring members and 9 members at reduced fee (student rate).

The annual **account** for STS-CH in 2002 shows total revenues of CHF 2929.85 (2001: CHF 2776.-), total expenses of CHF 1599.95 (2001: CHF 1103.20), and a balance of CHF 1402.75 (CHF 1672.80). Part of the expenses is a sponsorship of CHF 1000.- for the annual conference of the Swiss Academy for Humanities and Social Sciences (November 2003), which we co-organize with the Academy (cf. 3.1). At its present size, STS-CH can expect an annual income (membership fees) of about CHF 3000.-.

2.2 DISCOURSE, POLITICS, AND BIOETHICS (BASLE, 14 JUNE 2002)

The workshop on "Discourse, Politics, and Bioethics" succeeded the 1st Annual Assembly that was held at the University of Basle on 14 June 2002. The event was hosted and chaired by Prof. Sabine Maasen. The recently appointed professor of science studies began by introducing her group to the participants. The workshop consisted of two lectures, followed by a lively discussion.

Kathrin Braun (PD Dr.), Institut für Politische Wissenschaft, Universität Hannover.

"Deliberation, democracy, and bioethics: How to democratise the politics of biomedicine?"

Sabine Maasen (Prof. Dr.), Sciences Studies, Universität Basel.

"Politics by discourse – promises and paradoxes"

The evening was concluded in the informal setting of a nearby garden restaurant.

2.3 ICONOCLASHES: GUIDED VISIT OF EXHIBITION (KARLSRUHE, 12-13 JULY 2002)

In July a group of about twelve STS-addicts visited the exhibition "Iconoclash – Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Arts" organized by Peter Weibel and Bruno Latour at ZKM in Karlsruhe. Unfortunately Peter Weibel didn't have time to guide us through the exhibition but he was so kind as to organize another guide who provided us with some theoretical impressions into the rather complex and abstract concept of the exhibition. We were surprised to see how compartmentalised the exhibition on iconoclashes had been organized, obviously the concept was founded on a division of labor based along the divisions of science, religion and arts. The second day of our visit to ZKM was dedicated to the Symposium "Image Wars and Image Floods – Reflexions about the Exhibition Iconoclash", which presented us with the opportunity to see big shots like Brian O'Doherty and even Bruno – himself! The exhibition and the symposium surely stimulated discussions, if not amongst the STS-community as a whole, then amongst us touriSTS on a field trip to Germany.

2.4 WORKSHOP SERIES: "INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, EXPERT CULTURES, AND WORK PRACTICES" (ZURICH AND LAUSANNE, APRIL-JUNE 2003)

STS-CH co-organizes a series of semi-public workshops under the header of "Information Technology, Expert Cultures, and Work Practices". Together with a series of public lectures, the three workshops are sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation to foster innovative research in social sciences (Network Initiative of the Priority Program "Switzerland towards the Future"). The series is organized jointly by the Institute of History (History of Technology, David Gugerli) at the ETH Zurich, the Observatoire Science, Politique et Société at the EPF Lausanne (Martina Merz), and the Forschungsstelle für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte at the University of Zurich (Martin Lengwiler). On a scientific level, the series of lectures and workshops aims at enhancing the understanding of information technology's position in our contemporary knowledge society by integrating approaches from a wide range of social sciences and related fields. On an institutional level, the initiative aims at reinforcing the respective scholarly network in Switzerland. To this end Swiss researchers are brought together, and the community's contact with internationally renowned scholars from abroad is being reinforced.

The Workshops aim at bringing together younger researchers in the domain of STS. They provide a space for discussion and the presentation of research results.

25 April 2003 Workshop "Democracy and Data Structures"
with Anne Eckhardt (Basler & Hofmann, Zurich)

12 June 2003 Workshop "Digital Networks and Expert Cultures"
with Stefan Kaufmann, Barbara Bonhage (both ETH Zurich) and Prof. Karin Knorr Cetina (University Konstanz)

19 June 2003 Workshop "Information Technology and Property Rights"
with Monika Dommann (University of Zurich) and Prof. Dominique Foray (OECD, Paris)

For a detailed program (including the lectures), consult www.tg.ethz.ch and see the attached poster.

3 PROJECTED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

3.1 CO-ORGANIZATION OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SWISS ACADEMY FOR HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: "TECHNOLOGY STUDIES: BETWEEN REFLEXION AND DOCUMENTATION" (BERNE, NOVEMBER 2003)

STS-CH co-organizes the annual conference of the Swiss Academy for Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW) 2003. In addition, STS-CH supports the event financially. The conference with the title "Technology Studies: Between Reflexion and Documentation" ("Technikforschung: Zwischen Reflexion und Dokumentation") will take place on November 12 and 13 at the *Museum für Kommunikation* in Berne. Among the keynote speakers are: Prof. Sally Wyatt (University of Amsterdam), Prof. Dominique Pestre (EHESS, Paris), Prof. Thomas Hengartner (University of Hamburg).

For information on the registration procedure and the final conference program consult www.sagw.ch or watch our STS-CH mailing list.

3.2 SPRING SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES: "SITES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION" (BASLE, MARCH 2004)

After two previous STS Schools – the first held in Zurich, the second in Lausanne – which have received considerable praise and attention, the board has decided to co-organize a next Spring School together with Professor Sabine Maasen (Science Studies, University of Basle) who will act as host. The Spring School will take place at the University of Basle from March 9 to 12, 2004 with the general theme "Sites of Knowledge Production". At present, the program committee (Sabine Maasen, Bernhard Truffer, Martin Lengwiler, Martina Merz) is in the process of securing the required funding and of concretizing the program. The call for papers will be published within the next months.

For more information, contact Martin Lengwiler at mlengwiler@compuserve.com or Martina Merz at martina.merz@epfl.ch.

3.3 TEACHING ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF STS IN SWITZERLAND

In order to promote teaching in the field of STS in Switzerland, two initiatives have been taken. First, an inventory of available courses in the field of STS in Switzerland has been gathered. It will be made available on the web site of the association www.sts.unige.ch as soon as possible. Second, a project for an intensive introductory course to STS is under discussion. It would take place once every two years and last one week. Bruno Strasser and Monika Domann are in charge of presenting this project to the association.

3.4 JOINT CONFERENCE WITH THE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR WISSENSCHAFTS- UND TECHNIKFORSCHUNG (GWTF), GERMANY

The (German) "Gesellschaft für Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung" organizes an annual conference for STS researchers every autumn. During their last general assembly it has been decided to check out the possibility to co-organize the 2004 conference together with STS-CH. The board of STS-CH has responded positively. It has decided on its turn to take up discussions with the GWTF about a potential joint conference.