

## PRESS RELEASE

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The 2nd European Corporate Foundations Knowledge Exchange on 21/22 November in Zurich

# CORPORATE FOUNDATIONS FROM ACROSS EUROPE MEET IN RÜSCHLIKON

**On 21 and 22 November 2017, corporate foundations from across Europe met in the Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue in Rüschiikon. Representatives from approximately 100 foundations came together at this, the second meeting of corporate foundations under the auspices of SwissFoundations, the association of Swiss grant-making foundations, and DAFNE, the European network of national donor and foundation associations. The objective - to exchange knowledge and best practices in an exclusive framework and to discuss challenging issues - was met with flying colours. Special attention was given to the relationship between the foundations and their founding companies as this influences the commitment of the foundations as regards current challenges.**

The first Knowledge Exchange took place in Fontainebleau in France. Thanks to its very positive reception, interest in a second instalment – this year in Switzerland – was even higher. Around 100 representatives from Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Spain and Switzerland discussed the specific challenges facing corporate foundations. As principal speaker and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Swiss Re, Walter B. Kielholz made clear from the very beginning: «Corporate Foundations have an important role: They are brand ambassadors and contribute to the reputation of the company. At the same time they have to reflect the values and performance of the company.»

### Independent though not unconnected

The commitments assumed by corporate foundations are independent of the founding company, but a close relationship still remains. This impacts on the governance of the respective foundation as well as on its mission and methods. Beate Eckhardt, Managing Director of SwissFoundations, explains: “Corporate foundations have a big plus in terms of potential and opportunities because they can fall back on the services, competences and expertise of their founding companies. That’s an advantage which should be exploited.” In various keynotes and small groups, it was discussed how this relationship influences how corporate foundations react to current challenges and opportunities. This is especially important in times where personal impact needs to be maximised and the difference achieved highlighted for all to see. The sharing of best practices was another area of focus. James Magowan, Coordinating Director of DAFNE, also sees here the crucial added value of such a pan-European event: «We have created the space for an effective exchange of knowledge and experience. National associations can use this international learning to support their corporate foundations members in the development of their practice.»

The meeting was organised by SwissFoundations, the association of Swiss grant-making foundations, and the donor and foundation networks in Europe, DAFNE. The Swiss Re Foundation acted as joint host and sponsor. The event received further support from Credit Suisse Group, JTI Foundation, Novo Nordisk Haemophilia Foundation, Sight and Life Foundation, Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, UBS AG and Z Zurich Foundation.

## Further information on the programme, speakers and picture material

<http://www.swissfoundations.ch/de/mediensdesk/ecfke2017>

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### SwissFoundations

#### Association of Swiss Grant-making foundations

Created in 2001 through the joint efforts of eleven foundations, SwissFoundations brings together Switzerland's grant-making foundations, giving them a strong and independent voice. As an active network dedicated to innovation, SwissFoundations fosters the exchange of experiences, transparency and professionalism in the Swiss foundation sector. The association is open to big and small, locally and internationally active foundations based in Switzerland or Liechtenstein. With its members investing over 1.5 billion Swiss francs in charitable projects and initiatives over the past five years, SwissFoundations represents over a quarter of all grants made each year by charitable foundations in Switzerland.

[www.swissfoundations.ch](http://www.swissfoundations.ch)

### Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe (DAFNE)

DAFNE is an informal network gathering donors and foundations associations in Europe with the aim of providing a platform to share knowledge and learn from best practices. With 25 member associations with a collective membership of more than 7,500 foundations and grant-makers, DAFNE underpins individual activities of its members by encouraging dialogue and collaboration between the national associations. DAFNE creates an effective mechanism for Europe-wide collaboration; exchange of know how; and the creation of a pool of knowledge at the level of the DAFNE network among philanthropy support organisations.

[www.dafne-online.eu](http://www.dafne-online.eu)