

ACECH Annual Report

2020



**Asociación de Científicos
Españoles en la
Confederación Helvética**

Letter from the President

Dear members and friends of ACECH,

During 2020, COVID-19 has been the biggest global event—and challenge—of our lifetimes. My first thoughts of this annual letter go to those who went through serious difficulties as a result of this pandemic. At the same time, this situation put the scientific community in the spotlight, highlighting the importance of developing a strong network of researchers across all disciplines to successfully face such global challenges. In a way, this has given me even more strength because I strongly believe ACECH can contribute to this endeavor of bringing together talented individuals, hard-working towards solving such intricate problems.

Our Society—as any other element of our societies—underwent a massive impact in this key third year since our foundation. All our planned live events had to be postponed until restrictions are lifted. However, this does not mean we did not work in the background. Quite on the contrary, there was quite a lot of activity, planning, and organization. Let me highlight for you the most relevant ones:

Following a very positive feedback from our members of a previous event at the Ethnographic Museum in Neuchâtel, we decided to organize a series of micro-talks at the Einsiedeln Abbey. This format of short talks about one's research activities allows for fluid interactions and exposure to new ideas. The event included a guided visit to the library, which contains hundreds of priceless manuscripts and incunabula covering philosophy, jurisprudence, natural sciences and medicine. Indeed, a very inspiring stage to engage with other colleagues and friends!

The activity that took most of our time was a scientific event organized at CERN. CERN symbolizes again the most noble facets of our community: scientists from all over the globe working coordinately to answer some of the most profound questions we can pose to ourselves. Hence, difficult to imagine a more inspiring setting to organize our scientific event combined with our General Assembly. The program includes a guided visit to the facilities and invited talks from two renowned keynote speakers: Profs. Minia Manteiga Outeiro (University of a Coruña) and Mariano Barbacid Montalbán (Spanish National Cancer Research Center; CNIO).

Other activities included contributions channeled through RAICEX (Red de Asociaciones de Investigadores y Científicos Españoles en el Exterior). For example, providing advice to science policy makers in Spain. We believe that our experience abroad can help to shape the future of a more efficient scientific framework in Spain. Also, more than ever, we have been active in social media in an attempt to communicate potentially relevant information to our members and beyond.

I want to conclude with a rather optimistic tone, whereby I can assure you that we will keep on working hard to support our community. As anyone else, I am thrilled to think about the moment when we will be able to gather again face to face in one of our postponed events. Finally, I want to thank all the people contributing to ACECH in one way or another on a complete voluntary basis. Specially to those of them who went through very difficult personal moments during this year, despite of which they were always there to support the Society.

Looking forward to continuing this journey with you.

Truly yours,

Pablo Sinues

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Sinues'.

For more information, please contact president@acech.ch



Pablo Sinues, President of ACECH

Vision and Goals

ACECH is an independent non-profit organization created by and for the community of Spanish researchers in Switzerland. Funded in November 2017 and managed entirely by volunteers, the association aims at serving as a network for mutual support and strengthening the collaboration between Spain and Switzerland by channeling and disseminating the interests and activities of its members to the authorities and civil societies of both countries.

The work of the association develops around four main goals:

- **Representative** – Representation of the Spanish research community in Switzerland to the Spanish and Swiss authorities.
- **Social** – Support and collaboration between members.
- **Informative** – Scientific dissemination.
- **Sponsoring** – Promotion and mediation to create and reinforce collaborations between Spain and Switzerland.



Main goals of ACECH

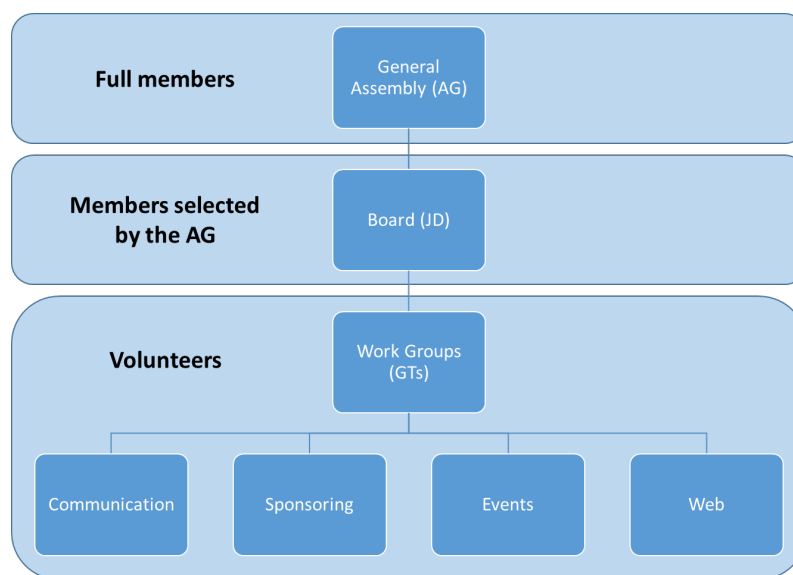
These goals are carried out through a series of both continued and eventual activities including networking, social and scientific events for members and public, distribution of relevant information among members, development of mentoring and support tools for young researchers and newcomers, collaboration with the Office for Education on outreach activities and bilateral discussions with the Spanish Embassy and Ministry for Education to advocate for better return opportunities and promote positive transformations of the Spanish science system.

ACECH belongs to the Network of Spanish Researchers Abroad (Red de Asociaciones de Investigadores y Científicos Españoles en el Exterior: RAICEX). This network, formed by 15 associations registered in different countries, appears as an answer to the growing need of joining and representing under a common frame the community of expatriate Spanish researchers interested in sharing and transferring their competences and acquired knowledge in a global and multilateral scientific context.

Structure

ACECH was created and is managed exclusively by volunteers. The association is structured as follows:

- **The General Assembly (Asamblea General: AG)** is the highest decision-making body of the association, and it is composed of all the full members.
- **The Board (Junta Directiva: JD)** is the managing body of the association, and it is composed of five members elected by the AG.
- **The Work Groups (Grupos de Trabajo: GTs)**, composed by voluntary members, are responsible for the operation of the association in coordination with the JD.



Structure of ACECH

The structure and functions of the GTs is adapted to the running needs of the association, covering both permanent and continuous tasks and temporary actions. ACECH is currently composed of four GTs, run by around 12 volunteers.

- **GT Communication** takes care of all the digital communication activities, including email correspondence and management of ACECH social networks (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram).
- **GT Sponsoring** is in charge finding and establishing sponsoring agreements with public and private bodies to fund the operation and activities of the association.
- **GT Events** is responsible for planning and organizing all ACECH events such as the yearly General Assembly and various networking, scientific and social activities.
- **GT Web** takes care of updating and maintaining the ACECH website.



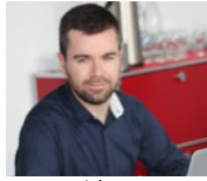
Pablo Sinues

Presidente
Tenure-Track Assistant Professor
University of Basel & ETH Zurich
Translational research



Natalia Guerrero Albuquerque

Vicepresidenta y coordinadora del grupo de financiación
PhD Student
EMPA
Non-isocyanate polyurea aerogels & polymers



Moisés Bueno

Secretario y coordinador del grupo de comunicación
Senior Scientist
EMPA
Functional Materials Department



Javier Ribera Regal

Tesorero
Scientist at EMPA
CRO at MycoSolutions AG
Wood biotechnology, microbiology



Paula Díaz Redondo

Coordinadora del grupo de organización de eventos (Zurich)
PhD ETH Zurich
Energy policy, environmental management



Clara Galán Navarro

Coordinadora del grupo de organización de eventos (Romandía)
PhD EPFL
Bioengineering



David Salido Monzú

Vocal y coordinador del grupo de desarrollo web
Postdoc
ETH Zurich
Optical metrology



Rocío Fuente Pérez

Voluntaria del grupo de comunicación (Visibilidad)
Marie Curie Fellow
University of Zürich
Bone Metabolism and Pediatric Research



Daniel Rodríguez Gutiérrez

Voluntario del grupo de comunicación (LinkedIn)
Assistant Doctor
University of Fribourg
Endocrinology & sex development



Cristina Freire Sanz

Voluntaria del grupo de comunicación (Instagram)
PhD Student
University of Geneva, Centre Medical Universitaire
Genetic medicine



Marta Vidiella del Blanco

Voluntaria del grupo de organización de eventos
PhD Student
ETH Zurich / EMPA Dübendorf
Chemical engineering, polymer materials



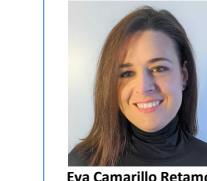
Marina A. González Lazo

Voluntaria del grupo de comunicación (Facebook)
materials Specialist, SICHH S.A.
Physics, material engineering



Marina García González

Voluntaria del grupo de organización de eventos
PhD Student, PSI
Synchrotron radiation, condensed matter



Eva Camarillo Retamosa

Voluntaria del grupo de comunicación (Newsletter)
Senior Scientist
Center of Experimental Rheumatology
University Hospital Zurich

Members

A summary of the types of memberships and their benefits are shown in the following table:

Advantages and rights of ACECH memberships

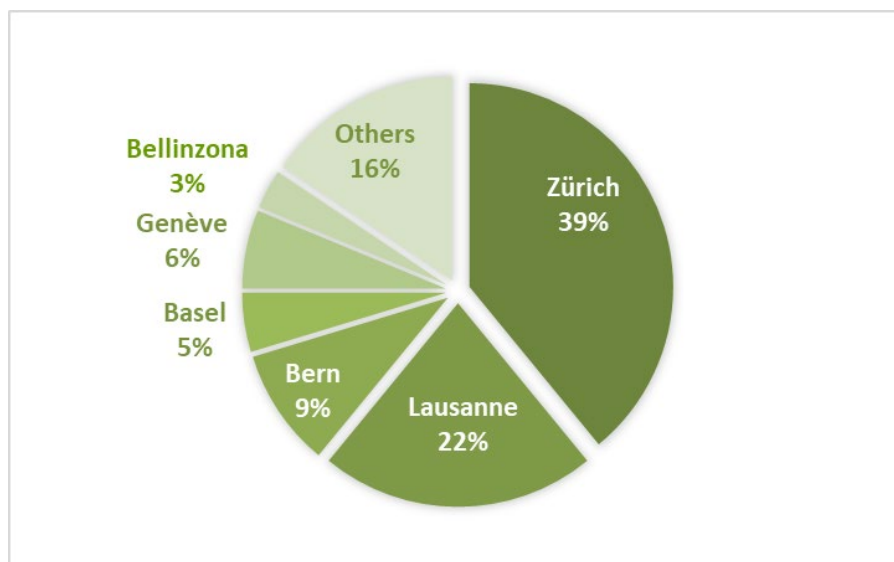
	Full Members	Associated Members
Updates about activities and Scientific Events	✓	✓
Free Attendance to Events	✓	✗
Linkedin Acech Group (job offers, networking)	✓	✗
Dissemination of Scientific Publications	✓	✗
Executive Board and Task groups involvement	✓	✗
Personal Development (grants, courses, mentorship program)	✓	✗
Attendance and Vote in the Annual General Assembly	✓	✗
Annual Fee (CHF)	50 / 25*	Free

*Students and unemployed members

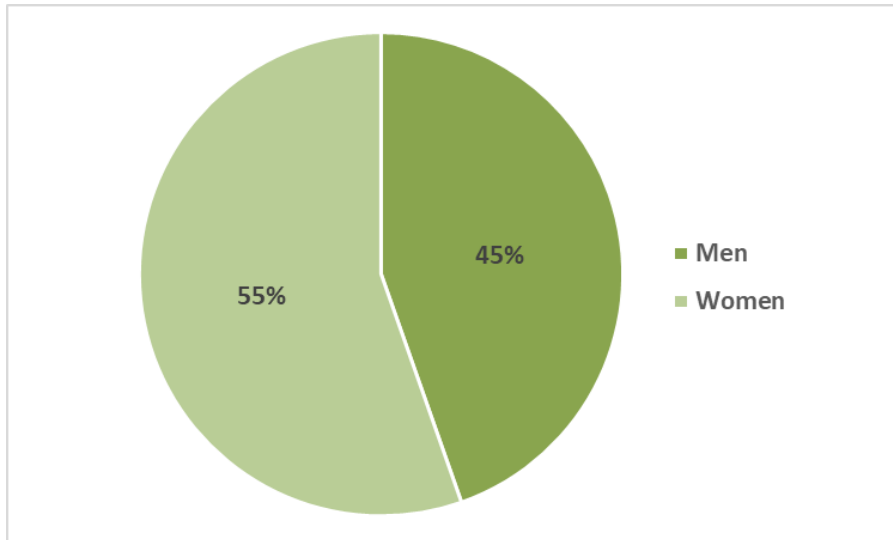
By the end of 2020, a total of **69 scientists** are **Full Members** with all the rights described in the statutes of the Association. Besides, other advantages offered were the free attendance and funding support for travelling to our scientific events, membership of Raicex, publications dissemination, networking and access to our LinkedIn group where the job offers are posted. Moreover, **253 scientists**, who showed their interest in ACECH, received general information about our events and activities as **Associated Members (Friends)**.

Due to the exceptional circumstances affecting all of us, 2020 membership fees have been waived for all members and, when paid, automatically assigned to the 2021 memberships.

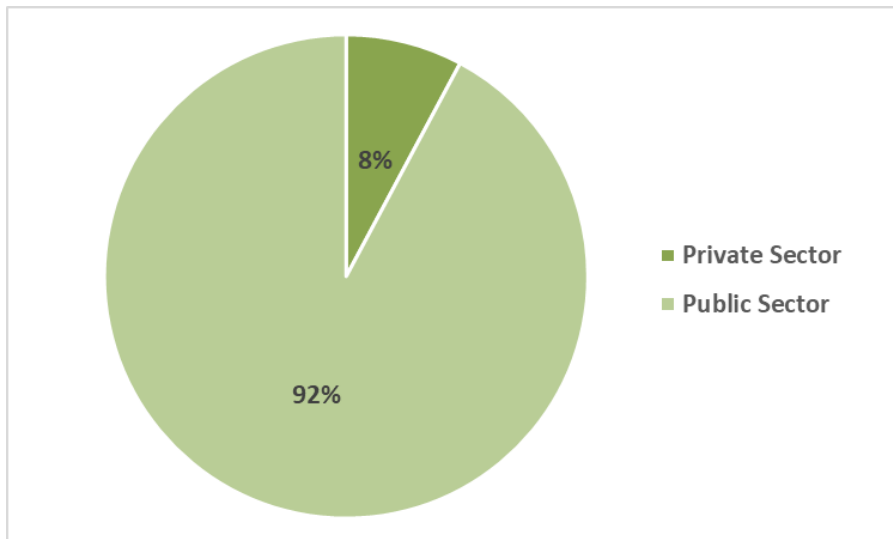
Some other figures and statics updated (January 2021) can be found in the next graphics:



Geographical distribution of the members (Jan 2021)



Gender Balance amongst the members (Jan 2021)



Distribution by type of sector of the institutions of the members (Jan 2021)

Actions

Scientific Event at CERN

CERN is one of the world's largest and most respected centers for scientific research and as such, the presence of Spanish scientist community is very significant. Hence, the possibility of collaborating with such an organization remains crucial for ACECH.

One of the main objectives set by ACECH since 2019, was to increase the involvement and participation of the southern part of Switzerland since the support coming from the northern part of the country is currently larger. In order to promote the scientific activities, ACECH members will have the opportunity to claim travel support.

Therefore, within this context, we planned to organize one of the main ACECH annual events housed by CERN during the course of 2020, in combination with the general assembly. Unfortunately, since CERN has cancelled all the events indefinitely, the event could not take place. However, as soon as the current situation allows for it, we will organize the event, which will have the same configuration and structure as designed previously. We have confirmed with the participants, sponsors and CERN the future involvement on the new edition of the event. It will hopefully take place during the spring semester and it will also foster the Italian (ASIERI) and French (SIEF) parallel associations of Spanish scientist abroad, allowing an unmatched collaboration opportunity among all sister associations. This event will entail seamless networking possibilities for attendees within an excellent environment as well as great visibility for ACECH on this second year of the association existence. It would also represent an opportunity to increase our engagement of members from the Geneva hub given the proximity of the location.

With this aim, a close alliance and teamwork has been taking place between board members of the association and scientist established on CERN since 2018.



Cancelado hasta nuevo aviso

I ENCUENTRO DE INVESTIGADORES ESPAÑOLES EN SUIZA, ITALIA Y FRANCIA
1ST MEETING OF SPANISH RESEARCHERS IN SWITZERLAND, ITALY AND FRANCE

28 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2020, CERN
- VISITA GUIADA AL CERN *Guided Tour CERN*
- COMIDA *Lunch*

**PROF. DR. MINIA MANTEIGA OUTEIRO**
PROFESORA DE ASTRONOMÍA Y ASTROFÍSICA,
UNIVERSIDADE DA CORUÑA, ESPAÑA
Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics University of A Coruña, Spain

PROF. DR. MARIANO BARBACID MONTALBÁN
PROFESOR E INVESTIGADOR AXA-CNIO DE ONCOLOGÍA
MOLECULAR, CENTRO NACIONAL DE INVESTIGACIONES
ONCOLÓGICAS CNIO, MADRID, ESPAÑA
Professor and researcher AXA-CNIO of Molecular Oncology, Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas CNIO, Madrid, Spain



29 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2020, CERN
- ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE LA ACECH
General Assembly ACECH

SPONSORS:

FUNDACIÓN RAMÓN ARECES

#EventoACECH #CERN #Innovacion #Science #networking #aso_ACECH #Spain #Switzerland

Flyer Scientific Event at CERN 2020

General Assembly 2020

Exceptionally, due to the unstable situation prevailing throughout the year, the third General Assembly of ACECH has not taken place yet. In principle this year the General Assembly was scheduled to take place on 14th of June in Geneva, in such a symbolic place as the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), after a scientific event where we were counting with the presence of prominent researches such as Prof. Mariano Barbacid and Prof. Minia Manteiga. As the date approached, the health measures prevented celebrating the event in June, so we decided to postpone it to the 28th of November, hoping that by then it would be possible to hold the event. However, the CERN canceled all events taking place in its facilities from October onwards indefinitely. In a last effort to be able to celebrate the General Assembly, we organized a day at the Umwelt Arena (near Zürich) on the 5th of December, where we took into account all the hygienic and social distancing measures required by the Federal Office of Public Health at the time. Unfortunately, a couple of weeks before the meeting took place; the restrictions were made stricter due to the increase in infections. So again, we had to cancel the event and postpone the General Assembly, which will take place as soon as the situation stabilizes sufficiently to make it safe to meet in person again. Although if we consider that the situation is prolonged too much again, we consider doing the General Assembly virtually. In this sense, we also decided that the full member's membership fee from 2020 would be valid for 2021.

NanoTalks

[Planned for March 28th, 2020, Einsiedeln Abbey]

After the success of the NanoTalks carried out in October 2018 in the Neuchâtel Ethnography Museum, ACECH decided to repeat it in 2020, changing the stage to the Einsiedeln Abbey.

The NanoTalks are a platform to inspire and stimulate talks about art, science and technology. Speakers create understandable talks for all audiences on complex issues, and inspire the audience with new ideas.

Objectives of the NanoTalks, which contribute to the ACECH objectives:

- Provide a platform to bring closer the different branches of science (human sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, arts, etc.).
- Exchange research findings in a fresh and dynamic way.
- Continue gathering new ACECH members and volunteers for the working groups.

Venue:

The Einsiedeln Abbey is considered the most important baroque church in Switzerland. It is famous for its black Virgin and is a popular pilgrimage destination along the Camino de Santiago. Its library has about 230,000 books, some of which are handwritten documents dating from the 10th century. After the NanoTalks, which were planned to take place in a

seminar center in the vicinity, we would have liked to make a guided tour of the Abbey and library (approx. 90 minutes). The excursion is limited to a maximum of 30 people. If there is enough demand, we could organize two separate tours.

MicroCharlas y visita al Monasterio de Einsiedeln

Sábado, 28 de Marzo de 2020
9:30-15:30
Gasthaus Meinradsberg
Ilgen-Weidstrasse 3
CH-8840 Einsiedeln
y
Monasterio de Einsiedeln
Kloster Einsiedeln, 8840 Einsiedeln



9:30 Presentación del Evento (Gasthaus Meinradsberg)

10:00 MicroCharlas, Sesión I
Charlas de 9 minutos cada una:
5 minutos presentación y 4 minutos discusión estimulante.

11:00 Café

11:30 MicroCharlas, Sesión II
Charlas de 9 minutos cada una:
5 minutos presentación y 4 minutos discusión estimulante.

12:30 Apéro

14:00 - 15:30 Visita guiada al monasterio y biblioteca de Einsiedeln (EN)
Monasterio benedictino medieval de Suiza. La abadía esta dedicada a Nuestra señora de los Ermitaños. El monasterio es una etapa importante de la peregrinación a Santiago de Compostela y destino de muchos peregrinos. La "Virgen negra" de Einsiedeln en la Gnadenkapelle (Capilla de la Gracia) es un punto de atracción para aproximadamente un millón de peregrinos y turistas cada año. La biblioteca tiene cerca de 250.000 volúmenes y muchos manuscritos de incalculable valor.



Sponsors:



Síguenos en: www.acech.ch



Flyer invitation for the NanoTalks 2020

Cancelled due to Corona- Lock down

The NanoTalks had to take place exactly 13 day after the first lock down was officially announced. The organization was almost finished: about 18 participants were registered; about 5 NanoTalk-presenters had expressed their interest and chosen a topic to present; the seminar venue, the visit to the Einsiedeln library and the lunch were booked.

The 13. March we decided to postpone the event, not providing an alternative date, since we did not know how the situation would evolve.

Alternative considered

We did not and do not want to let the current situation paralyse our activities and keep us disconnected. Although during the summer it was possible to organize meetings between 300 and 1000 people- depending on the month and canton- the team considered reorganising the NanoTalks. However, there were provisions that people did not feel like meeting physically, that is why we decided to experimentally organise the first session of **Virtual NanoTalks on Thursday, 24 September 2020, from 17:30 - 19:30. Zoom Convening.**

The videoconference event would have **included 6 NanoTalks** of 5 minutes each followed by questions and discussion. At the end of the NanoTalks we planned a round table to discuss experiences about working remotely during these last months, mainly focused on sharing learnings and tricks that have helped ACECH Members to adapt and make the most of this situation. If we had received enough proposals and the format of the event would have been interesting, we wanted to organise a second session a few weeks later with the NanoTalks that were not selected for the first round.

Unfortunately, however, due to a lack of interest and some logistical difficulties, the event could not take place as planned at Zoom.

As soon as the situation allows it, we will intend to reestablish the NanoTalks initial plan, including the visit to the monastery in Einsiedeln.

Strategic Plans for Next Year

Welcome Packages

The idea is to welcome new Spanish scientists who arrive in Switzerland with open arms. It is planned to take place every year in September, with the beginning of the academic year.

More specifically the intention is to:

- Give welcome packages to new members who become part of ACECH. This package will consist of an online information guide of the main cities as well as a exclusive information of the association.
- Whenever the health situation allows it, we plan to organize a great welcome event, open to everyone and face-to-face. It will consist of several micro talks followed by a networking event.

ACECH Buddy Program

This initiative puts a Spanish scientist who comes from abroad in contact with a member of ACECH who lives in Switzerland. The aim is to facilitate the integration of newcomers in social and labor life and promote cultural exchange. Program information will be available on the association's website and members who participate in this program will receive an mentoring certificate.

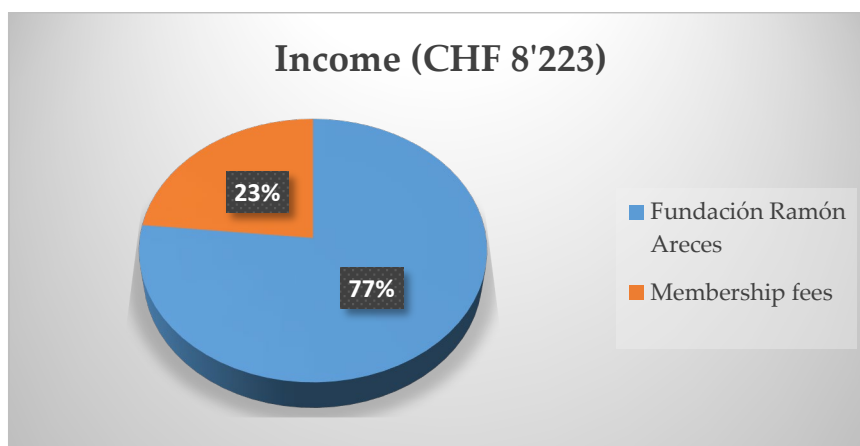
Networking: Science and an Aperol

On a regular basis, it is intended to hold monthly events open to everyone in Networking. Happy hours meet up will be held to publicize the association and put different Spanish scientists in contact (connect people and make a society). They will take place in the main cities of Switzerland and it is planned to expand it to other cities according to availability of members and interest of the people

Treasurer Report

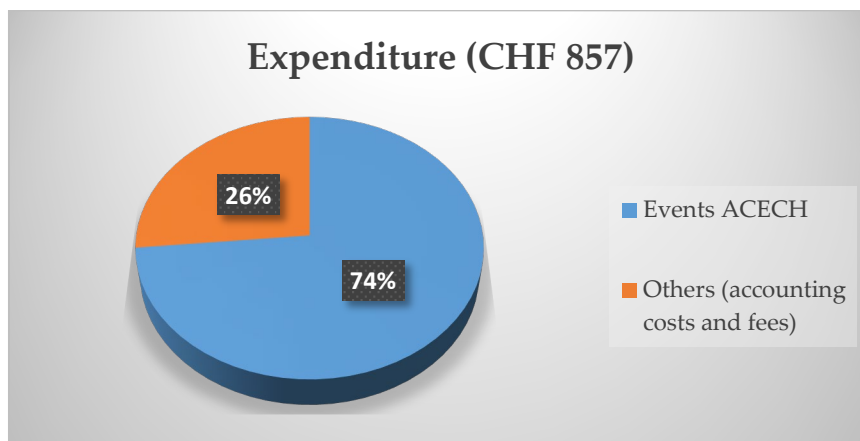
Only volunteers manage ACECH and the membership fees of the associates provides its economical independency. However, the Board of directors has requested economical support from public and private institutions in order to achieve all the proposed activities. It is thanks to this economical support that ACECH has been able to keep its financial stability. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic situation, ACECH was not able to organize any activities during 2020. Fundación Ramón Areces that contributed up to 77% of the total income has provided the main economic support.

Income



Fundación Ramón Areces	CHF 6'298
Membership fees	CHF 1'925
TOTAL	CHF 8'223

Expenditure



Events ACECH	CHF 630
Others (accounting costs and fees)	CHF 227
TOTAL	CHF 857

Sponsors and Partners

Fundación Ramón Areces



FECYT: Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología



AECID: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo



Embajada de España en Suiza



RAICEX: Red de Asociaciones de Investigadores y Científicos Españoles en el Exterior



Contact

You can find more information on www.acech.ch, and contact and follow ACECH on:

Email: info@acech.ch

Twitter: https://twitter.com/aso_acech

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/acech/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AsoACECHSuiza/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/aso_acech/

