

ACECH Annual Report

2021



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

Letter from the President

Dear members and friends of ACECH,

Statement from Pablo Sinues

Following the last General Assembly in October 2021, a new Board was elected and therefore this will be my last letter of our annual report. Still in the wake of a pandemic situation, from the Board of ACECH, we have done our best to navigate 2021. However, given that this will be my last communication, I will provide a high-level overview of our complete journey, rather than just a reflection of the last year.

We sowed the seed of ACECH back in November 2017, when a group of highly committed and talented fellows gathered at ETH in a foundational event. Looking back, I am extremely proud of our achievements, all of them in line with our mission:

- We promoted the importance of research, science and innovation in our society. For example, our traveling exhibition reached high schools to promote, among the next generation, science and research as a key element of economic development and overall well-being of our society. If this inspired just one of the many children that we reached, then the effort was truly worth it. I personally deem rigorous communication extremely important in these times of widespread misinformation.
- Inspired by the successful model of our hosting country, we advised Spanish institutions to hopefully make our Scientific system more competitive and attractive for global talent. Moreover, our integration in RAICEX, allowed us to inspire policy makers in Spain as a single interlocutor, representing the entire community of Spanish researchers abroad.
- Another important mission of ACECH is to support our network of members. Immigrating –even under our privileged conditions– is never an easy task. Perhaps, this is the achievement I am most proud of: we created a sense of community. Helping each other from ordinary issues such as explaining how the health insurance system works to supporting us to make the next career move, is probably the highest added value that we brought.

With all this, we now leave the ACECH in the best possible hands: the new Board holds all the characteristics and values to finalize the stabilization process of the Society and to bring it to the next level.

Finally, I want to specially thank the former Board. It has been such a privilege to make this journey with you. Your sense of responsibility, commitment and generosity with your time is beyond any expectation. Hats off guys.

Truly yours,

Pablo Sinues

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.



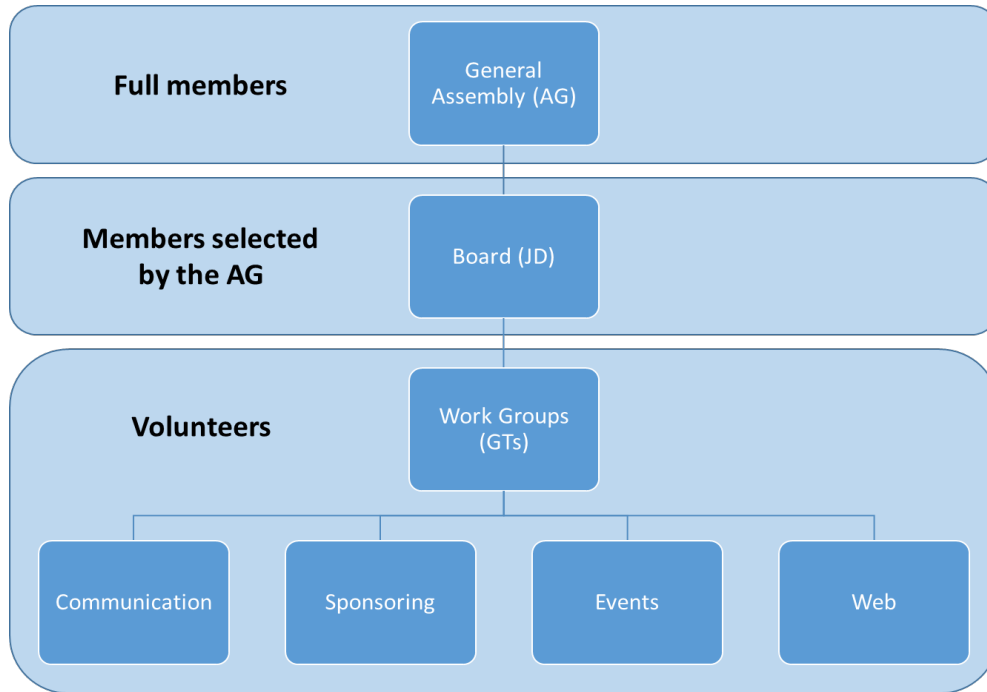
Main goals of ACECH

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 17 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

In October 2021, the 22 full members that attended the ACECH General Assembly unanimously approved restructuring the board as follows:



The board duties are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| ● Santiago González | President |
| ● Raquel Rouco | Vice-president |
| ● David Salido | Secretary |
| ● Pilar Vesga | Treasurer |
| ● Clara Galán | Event manager |
| ● Paula Díaz | Events |
| ● Santi Erroz | Communication manager |
| ● Rocío Fuente | Communication |
| ● Daniel Rodríguez | Communication |
| ● Julia Coronas | Communication |

The volunteers are distributed into the different work groups:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| ● Moisés Bueno | Events |
| ● Pablo Sinues | RAICEX liaison |
| ● Natalia Guerrero | Events |
| ● Laura Lozano | Events |
| ● Ana Humbert | Web & Communication |
| ● Carmen Picón | Communication |
| ● Natalia Méndez | Communication |
| ● Clara Martínez | Communication |

Members

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

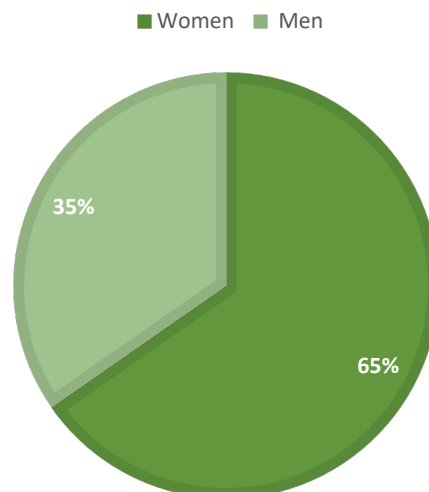
Advantages and rights of ACECH memberships

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

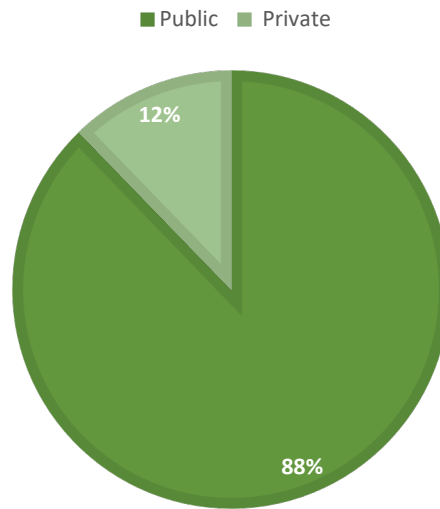
*Students and unemployed members

By the end of 2021, a total of **49 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 traveling to our scientific events, membership of RAICEX, publications dissemination, networking and access to our LinkedIn group where the job offers are posted. Moreover, **256 scientists**, who showed their interest in ACECH, received general information about our events and activities as **Associated Members** (*Friends*).

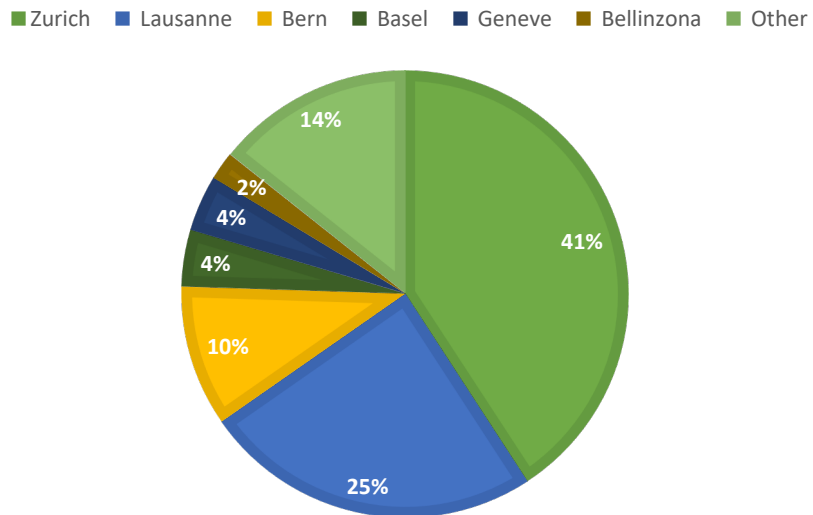
Some other figures and statistics updated (January 2022) can be found in the next graphics:



Gender Balance amongst members (Jan 2022)



Distribution by type of sector of the institutions of the members (Jan 2022)



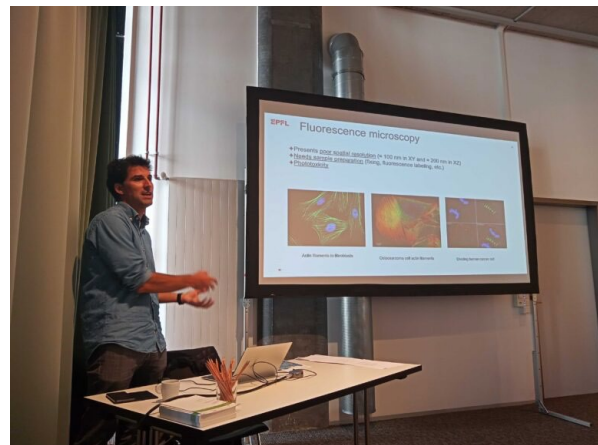
Geographical distribution of the members (Jan 2022)

Actions

General Assembly 2021 and Nano Talks

On Saturday 23rd October the 3rd General Assembly of ACECH took place in the Umwelt Arena (Spreitenbach, Aargau). There were 27 participants, of which 22 full members, 2 accompanying persons and 3 representatives of the Spanish Embassy in Switzerland. All full members voted for the renewal of the Board of Directors and new volunteers were introduced to contribute to the running of ACECH.

The Assembly was followed by a scientific event of informative Nano Talks to stimulate the multidisciplinary debate that characterizes our association (details of the speakers and topics can be found in the following poster of the event). There was also a networking lunch and an interactive visit to the Umwelt Arena, a very interesting center for sustainability, environment and energy.





Asociación de Científicos
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EVENTO ANUAL ACECH

23 OCTUBRE 2021



PROGRAMA

- 09:30-10:00 Bienvenida/café
- 10:00-11:15 MicroCharlas
- 11:15-11:30 Pausa Cafe
- 11:30-12:30 Asamblea General de la ACECH
- 12:30-14:00 Comida
- 14:00-15:00 Visita guiada al Umwelt Arena Schweiz



Umwelt Arena Schweiz
Türliackerstrasse 4
8957 Spreitenbach



¡Comida y bebida incluida!



MICROCHARLAS

- Xavier Lucas: Del algoritmo a la probeta: el diseño computacional de fármacos
- Antonio Treyvaud: 3G-ST producto de una investigación científica fundamental.
- Marcos Penedo: Nanoendoscopy AFM: a window into the cell
- Santiago Erroz: Ciencia vs privacidad: ¿qué pasa con mis datos?
- Julia Coronas: Las levaduras: más allá del pan y la cerveza
- Joaquin Garcia: Fricción y desgaste, una perspectiva computacional



Poster: International Day of Women and Girls in Science

The 11th of February is celebrated annually as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. In ACECH we paid tribute to our female scientists by making an informative poster. We presented women scientists who shared their projects and revealed the figure of the woman scientist who inspired them in their work and career. We shared the story of five women researching in various fields of science (cells, music, bacteria, fungi and multiple sclerosis) in order to bring the figure of women closer to the public and reveal the importance of women researchers for future generations.

MUJERES en la CIENCIA. Ayer y hoy

Dr. Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard
(1942-presente)
Alemania

La regulación del desarrollo de las extremidades
Durante el desarrollo embrionario es necesario que cada gen involucrado se exprese en las células adecuadas, en el momento preciso y durante un periodo de tiempo específico. Para ello es necesario un complejo mecanismo de regulación y su alteración puede causar malformaciones. Mi proyecto se centra en investigar los mecanismos reguladores que están activos o inactivos en cada población celular presente durante el desarrollo normal y patológico de las extremidades.

Dr. Raquel Rouco García
Universidad de Ginebra

Bacteriófagos prometedores para terapias antibacterianas
Los bacteriófagos, virus que infectan a bacterias, atacan y eliminan bacterias de diferentes especies y orígenes, incluidas aquellas con gran capacidad virulenta y resistentes a antibióticos. Paradójicamente, los bacteriófagos también pueden mejorar su adaptación al medio, por ejemplo, en presencia de antibióticos. En mi proyecto estudiamos este arma de doble filo para entender su papel en la evolución de bacterias multiresistentes y para avanzar en el desarrollo de terapias antibacterianas basadas en estos virus.

Dr. Elizabeth Kutter
(1945 - presente)
EEUU

Dr. Elena Gómez-Sanz.
ETH Zurich

El sonido del poder: El uso de Música y sonoridad
He analizado en mi investigación como el poder político instrumentaliza el concepto de identidad nacional para influir en la conservación y selección de fuentes musicales históricas. En consecuencia, la historia musical reconstruida gracias a esas fuentes prioriza determinadas manifestaciones como iglesias y estado mientras descarta realidades musicales tendientes a relativizar o contravenir la identidad cultural impuesta desde arriba. Entender estos procesos contribuye a aproximarnos a la realidad histórica.

Dr. Zofia Lissa
(1908-1980)
Ucrania

Prof. Dr. Cristina Urchueguia
Universidad de Berna

De las estrellas a las células
Siempre me sedujo la ciencia, especialmente la astronomía. Crecí soñando en planetas y estrellas, y fascinada con el universo, hice un doctorado en cosmología. Tras mi doctorado, hice una estancia de investigación en Israel, donde descubrí la biología de sistemas, que estudia las células con métodos cuantitativos. Nuevamente fascinada, esta vez por lo pequeño, me embarqué en el estudio del cáncer con herramientas matemáticas y computacionales. Hoy día dirijo un grupo de investigación en IBM Research Zurich, donde desarrollamos herramientas de IA para la medicina personalizada del futuro.

Dr. Margarita Salas
(1938-2019)
España

Dr. María Rodríguez Martínez
IBM Investigación Zurich

Buscando una terapia contra la esclerosis múltiple
La esclerosis múltiple es una enfermedad degenerativa que afecta al sistema nervioso central (el cerebro y la médula espinal). Las personas que la sufren pierden la capacidad de caminar, de ver, de hablar, etc. La causa de esta enfermedad no se conoce y esto impide desarrollar terapias eficaces para tratarla. En el laboratorio en el que trabajo investigamos para poder encontrar una solución que permita aumentar la calidad de vida de estas personas.

Prof. Dr. Rita Levi-Montalcini
(1909-2012)
Italia

Dr. Alba Sánchez
Hospital Universitario de Zurich



Patrocinan:



Postponed events due to COVID

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 the 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 canceled 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 in 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 scientists 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 in this second year of the association's existence. It would also represent an opportunity to increase the 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 scientists established at CERN since 2018.



ASTERO, SIF y ACECH

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:

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 **Cooperación Española**

FUNDACIÓN RAMÓN ARECES

 **GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA**

 **MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN Y COMPETITIVIDAD**

 **FECYT**

 **FUNDACIÓN ESPAÑOLA PARA LA CIENCIA Y LA TECNOLOGÍA**

 #InvestigACECH #CERN #Innovacion #Science #networking #aso ACECH #Spain #Switzerland

Flyer Scientific Event at CERN 2020

Strategic Plans for Next Year

Recruiting of Social sciences, company and non-academic related members.

ACECH is in continuous search for new members and associates. With this goal in mind, the new members of the Board have designed a new campaign to increase the reach of ACECH.

The organization wants to increase the scope of their activities not only to the scientists working in academia, but also to social scientists and those working for the private industry.

This new campaign will have two pillars: (i) Distribution of posters and brochures in diverse locations across Switzerland (e.g., Embassy, universities, Consulates...). (ii) Virtual communication through e-mails using the communication of other associations (e.g., postdoc associations, students etc.).

ACECH Network

ACECH network is an initiative whose main aim is to allow ACECH members to contact and help each other, by the generation of a sort of social network. In a first step, we will ask our members whether they are interested or not in participating, and if so, to what extent will they be ready to help others. It could be either giving professional and career advice or establishing scientific collaboration, as well as reaching other social aspects, such as helping them stabilize in Switzerland, finding a place to stay, understanding the educational system, or simply organizing regular and local social and networking events to better get to know each other. Once the data is gathered, we will establish a secured system by which only full members are allowed to access and to find the contact details of other members willing to be contacted. In the long run, a mentoring network could be developed on the basis of this information. We are positive that ACECH network will be extremely useful, not only for the Spanish researchers newly arrived in Switzerland, but also for the more senior members of our association.

Newsletter & social networks

An important pillar of ACECH is communication (AKA Marketing, Media or Press). The responsible members of the Board together with some voluntary members are in constant collaboration to perform marketing activities and improve the communication between the members and the Board:

- Newsletter: a new monthly newsletter will be sent to all the active members and will include the latest news and job opportunities relevant for Spanish Scientists living in Switzerland.

- Social Media: Job opportunities, news, activities etc. are regularly posted in the Social Platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter). Common shared posts also take place with other associations (e.g., RAICEX, Spanish Embassy). The plan for next year is to continue these regular posts.

Science policy

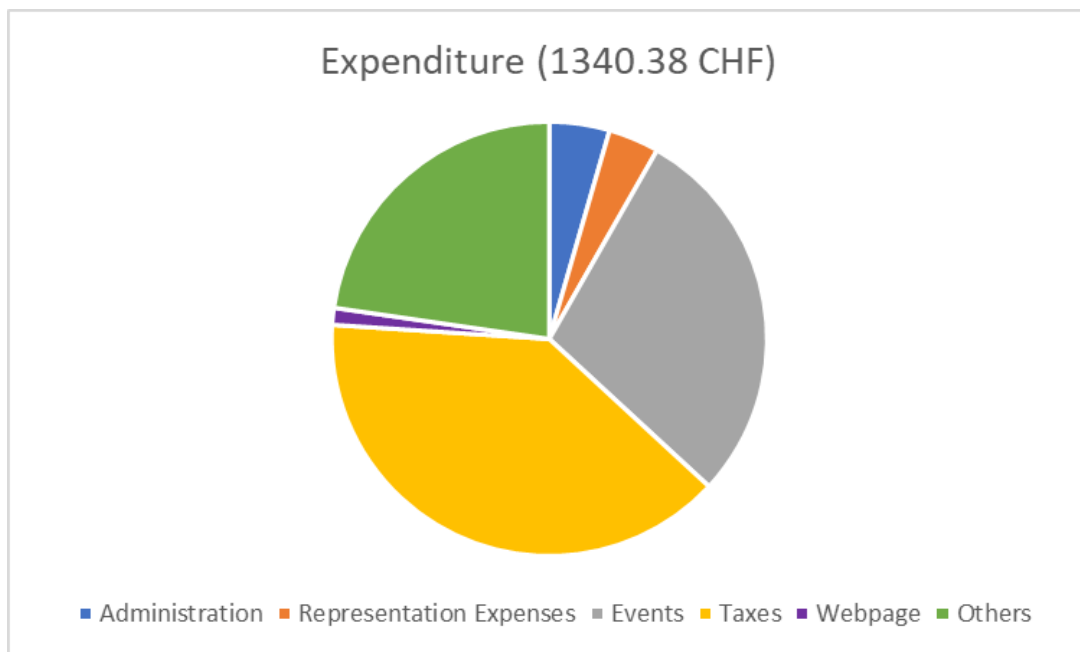
From ACECH as part of RAICEX (Red de Asociaciones de Investigadores y Científicos en el exterior) we aim to contribute from our experience to the improvement and development of a scientific framework in Spain. We will create a science policy committee inside our association. This will give us the opportunity to be part of the RAICEX science policy and talent attraction committee to work in close contact with its sister societies of Spanish researchers' members of RAICEX. Thus, we will be involved in specific actions such as providing advice on the new Science Law or developing reports to guide and improve the evolution of the science system in Spain for those scientists that want to stay or return.

Women in science day

ACECH in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy will organize an event in June to honor the Swiss women's strike. The round table will count with Spanish and Swiss women from Universities and Industry as well as Governmental institutions which will give a point of view of the difficulties and challenges that women face in the different environments in both countries. The aim will be to establish a bridge between both countries and discuss how they could benefit from one another experiences and suggest possible solutions to already mentioned challenges.

Treasurer Report

Only volunteers manage ACECH and the membership fees of the associates provides its economical independency. This has allowed ACECH to organize several activities during 2021 even though, due to the COVID crisis, some of them had to be postponed. The total amount of income for the 2021 period (376.43 CHF) came solely from the membership fees. On the other hand, the expenditures (1340.38 CHF) were divided as follows:



Administration	60 CHF
Representation Expenses	50.44 CHF
Events	384 CHF
Taxes	524.8 CHF
Webpage	16.81 CHF
Others	304.33 CHF
Total	1340.38 CHF

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/

