

## CCES News 17

### Scientific Events

#### CCES Conference 2016 «Grand Challenges in Environmental and Sustainability Science and Technology»

Close to 300 participants attended the CCES Conference «Grand Challenges in Environmental and Sustainability Science and Technology» that took place at ETH Zurich on February 10 and 11, 2016. Invited keynote speakers as well as CCES scientists addressed pressing environmental problems and presented state-of-the-art research highlights with a focus on practical applications. The participants not only benefited from the lively plenary discussions but also from the unique opportunity to meet people from many different disciplines and backgrounds.



Lively panel discussion. Photo: Tom Kawara

The concluding panel discussion, which turned out to be the highlight of an exciting conference, addressed the role of science in society, particularly focusing on the challenges encountered in the dialog between politics and science [[www.cces.ethz.ch/conference2016/impressions](http://www.cces.ethz.ch/conference2016/impressions)]. Among other things, the two politicians on the panel expressed their wish to get more opportunities to discuss pertinent scientific issues directly with leading scientists, instead of being solely dependent on science advisers and consultants, who may have quite different interests and agendas. In this context, both politicians urged the academic community



The audience actively involved in the debate. Photo: Tom Kawara

to preserve its role as an independent institution committed to the search for «truth». They also pointed out that scientists must learn to explain complex scientific issues including prevailing uncertainties to lay persons in a more comprehensible manner. Finally, there was a mutual agreement that science and policy should intensify direct encounters, for example by inviting politicians to lab visits, in order to deepen relationships and dialog, and, above all, to build mutual trust.

Further video streams and the slides of the presentations can be downloaded from the conference website [www.cces.ethz.ch/conference2016](http://www.cces.ethz.ch/conference2016)

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### Education

#### The 6<sup>th</sup> CCES Winter School «Science meets Practice» successfully concludes for 2016

The CCES Winter School «Science meets Practice» took place on January 11 to 14 and February 1 to 4, 2016 at Wislikofen, with 23 participants from the ETH Domain and other Swiss and international institutions. In January, participants received inputs on theories and methods in facilitating science-practice interactions, while in February these skills were put into practice through workshops with stakeholders from administration and the local community. Fruitful collaborations ensued on the topic of changing «Future Landscapes», including an invitation by the Mayor of Wislikofen for participants to present their findings at local Swiss National Day speeches in August, and showcase workshop outputs at the local museum. The CCES Winter



Meetings with the Wislikofen community. Photo: P. Kruetli

School will be back in 2017. For more information, please visit [www.cces.ethz.ch/winterschool](http://www.cces.ethz.ch/winterschool).

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### Outreach

#### The CCES data platform for environmental research becomes the long-term WSL Envidat/OSPER infrastructure

Having sailed stormy waters in the past, the SwissEx platform has seen a major technological jump towards practicality and user friendliness. Some ambitious data analysis features will no longer be supported, making the system slimmer and easier to maintain. As a core, the platform renamed OSPER (Open Support Platform for Environmental Research) still features a data infrastructure with easy and now intuitive data access, exploration and (simple) analysis. The main strength remains a flexible treatment of metadata and therefore a platform that allows the scientist to store, share and retrieve data from various and heterogeneous sources.

While OSPER will continue to provide access to hundreds of environmental data sets, e.g. from former CCES projects ([www.osper.ch](http://www.osper.ch)) it will now in addition join forces with the Envidat data portal in order to serve data to Envidat but also to provide Envidat with some of the new technology developed in OSPER. One first example of this collaboration is the DOI publishing of data sets, which is already fully functional and dynamic. To start with, two long-term nivo-meteorological



Illustration: Design matrix of key properties of the new OSPER dataplatform

data sets from Weissfluhjoch Davos have been published giving more impact to the related publications, e.g. Wever et al. (2015)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Wever, N., Schmid, L., Heilig, A., Eisen, O., Fierz, C. and Lehning, M.: Verification of the multi-layer SNOWPACK model with different water transport schemes, *The Cryosphere*, 9(6), 2271–2293, doi:10.5194/tc-9-2271-2015, 2015.