

# HUMER FOUNDATION

## FOR ACADEMIC TALENT



### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Dr Franz B. Humer, Chairman of the Foundation Board

It never ceases to amaze me how focused and farsighted "our" doctoral students at the universities in Salzburg and Basel are when they plan and structure their mostly three-year theses. I remember my generation 40 or 50 years ago being much less meticulous about our own dissertations and often leaving the necessary clarifications to the very last minute ... Those times are long gone: nowadays, doctoral students generally know right from the start which semesters they will be spending at their home university and when and where they are planning to go abroad. And this makes a lot of sense, not least because today's doctoral thesis involves much more research and "field work" than it used to.

Suddenly, however, it is all change once again: the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on doctoral students' work for almost a year now. Border closures and quarantine regulations mean that planned stays abroad are now virtually impossible or only feasible under extremely restrictive conditions. This is especially the case for the field studies that the doctoral students from the University of Basel had planned for the key research topic "Africa". Since the second wave of the pandemic struck, however, travel has even become nigh on impossible in Europe, the focal point of the theses that we are supporting at the University of Salzburg.

Of course, the situation is being exacerbated by the restrictions imposed at the universities themselves. Actually stepping onto university premises has been unimaginable for some time now, and the all-important personal

interactions and discussions with professors and students are clearly suffering greatly.

In short, writing a dissertation that adds genuine value to the academic community is challenging enough as it is under normal circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic is thus another very sizeable obstacle that also needs to be overcome.

I am therefore all the more impressed by the astonishing energy and optimism shown in 2020 by the doctoral students we supported. All of them responded with great flexibility to the changing circumstances and tried to make the best out of an unprecedented situation. I am delighted that, through our financial contributions, we have been able to help ensure that no additional uncertainties or problems arose in this regard. We have an obligation to do all we can to enable them to continue and successfully complete their theses despite potential delays and the need to change plans.

In these times in particular, the longstanding partnership based on trust between the staff responsible at the two universities and our office is proving its worth. Time and again, they put their heads together to find solutions that will work in practice. This gives me confidence that the obstacles thrown up by COVID-19 will be overcome successfully in 2021 too.



## PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020

Urs Lauffer, executive member of the Foundation Board

Our Foundation, set up in spring 2007, aims to fund talented young scholars in Switzerland, Austria and other European countries, on an exclusively non-profit basis. This is done in close co-operation with the universities in Salzburg and Basel.

In 2020, the University of Salzburg received a sum of EUR 250 000. This support enabled six candidates to continue their doctoral work at the Salzburg Centre of European Union Studies during the year under review. Our Foundation has once again supported the University of Basel with a grant of CHF 100 000 for the key research topic "Africa". This sum was used to fund two doctoral candidates.

We deeply value the intensive collaboration with the relevant staff at these universities. This is the best way to ensure the quality of the individual research projects, which is regularly monitored by the professors involved. The Humer Foundation therefore still does not consider applications sent directly to it by doctoral candidates.

The Foundation Board met in two sessions during the year under review. The spring session had to be held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while the autumn session was able to take place in Arlesheim as planned. The main focus was the evaluation and approval of requests for financial support for doctoral candidates, which was undertaken on the basis of thorough, balanced assessments made by the two universities. In addition, the Foundation's statutory business (annual accounts, yearly review, auditor's report, elections) was dealt with.

Furthermore, the Foundation Board periodically reviews the success of funding activities. In doing so, we assess both the effectiveness and efficiency of our work, thus measuring the usefulness and the economic efficiency of the allocation of our Foundation's resources. Based on

this, and using specific individual cases as templates, we then define our Foundation's goals for the new financial year. And finally, we also deal with all financial issues and risks (including investment principles, which are regularly reviewed and adjusted), and oversee the work of our office.

At the end of 2020, the organisation's capital totalled over CHF 1.7 million. Despite challenging market conditions due to the pandemic, the Foundation achieved a marginally positive financial result in the year under review, meaning that its organisational capital was not eroded as quickly as forecast. In this light, the Foundation Board believes that our Foundation can continue its activities until the end of 2024, although the organisation's capital will inevitably be reduced further over these years.

The office is managed by Lauffer & Frischknecht, a communication management consultancy, on a consultative basis. Stéphanie Ramel takes care of the administration, and Fritz Frischknecht, MA Econ., is responsible for the accounts department. Swiss GAAP FER 21 is used for the annual financial statements.

## CURRENT THESES

At present the Humer Foundation is supporting the following doctoral students:

### UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG EUROPEAN UNION STUDIES

SARAH DEISL – How do the EU institutions benefit from the shift of power caused by the crisis of the Rule of Law?

LÉO GOTARDA – Mainstreaming climate change into all EU policies

CARINA KOBLER – Mobile 24-hour Care Workers in the European Union: Different Labour Regimes and their Social Implications in Practice

KLAUDIA KOXHA – Populism and European Integration in the Western Balkans: How does populism affect country compliance with EU recommendations?

BIRGIT MITTER – Veins of European Sports Policy: A Quantitative Network Analysis of a European Soft Power Policy Field

NICO PETZ – Deep Learning in Time-Series Econometrics with Application in Macroeconomics

ANNA STELZER – Monetary policy and the distribution of income and wealth: The heterogeneous case of the euro area.

### UNIVERSITY OF BASEL AFRICA

RAJA DAOUAH – Emerging Trends, Developments and Opportunities of Islamic Finance: The Moroccan Case

ANDREA KIFYASI – Diplomatic History of China's Medical Assistance to Africa: A case study of Tanzania, 1960–2015

JULIA RENSING – Narratives and Negotiations of Colonial Legacies in Namibia and Germany – A Post-Colonial Heterotopia?

ESTHER TOLULOPE ILESANMI – Engendering the Colony; Maternal Health, Indigenous Knowledge and European Medicine in South-West Nigeria, 1925–1960.

## COMPLETED THESES

In 2020, the following dissertations made possible by our Foundation were completed:

### UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG EUROPEAN UNION STUDIES

SANDRA HUMMELBRUNNER – The Consistency of European External Action

MILENA KERN – Essays on the Liberalisation of International Trade in Services – Chances and Risks of Freedom of Services in the EU Common Market

ISABEL STAUDINGER – Conditionality. EU Financial Assistance as New Enforcement Mechanism of EU Law

### UNIVERSITY OF BASEL AFRICA

STEPHEN ASOL KAPINDE – Shifting Pendulum: The Struggle for Prophetic Advocacy in the Anglican Church towards Democratic Transformation of the Kenyan State (c. 1963–2012)

### UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH ASIA AND EUROPE

NINA RAGETH – Religion and Medicine. South Indian Guru-Organisations and Siddha-Medicine.

## KEY FINANCIAL DATA 31 December 2020

in CHF

	2020	2019	2018
Financial support	365 000	330 000	388 000
Annual result	-375 000	-70 000	-366 000
Organisation's capital	1 732 000	2 106 000	2 231 000

Since it was established in 2007, the Foundation has provided financial support totalling around CHF 7.9 million.

## FOUNDATION BOARD

### CHAIRMAN

Dr Franz B. Humer (Erlenbach)  
Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International  
Centre for Missing and Exploited Children

### MEMBERS

Dr Gottlieb Keller (Zug)  
Former member of the Corporate Executive  
Committee of F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd

### VICE CHAIRWOMAN

Renate Gerber (Arlesheim)  
Honorary Senator of the University of Salzburg,  
Vice Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the  
Fritz Gerber Foundation for talented young people

Urs Lauffer (Steinmaur)  
Partner in Lauffer & Frischknecht,  
Management Consultants for Communication

## OFFICE

HUMER FOUNDATION  
FOR ACADEMIC TALENT

Urs Lauffer  
Stéphanie Ramel  
Fritz Frischknecht

Kirchgasse 38  
Postfach  
8024 Zurich, Switzerland

Tel.: +41 44 254 60 32  
[www.humerstiftung.ch](http://www.humerstiftung.ch)

## HEAD OFFICE

Dr Benedikt A. Suter  
Lenz · Caemmerer

Elisabethenstrasse 15  
Postfach 430  
4010 Basel, Switzerland

## STATUTORY AUDITORS

BDO AG (Zurich)