

HUMER FOUNDATION

FOR ACADEMIC TALENT



PANDEMIC: SCIENCE HOLDS THE KEY

Dr Franz B. Humer, Chairman of the Foundation Board

Even now, more than two years after we first heard the shocking reports from China, the COVID-19 pandemic still has us firmly in its grasp. Although we have grown accustomed to many things, this only makes us long for our "old" lives all the more. Open borders, personal contact, events of all kinds, but also simply meeting up with friends and family – all of this we miss a little more each day.

Amongst all the restrictions and obstacles, however, the pandemic is also sharpening our focus on what is really important. And this undoubtedly – and especially – includes science and research, which are our genuine beacons of hope in these times. Just imagine where the world would be today if the research industry had not succeeded in developing effective vaccines at breakneck speed. And the fact that there are now various highly promising drugs on the horizon to fight COVID-19 underlines the key role played by research and development in times of crisis.

However, it is not just the medical sector that was and is put under pressure in a pandemic. Critical questions are also posed of our economies. Likewise, the actions of national governments, cross-border cooperation and many more factors need to be tackled from a scientific perspective. In short, the consequences of and lessons to be learnt from the pandemic will keep various fields of science occupied for a long while yet. What will be decisive in my view will be the courses of action that researchers can devise to exert a positive influence on how governments, but also individuals, behave during major crises in the future.

In other words, I think, science is more in demand nowadays than perhaps it has ever been – at a time when the public sector is stretched to the limit because of the direct and indirect costs of the pandemic. Yet, now more than ever, it would be fatal to meddle with the finances of the educational institutions, particularly those of the universities.

Doing so would jeopardise key areas of academic work, not least that of doctoral training, which has become much more professional over the past 20 years and thus requires significantly more funding than it used to.

This has led us to be particularly highly motivated in pursuing our purpose as a foundation over the last two years, especially since our funding has allowed the doctoral candidates whom we support at the universities in Basel and Salzburg to continue their challenging work despite tougher conditions. Needless to say, some doctorates that were originally intended to take three years will require a few more months to finish off, not least because of the border closures. But at least we are able to provide some financial support in these cases too.

Our Foundation has been working to benefit talented young scholars for 15 years now. Over this time, we have been able to help many highly impressive theses see the light of day and will be maintaining this support until the end of 2024. The valuable experience we have gained working with these exceptional members of the academic and scientific community has made a lasting impression on us, for which we are most grateful.



PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021

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.

2022 marks our Foundation's 15th anniversary. Since we were established, we have been able to support 68 doctoral candidates in Austria and Switzerland to the tune of over CHF 8 million.

In 2021, 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. As a basic principle, therefore, the Humer Foundation 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 Salzburg 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 2021, the organisation's capital totalled over CHF 1.37 million. Favourable market conditions enabled the Foundation to achieve a positive financial result in the year under review and thus slow the erosion of the organisation's capital. In this light, the Foundation Board is planning to 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

Effect of the Member States' Rule of Law crisis on the division of competences among EU organs

LÉO GOTARDA

The Mainstreaming of Climate Change into all EU Policies

KLAUDIA KOXHA

Populism and European Integration in Western Balkans

BIRGIT CAROLIN MITTER

Veins of European Cultural Policy: Awarding, Effects and Sustainability of European Cultural Project Funding

NICO PETZ

Essays on High Dimensional Vector Autoregressions using Bayesian Non-Parametric Methods

ANNA STELZER

Heterogeneous effects of monetary policy in the euro area

UNIVERSITY OF BASEL AFRICA

JULIA RENSING

Namibia-Germany: A Post-Colonial Heterotopia? Narratives and Negotiations of Colonial Legacies in Namibia and Germany

ESTHER TOLULOPE FADEYI

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

COMPLETED THESES

In 2021, the following dissertations made possible by our Foundation were completed:

UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG EUROPEAN UNION STUDIES

CHRISTIAN KLEINERTZ

Essays on the Labour Market Effects of Migration

UNIVERSITY OF BASEL AFRICA

ANDREA KIFYASI

Diplomatic History of China's Medical Assistance to Africa: A Case Study of Tanzania, 1960–2015

KEY FINANCIAL DATA 31 December 2021

in CHF

	2021	2020	2019
Financial support	377 000	365 000	330 000
Annual result	-340 000	-375 000	-70 000
Organisation's capital	1 371 000	1 732 000	2 106 000

Since it was established in 2007, the Foundation has provided financial support totalling around CHF 8.3 million.

FOUNDATION BOARD

CHAIRMAN

Dr Franz B. Humer (Erlenbach)
Businessman

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

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

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

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