

Kongress «Graubünden forscht – Young Scientists in Contest 2016»

## **Grussbotschaft des Präsidenten der Graduate School Graubünden**

Prof. Dr. Walter Reinhart, Chur

Esteemed scientists

Dear Regierungsrat Jäger, member of the government of Graubünden

Dear Mr. Ackermann, Vice-President of Grosser Landrat Davos

Esteemed members of the represented universities and research institutes

Dear guests

Welcome to this year's conference «Graubünden forscht – Young Scientists in Contest». For the fifth time, researchers from the Grisons and from the neighboring regions get together for this scientific networking event. Getting to know each other and listening to the different presentations about ongoing research will provoke personal and scientific stimuli for your future activities. The insight into research from other scientists who work at institutions in the Grisons and in South Tyrol will contribute to expand your horizon beyond your own field of scientific expertise.

During the next two days, you will have plenty of opportunity to enrich your knowledge with bits and pieces from colleagues and other scientific disciplines. I wish you, that during the conference you can establish new personal contacts, which may lead to fruitful collaborations between different institutions. Allow yourself to be curious: It is worthwhile to look for persons who work on projects similar or related to your research in the neighboring regions, such as South Tyrol, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Ticino, and eastern Switzerland. The cantonal and national borders should not be an obstacle if you plan to establish partnerships.

On top of the scientific presentations, we have added several exciting points to this year's program: A survey after the 2014 conference revealed the demand for more interactive podium discussions. Tonight we will have a panel discussion that will look at the career options for researchers inside and outside of academia. Tomorrow morning, a workshop on career development will explore this topic further and give practical advice.

At the conference dinner tonight, the Graduate School Graubünden will honor the researchers who have completed their doctoral thesis at one of the Grisons' based research institutions between 2014 and 2016. The conference will close Thursday night with the public panel discussion on ethical questions in medical research.

In May this year, I was named president of the Graduate School Graubünden. The Graduate School is a subsidiary of Academia Raetica, which has organized this conference every two years since 2008. The performance mandate issued by the government of Graubünden rules the activities and the funding of the Graduate School Graubünden. Its activities follow the cantonal strategy for the promotion of higher education and research. The objectives of the Graduate School are

- to support doctoral students and postdocs in the area,
- to strengthen the network between the research institutions based in Graubünden and the Swiss universities,
- and to strengthen research and education in Graubünden in general.

To this end, we organize courses and meetings such as this conference. Mr. Duri Bezzola will introduce the Graduate School in detail later on.

In addition to the high quality of life here, the renowned research institutions and universities are the cornerstones for the promising future of sciences in Graubünden. Dear scientists, let us hope that your work will be fruitful and that you can make a personal impact on future science. We hope that research will flourish as a crisis resistant industry and thereby strengthen the entire economy in our alpine region for the benefit of its residents.

Times have changed significantly since the establishment of the first research institutions in Graubünden. Today their research is up-to-date and is geared towards the future: For example:

1. Developing regenerative medicine and minimally invasive surgical techniques at the AO Foundation
2. Understanding the mechanisms of allergies at the Swiss Institute of Allergy and Asthma Research (SIAF)
3. Exploring and managing natural hazards and global risks at the WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF and at the Global Risk Forum Davos
4. Measuring the effects of solar radiation on the Earth's climate at the PMOD/ World Radiation Center
5. Exploring micro- and nanotechnologies, and photonics at the University of Applied Sciences HTW Chur, and at the CSEM Landquart
6. Providing solutions for multilingual and small schools in peripheral alpine regions at the Pädagogische Hochschule Graubünden.

These topics, among others, are crucial for the successful future of our society. It is very important and fulfilling, that we can make substantial contributions to such relevant issues in our own region.

This conference is based on the generous financial support of the Graubündner Kantonalbank, CK-CARE,

Novartis, Swiss Life, EMS-Chemie and Elektrizitätswerk Davos. In addition, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all participants, whether as contributors, as members of the jury, or as part of the podium.

Dear scientists, now we are eager to hear about your research. Tomorrow afternoon, the Graduate School Graubünden will award the best contributions in the different disciplines. Some research projects refer directly to the challenges faced by people in the Alps. This indicates the co-responsibility of each scientist for the general welfare and social development. Thus, scientific curiosity shall link to the obligation to contribute solutions for major challenges of our society.

I wish you an inspiring, informative, and convivial time in Davos. I hereby declare the fifth conference «Graubünden forscht – Young Scientists in Contest» as opened.