

Press Release

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ETH Zurich & SBB

New mobility initiative launched

Zurich, 23 January 2018

ETH Zurich is launching the ETH Mobility Initiative together with the Swiss federal railways (SBB). At the WEF annual meeting, ETH and SBB announced a significant expansion of research and teaching in the field of mobility. This expansion is to include new professorships, as well as an investment of around CHF 100 million over the first ten years.

Congested roads, packed trains and additional buses at rush hour: existing transport systems are being stretched to their limits. Technological progress is enabling new solutions, from self-driving vehicles and more efficient use of road and rail infrastructure to door-to-door mobility. Meeting the numerous challenges and creating marketable innovations requires the cooperation of the scientific, economic and public transport sectors. That's why ETH Zurich is launching the ETH Mobility Initiative together with SBB.

"With this initiative, we aim to further expand our activities and expertise in this promising area and establish ETH Zurich as a leading centre for mobility research, both nationally and internationally," says ETH President Lino Guzzella. "This collaboration will allow us to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital transformation – to improve people's quality of life and the attractiveness of Switzerland as a location. As a strategic funding partner, we are delighted to be able to access ETH's expertise and to support research and development in this field," adds SBB CEO Andreas Meyer.

Two to four new professorships

More than 20 research groups already work in various areas of mobility research at ETH Zurich. Over the next ten years, this specialist expertise will be expanded with the introduction of two to four new professorships. Up to 100 doctoral students and postdocs will also conduct research into mobility-related questions. In future, the new specialists could work on projects such as optimising mobility and logistics services, or on digitalising and therefore increasing the efficiency of public transport infrastructure. And there's also plenty to do in the field of individual transport: for example, modern engine technologies need to be further developed and the control and operation of self-driving transport systems need to be advanced.

New ETH Mobility Centre

In the newly created ETH Mobility Centre, ETH scientists will work with funding partners to research technological innovations. These will include the development of nationwide mobility simulations and the improvement of vehicle–track interaction. Regular meetings, workshops and international speakers will offer platforms for exchange and anchor the projects in partner organisations. The Mobility Centre will be based at either the city-centre or Hönggerberg campus and could also feature an offshoot in the Dübendorf Innovation Park. Other aspects of the initiative will aim to facilitate exchange with politicians and the public on mobility-related issues, as well as training talented young researchers in this field.

CHF 100 million for the next ten years

The first ten years of the project will require CHF 100 million in funding. Funding partners such as SBB will cover approximately half of these requirements, along with other companies, organisations, foundations and private individuals. ETH Zurich will provide the remainder.

Further information

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ETH Zurich

ETH Zurich's roots date back to 1855, when it was established by the founders of modern Switzerland as a site of innovation and knowledge. Students benefit from an environment that promotes independent thinking, and researchers from surroundings that inspire top performance. Five hundred professors instruct around 20,000 students – including 4,000 doctoral students – from more than 120 countries. ETH files 90 patents and produces 200 inventions per year. Since 1996, the university has generated 330 spin-off companies.

www.ethz.ch/en

ETH Zurich Foundation

The ETH Zurich Foundation unites companies, private individuals and foundations with ETH Zurich. As the leading technology and science foundation, it supports the university in achieving its most important strategic objectives in education and research. Funding partners benefit from access to bold, high-quality partnerships with one of the best universities anywhere in the world, and the opportunity to work together to push boundaries.

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