



International Physics Olympiad, University of Zurich
Monday, 11 July 2016

Address by Dr Silvia Steiner, Head of Canton Zurich
Department of Education

Dear conference organisers and participants,
ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to Switzerland, and welcome to Zurich! It's my pleasure to welcome you to the 47th International Physics Olympiad here in the Canton and City of Zurich and greet you on behalf of the Zurich government.

Did you know that Albert Einstein submitted his PhD thesis at this very university here in Zurich back in 1905? Within only a few months he had published four more publications, including the light quanta hypothesis that subsequently earned him a Nobel Prize.

If they'd had a Physics Olympiad back then I guess Einstein would have won it. A hundred and eleven years later, Albert Einstein is unfortunately no longer with us. At least that means that you all still have a chance of winning a medal!

My own personal connection with Albert Einstein is that I share a birthday with him. But that's where the similarity ends: I was only smart enough to study law.

Joking apart, I'm very proud that Zurich has been chosen to host this year's Physics Olympiad. I think Zurich is the ideal venue for the conference, for two reasons in particular:



- First is Zurich's global standing as a centre of higher education and research. It's home to not just one, but two, internationally top-ranked establishments: the University of Zurich, and the ETH, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

And the large number of successful corporations that operate internationally out of Zurich help make it even more attractive as a centre of knowledge and learning.

So if at any point in the future you're looking for a great place to study or work, I can warmly recommend Zurich!

- The second reason why Zurich is the ideal venue for the Olympiad is the great weight we place on promoting the MINT disciplines: mathematics, IT, natural sciences and technology.
The strength of our economy and welfare depends to a large extent on experts in these disciplines working in industry, medicine, banking, insurance and other areas. So the message to all you here taking part in the Physics Olympiad is that we need you, and will continue to need you in the future!

In the next few days you're going to be applying your theoretical and experimental expertise to some complex physical problems. I wish you every success, and also a lot of fun in the process. I'm convinced that if you enjoy what you do, you'll be even more motivated and innovative. And that's good for all of us.

As in the original Olympics, it's not just winning that counts, but taking part as a team. Alongside the competitions the organisers have put together a programme of interesting fringe events to give you the opportunity to network and experience people from different cultures. I'd heartily recommend you to take full advantage of this opportunity. And of course I'd be delighted if you also took the opportunity to check out the many wonderful things that Zurich has to offer.



In closing, I'd like to thank you all again for visiting us here in Zurich and taking part in the Physics Olympiad. I'd also like to thank the organisers and partners without whom the event wouldn't be possible in the first place. Particular thanks of course go to the Swiss Physics Olympiad Association and to University of Zurich President Michael Hengartner and his team.

All that remains for me to do is to wish you the best of luck at the 47th International Physics Olympiad! Thank you for your attention.