# ACECH Annual Report

2019





## Letter from the President

Dear members and friends of ACECH,

2019 marked the second year since our creation as Society. Our primary focus has been its consolidation to ultimately leverage our community of researchers, disseminate science, and build bridges between institutions in Spain and Switzerland. With these clear targets in mind, we have executed an ambitious number of initiatives. Let me walk you through some of the most relevant milestones:

- We enjoyed a scientific/cultural event in Ticino. We gathered at the IRB in Bellinzona
  in a scientific event to discuss about Biomedicine. It followed a cultural visit to the
  stunning castles of Bellinzona, where our members could get-to-know each other in a
  relaxed environment.
- One key element of our mission is to promote science to the general public through outreach activities. In this regard, we have run a number of activities. For example, we held a cultural event at Ateneo in Zurich, where the public could enjoy an interesting mixture of music and knowledge about galaxies. In addition, our travelling exhibition, whereby a number of scientific projects of our members is displayed, continued its tour de Suisse around a number of high schools. This initiative has sparked great interest across young students and teachers. Also in the same dissemination context, some of our members have collaborated with Spain's national public radio, broadcasting their personal and working experiences.
- As our statuses lay down, we held our annual General Assembly, where we received
  the mandate from our members to continue working in the same direction. On the
  same day, we could enjoy a scientific session of multidisciplinary talks imparted by
  world-class researchers in Switzerland.
- One aspect our members often demand is information regarding non-academic career development opportunities. Switzerland's entrepreneurial ecosystem is indeed worldclass. For this reason, we organized at EMPA an event whereby successful entrepreneurs shared their experience and advice, and Swiss and Spanish funding agencies presented funding schemes and opportunities.
- Since last year, ACECH is also part of RAICEX, which is a network of sister societies
  of Spanish researchers located in 17 foreign countries. RAICEX brings together around
  4,000 researchers to give them a single voice. During the last year, we attended
  RAICEX's general assembly in Madrid, where we could also voice our opinion to
  important science policy makers and stakeholders, like for example Pedro Duque
  (Spain's Minister of Science, Innovation and Universities) and Rosa Menéndez
  (president of CSIC).
- Our communication team continued working to transmit relevant and useful information to our members.



I am most happy to sense that indeed, the Society is consolidating, as evidenced by the increasing number of members and the positive feedback we often receive from our community. The latter being the rewarding aspect of this endeavor.

As you can surely imagine, this success is only possible by combining institutional and sponsoring support with the motivation, massive hard work and passion of the rest of the board and volunteers. I am most grateful to all of them. It is just such a joy and privilege to work and share personal experiences with them.

I look forward to a great future of ACECH.

Truly yours,

Pablo Sinues

For more information, please contact <a href="mailto:president@acech.ch">president@acech.ch</a>



Pablo Sinues, President of ACECH

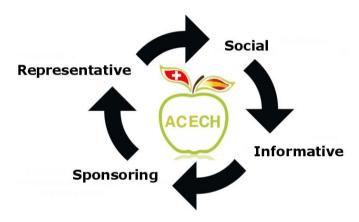


## Vision and Goals

ACECH is an independent non-profit organization created by and for the community of Spanish researchers in Switzerland. Funded in November 2017 and managed entirely by volunteers, the association aims at serving as a network for mutual support and strengthening the collaboration between Spain and Switzerland by channeling and disseminating the interests and activities of its members to the authorities and civil societies of both countries.

The work of the association develops around four main goals:

- **Representative** Representation of the Spanish research community in Switzerland to the Spanish and Swiss authorities.
- Social Support and collaboration between members.
- **Informative** Scientific dissemination.
- **Sponsoring** Promotion and mediation to create and reinforce collaborations between Spain and Switzerland.



Main goals of ACECH

These goals are carried out through a series of both continued and eventual activities including networking, social and scientific events for members and public, distribution of relevant information among members, development of mentoring and support tools for young researchers and newcomers, collaboration with the Office for Education on outreach activities and bilateral discussions with the Spanish Embassy and Ministry for Education to advocate for better return opportunities and promote positive transformations of the Spanish science system.

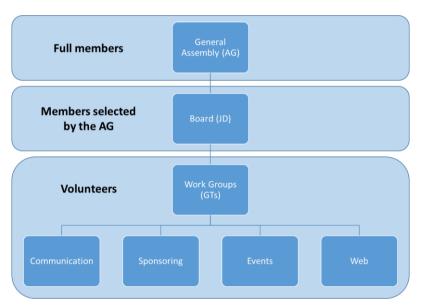
ACECH belongs to the Network of Spanish Researchers Abroad (Red de Asociaciones de Investigadores y Científicos Españoles en el Exterior: RAICEX). This network, formed by 15 associations registered in different countries, appears as an answer to the growing need of joining and representing under a common frame the community of expatriate Spanish researchers interested in sharing and transferring their competences and acquired knowledge in a global and multilateral scientific context.



### Structure

ACECH was created and is managed exclusively by volunteers. The association is structured as follows:

- The General Assembly (Asamblea General: AG) is the highest decision-making body of the association, and it is composed of all the full members.
- The Board (Junta Directiva: JD) is the managing body of the association, and it is composed of five members elected by the AG.
- The Work Groups (Grupos de Trabajo: GTs), composed by voluntary members, are responsible for the operation of the association in coordination with the JD.



Structure of ACECH

The structure and functions of the GTs is adapted to the running needs of the association, covering both permanent and continuous tasks and temporary actions. ACECH is currently composed of four GTs, run by around 12 volunteers.

- **GT Communication** takes care of all the digital communication activities, including email correspondence and management of ACECH social networks (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram).
- **GT Sponsoring** is in charge finding and stablishing sponsoring agreements with public and private bodies to fund the operation and activities of the association.
- **GT Events** is responsible for planning and organizing all ACECH events such as the yearly General Assembly and various networking, scientific and social activities.
- **GT Web** takes care of updating and maintaining the ACECH website.





























## **Members**

A summary of the types of memberships and their benefits are shown in the following table:

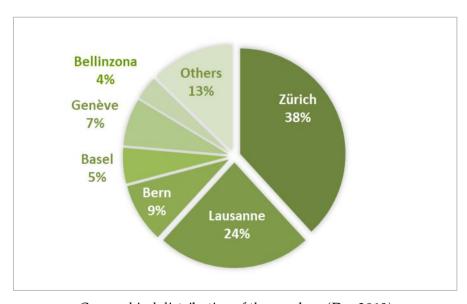
Advantages and rights of ACECH memberships

	Full Members	Associated Members
Updates about activities and Scientific Events	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>
Free Attendance to Events		×
Linkedin Acech Group	1	×
(job offers, networking)	•	
Dissemination of Scientific Publications		×
Executive Board and Task groups involvement	<b>√</b>	×
Personal Development	<b>~</b>	×
(grants, courses, mentorship program)		
Attendance and Vote in the Annual General Assembly		×
Annual Fee (CHF)	50 / 25*	Free

\*Students and unemployed members

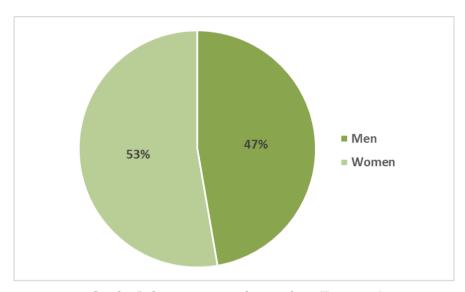
During the year (2019), a total of **55 scientists** paid the corresponding annual fee and became **Full Members** with all the rights described in the statutes of the Association. Besides, other advantages offered were the free attendance and funding support for travelling to our scientific events, membership of Raicex, publications dissemination, networking and access to our LinkedIn group where the job offers are posted. Moreover, **240 scientists**, who showed their interest in ACECH, received general information about our events and activities as **Associated Members** (*Friends*).

Some other figures and statics updated (December 2019) can be found in the next graphics:

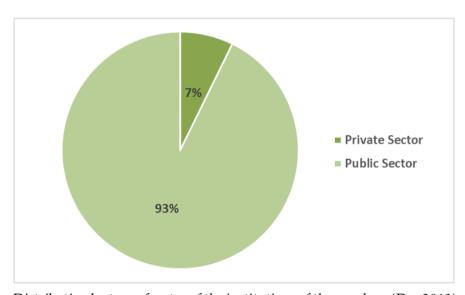


Geographical distribution of the members (Dec 2019)





Gender Balance amongst the members (Dec 2019)



Distribution by type of sector of the institutions of the members (Dec 2019)



## **Actions**

#### Scientific and cultural event in Bellinzona

[March 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB) and castles of Bellinzona (UNESCO World Heritage Site)]

This was a targeted event for researchers with a special interest in the Biomedical domain. Our host was Santiago F. González, group leader at IRB. He kindly organized a guided tour at IRB, lunch and dinner, as well as a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bellinzona. In addition, we had representatives of ASIERI (i.e. Society of Spanish researchers in Italy), offering an opportunity to network and share experiences with our neighboring peers.



Flyer Scientific and cultural event in Bellinzona

**Conclusions:** While the attendance was limited (around 15 participants), it was generally perceived that the quality of the talks was top-notch, sparking interesting discussions. It was also an excellent opportunity to understand first-hand the world-class science that it is being conducted at IRB, promoting as a result further interaction between researchers at IRB and others located in different parts of Switzerland. Regarding the cultural part of the event, it was enjoyed and useful to create personal bonds between the participants.







Welcome presentation from Dr. Santiago F. González (left) and networking lunch (right)

#### Ciencia y música en el Ateneo "Science and music in the Ateneo"

[April 5th, 2019 (19:00 – 22:00). Kantonsschule Stadelhofen, Zürich]

ACECH collaborated in the organization of an evening where science and music came together. We did it together with the Spanish Ateneo, the Spanish Embassy, and Spanish Consulate in Zürich. The event was imbedded in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Ateneo.

Objectives of the event Science and music in the Ateneo:

- Offering a muster of the latest advances in the field of astronomy, where Spanish researchers contribute actively to the advancement of the sciences.
- Offering an space to disseminate the Spanish culture. Therefore, we organized a concert of live vocals and piano boleros and tangos.

In the first part of the event, Paula Díaz presented the process of creation of the ACECH association, and its most important milestones in the first year. After that, Dr. Santiago Erroz Ferrer, presented us a talk called "Las galaxias: el Atlas del Universo", (The Galaxies, the Universe's Atlas). He is PhD in astrophysics by the Instituto de astrofísica de Canarias (IAC), 2015. After that, he came to Switzerland to work at the ETH Zürich as a postdoctoral researcher, while in the lasts years he has been an ACECH member, collaborating in several talks. Dr. Santiago Erroz Ferrer explained us how Spain continually contributes to the international "Sphere" in astrophysics with its discoveries and projects done in the IAC in Tenerife. He also described us, in a very interesting and visual presentation, what the Galaxies are, how they move, what they include (stars, planets, obscure matter, etc.) and how we can observe them with a telescope.





Dr. Santiago Erroz Ferrer presenting the talk "Las galaxias: el Atlas del Universo", (The Galaxies, the Universe's Atlas).

In the second part of the event, María-José Burguillos and Vicente Borland entertained us with a vocal concert and live piano music. The magnificent voice of María-José Burguillos immersed the audience in the world of boleros and tangos. The musicians, both with a large international trajectory, have several times performed in Switzerland. To close the event we could taste Spanish wine and food.



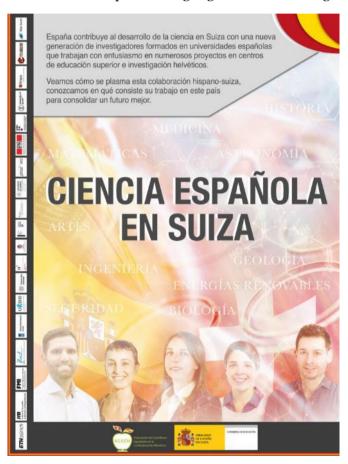
María-José Burguillos singing and Vicente Borland playing live piano music.

**Conclusions:** The event Science and music in the Ateneo was very warmly welcomed, the participation was extraordinary, about 50 people attended. The attendants were of all ages, including several members of the Spanish Embassy and Consulate. The Spanish Consul at Zürich offered a little speech, thanking both the Ateneo to bring close the Spanish culture, and the ACECH to put together art and science.



#### Travelling Exhibition "Spanish Science in Switzerland"

The Spanish Consulate for Education in Switzerland and ACECH co-organized an exhibition travelling across Swiss high schools about the work of Spanish scientist in Swiss Research Institutions. The exhibition is formed by 10 posters describing 27 research projects covering diverse topics. The goal of the exhibition was to introduce young students interested in Spanish language to research in a simple and engaging manner. The exhibition rotated along 2019 around Swiss centers in which Spanish language courses are taught.



Flyer "Spanish Science in Switzerland"

## **General Assembly 2019**

[June 22th, 2019 (10:30-16:30). Pädagogische Hochschule Bern and Embassy of Spain in Bern]

The second General Assembly of ACECH was again organized in Bern to facilitate attendance from any part of Switzerland. The formal assembly took place during the morning, where a summary of ACECH activities during ending year was provided to attending members, and the strategic plan for the next year was presented and discussed. The afternoon session included to highly interesting talks about immunology and neuroeconomics from two excellent Spanish scientist carrying out their research activity in Switzerland: Dra. Mireia



Sospedra Ramos and Prof. Dr. Carlos Alós-Ferrer. The event also included the presentation of the poster exhibition "Spanish Science in Switzerland", organized by the Spanish Consulate for Education in Switzerland in close collaboration with ACECH members. As in previous editions, the assembly closed with a charming reception at the Spanish Embassy in Bern.



Flyer General Assembly 2019

Conclusions: The attendance to ACECH 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly was limited (around 20 participants), as expected considering that most ACECH members are not Bern residents and need to commute from other cities to attend the event. This issue, in extension to other ACECH events, was one of the main points of discussion among the participants, leading to the definition of various concrete actions in the strategic plan for the next year aimed at increasing the interest and participation of members. Overall, the general perception of ACECH actions along the ending year was very positive considering its short life and all participants agreed on the positive outlook for the short and medium future.





Discussion around the poster exhibition "Spanish Science in Switzerland" (left) and ápero (right)



#### RAICEX assembly and symposium on Scientific Diplomacy

[September 30th-October 1st, 2019. Fundación Ramón Areces, Madrid]

We held an internal RAICEX (https://raicex.wordpress.com/) meeting comprising all the societies under its umbrella. We discussed the execution plan and tasks were distributed across all members. Our main milestones over the last year has been the delivery two reports: informe ATRAE (https://raicex.wordpress.com/informe-atrae/) and Informe sobre Leyes de Mecenazgo y sobre la incentivación de las colaboraciones Academia-Industria en diferentes países (en colaboración con la Real Academia de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales)

#### https://raicex.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/informe-raicex-18.9.19.pdf

Regarding the symposium on Scientific Diplomacy, we had the opportunity to meet and discuss with a number of science stakeholders in Spain, such as Pedro Duque (Spain's Minister of Science, Innovation and Universities) and Rosa Menéndez (president of CSIC). An executive summary with further details can be found in this link:

#### https://raicex.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/resumen-ejecutivo-para-los-socios.pdf

**Conclusions:** This was a productive event and the resulting milestones are twofold: i) RAICEX internal structure is consolidating solidly and ii) it is becoming a key interlocutor to channel suggestions and initiatives to ultimately make Spain's science, research and innovation ecosystem more attractive to global talent.



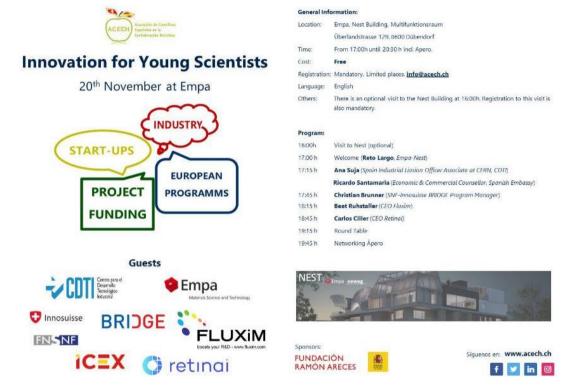
Symposium on Scientific Diplomacy at Fundacion Ramon Areces



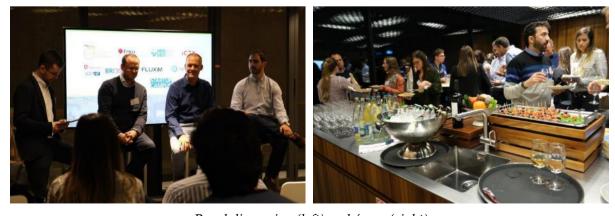
#### **Innovation Event (EMPA)**

[November 30th, 2019 (16.00-20.30). EMPA Nest Building, Dübendorf, Zürich]

In November, we organized an event about "Innovation and future alternatives for doctoral students and postdocs outside the laboratory". The idea was to bring people related to Innosuisse and from the Innovation Spanish office (CDTI) in order to explain their programs. We also had entrepreneurs of successful start-ups as well as different experts from the innovation scene in Switzerland (venture capitals, hubs, technology transfer, patents,..) sharing their personal experiences and expertise in a round-table. The event included a guided visit to the Nest Building as well as an Apéro to promote the networking among the attendees and speakers.



Flyer Innovation Event (EMPA)



Panel discussion (left) and ápero (right)



#### Navidades con RAICEX

[December 12th, 2019. Ciudad de la Luz, Alicante]

On the 20.12.2019, the "Conselleria de Innovación, Universidades, Ciencia y Sociedad Digital" invited ACECH to participate to the event "NAVIDADES CON RAICEX". In this event, representatives of RAICEX, a network of Spanish scientific associations' abroad (raicex.wordpress.com), did present their ATRAE (Atracción de Talento y retorno a España) report. In addition, scientists from the network and scientists who have been integrated into the Valencian research system through the "GenT" programs and the "Junior Scientific Excellence" grants, did present their experiences and expectations for the future. The event was organized in "Ciudad de la Luz (Alicante)" and moderated by scientists of the "Comunitat Valenciana" which have been distinguished with the "Jaume I" awards.





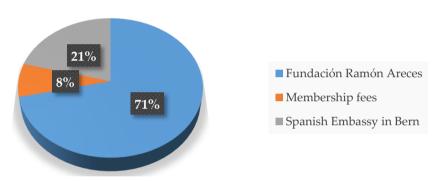
Presentation (left) and panel discussion (right)



# **Treasurer Report**

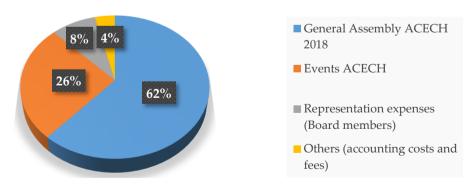
Only volunteers manage ACECH and the membership fees of the associates provides its economical independency. However, the Board of directors has requested economical support from public and private institutions in order to achieve all the proposed activities. It is thanks to this economical support that ACECH has been organizing a range of activities during 2019. Fundación Ramón Areces that contributed up to 71% of the total income has provided the main economic support.

## Income (CHF 12'634)



Fundación Ramón Areces	CHF 9'019
Membership fees	CHF 975
Spanish Embassy in Bern	CHF 2'640
TOTAL	CHF 12'634

## Expenditure (CHF 9'123)



General Assembly ACECH 2019	CHF 5'619
Events ACECH	CHF 2'393
Representation expenses (Board members)	CHF 768
Others (accounting costs and fees)	CHF 343
TOTAL	CHF 9'123



# **Strategic Plans for Next Year**

#### Microcharlas

[March 28th, 2020, Einsideln Abbey] (Temporarily postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions)

After the success of the NanoTalks carried out in October 2018 in the Neuchâtel Ethnography Museum, ACECH decided to repeat it in 2020, changing the stage to the Einsideln Abbey. The NanoTalks are a platform to inspire and stimulate talks about art, science and technology. Speakers create understandable talks for all audiences on complex issues, and inspire the audience with new ideas.

Objectives of the NanoTalks, which contribute to the ACECH objectives:

- Provide a platform to bring closer the different branches of science (human sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, arts, etc.).
- Exchange research findings in a fresh and dynamic way.
- Continue gathering new ACECH members.

The Einsiedeln Abbey is considered the most important baroque church in Switzerland. It is famous for its black Virgin and is a popular pilgrimage destination along the Camino de Santiago. Its library has about 230,000 books, some of which are handwritten documents dating from the 10th century. After the NanoTalks, which will take place in a seminar center in the vicinity, we will make a guided tour of the Abbey and library (approx. 90 minutes). The excursion is limited to a maximum of 30 people. If there is enough demand, we could organize two separate tours.



Einsideln Abbey, venue of next NanoTalk event in March 2020 (Foto: www.zuerich.com).



#### Scientific Event at CERN

[June 13th, 2020. CERN, Geneva] (Temporarily postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions)

CERN is one of the world's largest and most respected centers for scientific research and as such, the presence of Spanish scientist community is very significant. Hence, the possibility of collaborating with such an organization remains crucial for ACECH.

One of the main objectives set by ACECH in 2019, is to increase the involvement and participation of the southern part of Switzerland since currently, it is larger the support coming from the northern part of the country.

With this scope, a close alliance and teamwork has been taking place throughout 2019 between board members of the association and scientist established on CERN. This effort yielded one of the main ACECH annual events housed by CERN.

The event will take place June 13<sup>th</sup> and it will also foster the Italian (ASIERI) and French (SIEF) sister associations. The program of the event will consist of an encounter of ACECH members around a key note from a renown Spanish scientist Mariano Barbacid, where he can share not only his impressive scientific trajectory but as well his vision on science management in Spain. As well as a talk from Spanish physicists working at CERN and a group guided visit to the CERN particle accelerator. The event will also comprise a networking lunch, which will allow an unmatched collaboration opportunities among all three associations and its members.

This experience will entail seamless networking possibilities for attendees within an excellent environment as well as great visibility for ACECH. It would also represent an opportunity to increase our engagement of members from the Geneva hub given the proximity of the location.

## **General Assembly 2020**

[June 14th, 2020. CERN, Geneva]

ACECH 3<sup>rd</sup> general assembly will be co-located with the Scientific Event at CERN, taking place one day after (Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>) in the same CERN venue. As in previous editions, the general assembly will serve to review the activities of the association during the previous year, approve the strategic plan for the coming one and facilitate an space for open discussion and feedback around the association actions and impact. This edition will additionally hold the election process for the renewal of the board every 2<sup>nd</sup> year as stated in ACECH statutes. The candidates will be presented to all participants and the new board selected by majority voting among all present ACECH full-members.



#### Mentoring Program Launch (B.NOMIO)

ACECH plans to put in place a structured mentoring program during last semester of 2020. Such program will consist on the match of two members of ACECH in order to bridge the gap between senior scientist and younger professionals and connect people across different backgrounds and geographies while also engaging members with the association's activities. New arrivals would have a "go-to" person for advice and expertise regarding not only carrier counsel and networking building but also would facilitate real-world information about life in Switzerland and personal support.

We believe that this kind of mentoring programs will give value to the association by providing structure for networking among members. A mentorship platform will be put in place through ACECH website where assigned mentors and mentees would interact. Signing up to the mentoring program would be free of charge for ACECH members.



# **Sponsors and Partners**

Fundación Ramón Areces

# FUNDACIÓN RAMÓN ARECES

FECYT: Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología



AECID: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo



Embajada de España en Suiza





## **Contact**

You can find more information on www.acech.ch, and contact and follow ACECH on:

Email: info@acech.ch

Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/aso">https://twitter.com/aso</a> acech

LinkedIn: <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/acech/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/acech/</a>

Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/AsoACECHSuiza/">https://www.facebook.com/AsoACECHSuiza/</a>

Instagram: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/aso">https://www.instagram.com/aso</a> acech/

