

PRESS RELEASE

Merger of ICTswitzerland and digitalswitzerland

Pooled power for digital Switzerland

The general assemblies of both digitalswitzerland and ICTswitzerland have agreed to merge. This new umbrella organisation – under the name digitalswitzerland – combines the strengths of 220 members from business, the public sector, non-government organisations and associations, as well as research and academia, and will do even more to establish Switzerland as a leading digital research and innovation location. In particular, this new organisation will expand the public dialogue through Swiss Digital Days and other programmes and strengthen its commitment to digital issues at a political level, for example, by supporting the rapid introduction of E-ID, strengthening MINT (mathematics, information technology, natural sciences, and technology) vocational training and promoting the startup ecosystem in Switzerland.

Bern/Zürich/Lausanne, 2 October 2020. Following the signing of the letter of intent to merge, the members of the umbrella organisation ICTswitzerland and the digitalswitzerland location initiative have now confirmed the proposed merger at their respective general assemblies. As a location initiative, digitalswitzerland has been committed to establishing Switzerland as a leading international digital innovation hub. ICTswitzerland has represented selected and overarching digitisation issues connected to the general public, the government and industry with a special focus being given to cyber security and to the education and training of ICT specialists.

Merging under the name digitalswitzerland, the new 220-member organisation will combine both strategies to become the most relevant umbrella organisation in digital Switzerland. The merger will enable the comprehensive integration of all sectors and public administration within the digital economy. This will strengthen Switzerland as a digital and innovative location both at home and abroad. Ivo Furrer will remain President of digitalswitzerland; the current President of ICTswitzerland, National Councilor Marcel Dobler, will be Vice-President.

The umbrella organisation aims to develop selected skills and topics that can credibly position and strengthen Switzerland as a leading location for digital research and innovation. The focus will be on developing and implementing measures that will increase the number of MINT professionals at all levels of the education system, with the aim of meeting the demand for skilled professionals. The expansion of the digital ecosystem through cross-sectoral collaboration in order to facilitate continual innovation will also be emphasised. In addition, the organisation will increase its engagement to improve the cyber resilience of the federal government, the economy, and the general public and will also ensure that ethical standards are

maintained in the digital world. Dialogue with the Swiss public will be intensified thanks to Swiss Digital Days, which are held annually throughout the country. The organisation will continue to promote the startup ecosystem so that young entrepreneurs receive optimal support in terms of growth and scaling. On the political stage, it will advocate the digital issues and concerns of digitalswitzerland members. A first joint commitment concerns the rapid introduction of the federally approved and verified E-ID.

The merger was decided on 2 October and is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. The umbrella organisation will have offices in three cities: Lausanne, Bern and Zurich. Nicolas Bürer will assume overall responsibility for digitalswitzerland. Andreas W. Kaelin will be Deputy Managing Director and Head of the Bern office. He will be responsible for representing political interests, as well as for the cyber security and ICT vocational training dossiers. Sébastien Kulling will continue as Head of the Lausanne office while also serving as Deputy Managing Director. He is responsible for all members and activities in the Suisse Romandie.

Following the merger, the organisation's Management Board will consist of the following members:

Ivo Furrer (President) - Helvetia & Julius Baer, Marcel Dobler (Vice-President) – National Council, Yvonne Bettkober - AWS, Jochen Decker - SBB, Wolfgang Eger – The Post, Thomas Flatt - SwissICT, Franz Grüter - National Council, Peter Grütter - Asut, Marco Huwiler - Accenture, René Hüsler - HSLU, Marianne Janik - Microsoft, Gabriela Keller - Ergon, Christian Keller - IBM, Andreas Knöpfli - Swico, Joël Mesot - ETH Zurich, Stefan Metzger - Cognizant, Cédric Moret - Elca, Christophe Nicolas - Kudelski, Marcel Stalder - Chain IQ, Martin Vetterli - EPFL, Marc Walder - Ringier, Patrick Warnking - Google, Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler - Swisscom, and Anja Wyden Guelpa - civicLab.

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digitalswitzerland

About digitalswitzerland

digitalswitzerland, was formed in 2020 through the merger of the umbrella organisation “ICTswitzerland”, which was founded in 1980, and digitalswitzerland, which was founded in 2015. The newly-created organisation is the point of contact for all digitisation issues and is dedicated to solving the corresponding political, economic and social challenges arising from it.

digitalswitzerland is committed to ensuring that the potential of digital technologies is recognised, promoted and used by decision-makers in business, politics, research and education as well as by the general public. From 2021, the organisation will include more than 220 of the most renowned companies and organisations and innovative locations throughout Switzerland. The focus is on eight areas: education and talent, networks and mobilisation, international visibility, political and economic conditions, public dialogue (facilitated through Swiss Digital Days), the startup ecosystem, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and cyber resilience. Until the merger is complete, more information about all topics can still be found on the websites of the individual organisations.

www.ictswitzerland.ch and www.digitalswitzerland.com.