

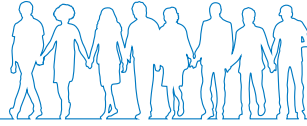


**nav**

novartis angestellten verband  
novartis employees association

Diversity





## Save The Date: NAV General Meeting 2024

Esteemed member

We kindly ask you to already mark the date of the 26th NAV General Meeting 2024.

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

The invitation will reach you promptly in the new year.

We are looking forward to your participation!

## Board of Education NAV

Esteemed member

With the QR code adjacent, we are providing you the lecture (in German only) by Prof. em. Theo Wehner from 5 September 2023, available until the end of this year.



We are very pleased to announce another interesting lecture with Prof. em. Theo Wehner. More collegiality at work: How does that work amongst the many individualists? Please mark the date and be looking forward to more information that we will share with you in the new year.

Thursday, 21 March 2024

We are looking forward to your participation!





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# Editorial

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Dear member

We will soon be saying goodbye to the year 2023. It was again a challenging and a “multifaceted” year. Should the common theme throughout this issue not become immediately obvious to you, it can be found in the DIVERSITY of our selection of topics.

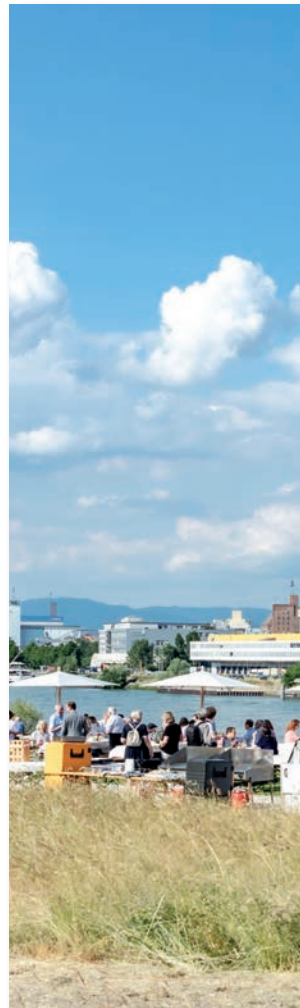
Our bylaws state: an association pursuant to Art. 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code under the name “NAV Novartis Employees Association” exists with its registered office in Basel. It is non-affiliated with any political party or any denomination. Non-affiliation with any political party is akin to being “neutral.” However, this does not mean that we will close our minds to the politically important issues facing our company, such as our business location in Northwestern Switzerland. Quite the opposite in fact! As an association, we see it as our duty to provide scope for political opinions. This is underpinned by our purpose, as given in Art. 2: The representation of the employment policy, economic and social interests of its members, and of employees in general, to the Novartis Management and to the outside world.

In view of the above bylaws, we are very pleased to have won the support Elisabeth Schneider-Schneiter to pen an article for us. “Our relationship with the EU has lasted for what feels like an eternity. Unfortunately, so has our crisis.” This was written by ELISABETH SCHNEIDER-SCHNEITER, National Councilor for the Die Mitte (BL) party, and it encapsulates the situation perfectly. She has been promoting Northwestern Switzerland and Basel as a business location for many years, not only in the Federal Parliament but also as President of the Basel Chamber of Commerce.

In a personal interview, MATTHIAS LEUENBERGER, Country President Novartis Switzerland, answers questions from Katrin Schmid, Swiss Public Affairs, about the importance of good relations with the EU and the significance of bilateral agreements for Novartis and for our Swiss economy.

Does the name RIET GROND mean anything to you? Our new Head of P&O for Switzerland recounts for us, in a very personal profile, his career at Novartis, the many “lessons learned” and how 20 years of professional experience at Novartis have shaped him.

Thirty years of actively promoting STEM subjects in the region – a good reason to celebrate! To mark this anniversary, the School<sup>Lab</sup> moved into new, prominent premises in the heart of the Novartis Campus – at Fabrikstrasse 10 – at the beginning of August 2023. “Our school laboratory seeks to arouse the curiosity and interest of students to make them want to pursue a scientific line of work.” This



is something that ANITA JESEL, Head of School<sup>Lab</sup> Novartis, and MARKUS REINELT, Head Early Career & Employee Assistance Novartis, totally agree on.

The article by ADRIAN GRIMM, Cultural Manager in Basel, on the Vogel Gryff is non-denominational. We are convinced that, especially in times like these, we would do well to retain our time-honored traditions and pass these on, so allowing them to be nurtured and maintained.

The celebration of the NAV's 25th anniversary certainly marked an unforgettable moment that we can look back on in 2023. Enjoy the photographic coverage in the middle of the magazine!

We wish you much gratification while reading this issue, an enjoyable and healthy end to the year and thank you sincerely for your loyalty to us.

Andrea Fedriga-Haegeli & Davide Lauditi  
Co-Chairs NAV





# Now we need to wrap up the package!

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After some tough exploratory talks, a promising package of solutions is finally on the table regarding the EU-Switzerland question. So now the Federal Council must open negotiations and get the EU's concessions down on paper. It's important both for the life sciences sector and for Switzerland in general.



**Elisabeth Schneider-Schneiter**  
National Councilor for Die Mitte (BL) and President of the Chambers of Commerce of both Basel cantons

## What has happened so far

Our relationship with the EU feels as if it has gone on forever. Unfortunately, so too does the crisis in our relationship. In 2010 the then Federal Councilor Doris Leuthard agreed with the EU Commission to hold exploratory talks about a framework agreement which would set out the future rules governing the Switzerland-EU relationship. From 2014 onwards, Switzerland repeatedly put off the EU because it was busy dealing with other important matters. Finally, in May 2021 the Federal Council stormed out of the room where the negotiations on the Institutional Agreement (InstA) were taking place and effectively slammed the door on it. With no plan B, note. Following a short period of radio silence, more exploratory talks took place, led by the Swiss chief negotiator Livia Leu – with remarkable results.

## Package without strings

Today there is an extensive package of solutions on the table. It is bursting with a series of agreements on subjects as wide-ranging as research, food, electricity, health, dispute resolution and others. This precious package leaves more scope for compromise on institutional

questions, because they are addressed separately, for each individual agreement, and not as a whole, as they were in the InstA.

Certainly, the EU has made some valuable concessions in the latest round of talks. For example, it has accommodated us on protecting and controlling wages, with a safeguarding clause under which Switzerland can retain its strong wage protection and maintain peaceful industrial relations. The EU has also shown itself willing to compromise on freedom of movement – for example on the expulsion of foreign criminals. And in the Citizen's Rights Directive it has proposed another safeguarding clause to prevent EU citizens from subverting the Swiss social security system.

## Two different perspectives

In Brussels, the Swiss question is regarded as tedious. Switzerland has the reputation of wanting to have its cake and eat it: access to the internal market without fully accepting its rules. This is in breach of one of Europe's articles of faith: if you want to operate in the EU internal market, you have to accept the relevant EU rules. No ifs or buts.

But of course from the Swiss point of view, things look different. For our economy and society, the bilateral agreements are key. Because only with stable legal relations with Europe can our country remain innovative and fit for the future. Switzerland must remain part of the European internal market. Freedom of move-

ment – even with the numerous challenges that it brings – is enormously important for our Swiss-based, personnel-intensive export industry. We need energy security, i.e. an agreement on electricity. If we are to remain the world champion of innovation, we need to be able to rejoin the global research world. And no one knows better than you, dear readers who work in this industry, how much we need a health agreement.

### **A lifeline for life sciences**

On the subject of the life sciences industry: in 2022 it accounted for 39% of Swiss exports and contributed a record 109.6 billion Swiss francs to foreign trade revenue. In the Basel area alone, life sciences companies provide over 32,500 jobs. Not including all the people working in the supply industries. With its highly dynamic research and development work, the sector is one of the principal drivers of Swiss innovative strength.

So your industry, in particular, is dependent on close connections with the European internal market. That is to say, on having an open free trade policy, reliable healthcare provision for employees and expats, a high degree of digitalization and competitive corporate taxation. It is for all these reasons that I am keen for your contribution to our national economy to be valued. Because you are helping to safeguard the well-being and prosperity of everyone in Switzerland.

### **Time is running out**

Many years have passed since we first sent out feelers towards the EU. Yet time is running out. After the parliamentary elections at the latest, the Federal Council should get its act together and get the concessions that were made in the exploratory talks down in writing. Because in 2024 there will be fresh elections for the EU Parliament and Commission. Whether Slovakia's Maroš Šefčovič – who is currently the EU Commissioner for inter-institutional relationships in the Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen, and therefore Switzerland's negotiating partner – will remain on the EU Commission is uncertain, because of his party's closeness to Russia. If the Swiss question were to go before a new EU Commission, substantive negotiations could be delayed again.



### **Bringing things to a head**

I regard the fact that the people involved in the talks have managed to produce a package of solutions out of the InstA as a huge step forward. Nevertheless, the Switzerland-EU question is in a volatile state: exploratory talks – however advanced they may be – are not official negotiations and even those are not yet binding contracts. That is why the Swiss government would do well to open and complete negotiations as quickly as possible. In June 2023, the Federal Council appointed Alexandre Fasel as the new Secretary of State for the Department of Foreign Affairs. He is therefore the successor to Livia Leu. Fasel has the necessary sensitivity to seize, on behalf of Switzerland, this unique opportunity for strong bilateral relations with the EU – and to grasp the hand that is being offered across the negotiating table.



# Matthias Leuenberger takes position

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**Matthias  
Leuenberger**  
Country President  
Novartis  
Switzerland



**Katrin Schmid**  
Swiss Public  
Affairs

## **Mr. Leuenberger, what role does the EU have for Switzerland? Are the bilateral agreements really so important for the pharmaceutical industry?**

**MATTHIAS LEUENBERGER:** Absolutely. There's a lot at stake for our industry. Switzerland and, above all, the Basel site are hugely important for us at Novartis in terms of research, development and production. If it is to remain that way, we need the relationship with the EU to be regulated – how we trade, carry out research and recruit skilled personnel. It's also vitally important for the Swiss economy. The chemical-pharmaceutical industry as a whole invests about as

much in Switzerland every year in research and development as it makes from selling drugs, around 7 billion francs. It's responsible for almost half of all Swiss exports – over 134 billion francs. We sell over 90 per cent of everything that our industry produces here to other countries – and the EU is by far our biggest trading partner. The framework conditions for export and research are extremely important, and the EU plays a key role in that.

## **Couldn't Switzerland simply rely on other countries? Is the EU still really as important as it was for Switzerland?**

Of course, sales to the USA and China have increased hugely. But that doesn't alter the fact that, at the end of the day, 48 per cent of our industry's exports go to the EU. Switzerland exports less to China than it does to the German region of Baden-Württemberg. The conditions for accessing the EU market continue to be crucial.



## **But the bilateral agreements are still in place.**

That's true, but the clock is ticking. The EU has made it clear that unless the relationship with Switzerland is developed and institutionalized, even the existing agreements will no longer be modernized or updated. Without updating, the agreements are at risk of erode in the medium to long term. So, for the EU, there's no question of maintaining the status quo. Furthermore, the path towards new agreements – on electricity, for example – remains closed off.





**So what specific consequences would there be if the pharmaceutical industry could no longer rely on the bilateral agreements?**

Here's one example: if the agreement on mutual recognition of conformity assessments were to expire in a few years, Switzerland as a manufacturing location would become more expensive than other countries, at a stroke. Suddenly multiple checks and inspections would have to be carried out again that are currently not required. This would result in unnecessary additional costs and complications. It's estimated that the extra costs for the entire pharmaceutical sector would amount to around 500 million francs a year.

What's more, our industry depends on highly-qualified specialists, and the Swiss labor market alone can't meet the demand. And it's worth remembering that demographic trends will make the shortage of workers even more acute in future. Since 2020, more people have gone into retirement than the number of new workers joining the Swiss labor market. We just can't keep going without workers from abroad.

One consequence that can already be felt today, which is affecting our industry indirectly is the limited access to European research framework programs such as Horizon Europe. Since the negotiations with the EU about a framework agreement broke down, Switzerland has been treated as a non-associated third country. It is no longer able to participate in specific projects. Yet Horizon is like the Champions League in football. The EU's research program is the biggest and most important in the world. So Switzerland is weakened as a center for research and of course that is not without significance for our industry.

**If you could make a wish for the future?**

It is an absolute priority for the research-based pharmaceutical industry that Swiss politicians work on relations with the EU with the necessary sense of urgency. Solutions must be found to safeguard the future development of our contractual relations so that framework conditions can be established that are good for business – and for Novartis.

# My Novartis journey so far



**Riet Grond**  
**P&O Head Switzerland**

Everything started with a misunderstanding... It was December 2003 and I was just finishing my MBA in Madrid while being excited about becoming a father soon. Hence, I was anxious to secure a job and started sending out applications left, right and center – basically “just” to have a job and to provide for my young family. Among others, I applied at a lumber trading company and in writing my motivation letter I felt it would increase my chances if I emphasized my upbringings in the Swiss mountains – basically having grown up in the woods – in lumber..., being well-grounded, resourceful and a hands-on doer. I never heard back from that company, yet got a call from Novartis, where I had applied in parallel. The hiring manager was sharing that he was in desperate need of a doer who was well-grounded, resourceful and hands on... The more I was listening, the more it dawned on me that I must have mixed up my motivation letters... I disclosed my mistake, we laughed – and I got the job!

In the last two decades I have had the opportunity to make diverse and rich experiences, both personally and professionally in many parts of the organization. In Animal Health, where it all started, I learned the basics of HR/P&O as a generalist. The following years at NIBR in the US taught me the value of diversity of thinking and styles. From my years at NBS/CTS I took away a rich lesson in the value of setting a vision and prioritization execution and my years with Oncology were characterized by many take-aways around the power of inclusive dialogue in decision-making.

I also got restructured twice. These experiences, as difficult as they have been, have forced me to grow my resilience muscle, they have heightened my awareness of what is important in life, they have led me to make conscious choices to protect my work-life balance

– and they have created strong gratitude for how Novartis has treated me in these forming moments of my life. In both restructuring cases, I felt I was first and foremost treated with respect, as a human being (not as a human resource!) who has feelings, anxieties and goes through his own motions. These moments of care and support are the moments I remember many years later and which have shaped who I aspire to be as a person and as a leader.

## How 20 years Novartis shaped me

If I were to describe my leadership style formed with time through these experiences, there are two words that sum it up: values and value.

On the VALUES side, firstly, I've built a strong desire to be as transparent as I possibly can with the teams I have the privilege to work with. I believe that everybody should be trusted with information relevant to them (to the degree this information can be disclosed at any point), so they can make informed decisions – for the business and for themselves. Secondly, while at times there might be a perception out there that HR/P&O is primarily a ‘relationship-driven’ discipline, I believe that any decisions, including people decisions, need to be based on data and facts. Only then can we ensure objectivity and fairness, which is what the organization rightly so counts on us to do. And thirdly, the way we interact, how we communicate, i.e. the above mentioned relationship focus, defines how our associates feel respected, supported and can trust that we have their backs at any point in time, in any circumstance they find themselves in.

On the VALUE side, I believe we should be driven by adding value to the business with everything we do. In consequence, I am inclined to focus and to de-prioritize activities that might be interesting yet take away focus from the things that are truly impactful. I believe that “less is more” and aspire to live by the principle of working “smarter not harder.” Making value-based decisions is not always easy, particularly in a very creative organization like ours, yet I see it as



a responsibility towards the enterprise and our teams to drive for focus and impact.

### **Aspirations for the role**

As I have been taking my first steps over the last few months as Head of P&O Switzerland, I have been meeting with many colleagues, including all the P&O Switzerland team members. I am deeply impressed by the quality and engagement in the team. This is the more so impressive as we are going through a period of uncertainty, supporting the organization through a big transformation and at the same time being transformed ourselves as a function. It's inspiring and heartening to see the professionalism, care, and dedication the team is showing in managing this stretch. Being able to keep this great engagement of the team, providing opportunities to develop and grow while reaching healthy, sustainable, work-life-integration levels, are aspirations we pursue across the TEAM.

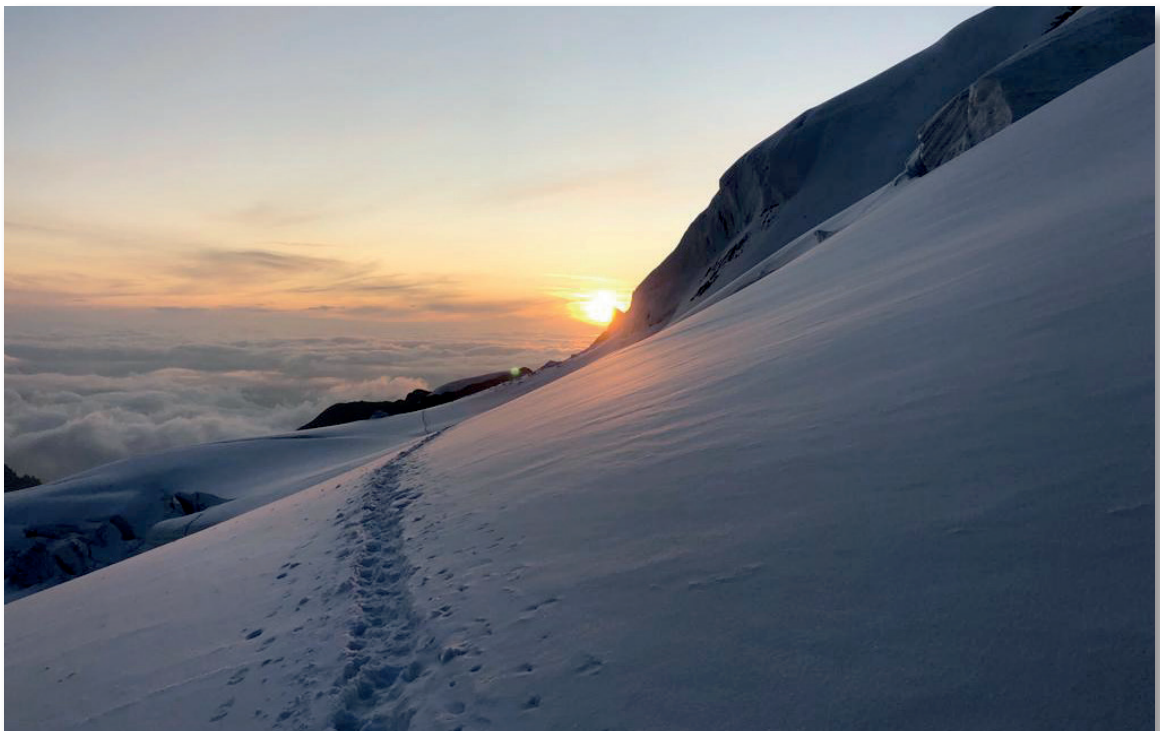
Holding true with the focus on value creation, we have the opportunity (actually, we have no choice but) to prioritize our agenda and to focus for impact. A strong business understanding and CUSTOMER CENTRICITY therefore become crucial success factors. Since a few years our function is called "People & Organization" and that's for a reason. While many of us have traditionally been drawn into the function for the people aspect and this will always remain

a core competency, our impact will further expand as we are able to take a lead role on the organization aspect – preparing the organization at any point in time for the future. Excelling on both these aspects is the art we aspire to master within the P&O Switzerland team over time.

"The only thing that is constant is change" – I think this is a true statement in the world we live in which also applies for us as a company. This being said, we have an important role to play in ensuring continuity and to protect the ORGANIZATION from activity that does not drive maximum impact – wherever and whenever possible. Simplifying, challenging and integrating on one hand and resisting the temptation to initiate too many things on the other hand are aspects I would like to foster as elements of our P&O Switzerland culture. Through this, we enable focus on what really matters to our associates and our organization – and eventually support our strategy of reimagining medicines at Novartis.



As you can see on the pictures, one of my passions to recharge is mountaineering.



# After nearly two years in office – personal impressions of a lay judge

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The Canton Council for Basel-Stadt elected new judges to serve on the Labor Tribunal from 2022 to 2027. Among them was Yvonne Tanner, a member of NAV. She gives us an insight into this fascinating and interesting work.



**Yvonne Tanner**  
**Lay judge**  
**Employee representative,**  
**Basel-Stadt**

When I was first approached during a NAV board meeting in autumn 2021 about the forthcoming vacancy for a judge, and was asked whether I could see myself as a candidate, I was initially somewhat skeptical.

What would I be taking on? I had absolutely no legal experience!

However, that is quite deliberately not required. Instead, you need to have a lot of experience of life and work, combined with plenty of common sense. Some intercultural understanding is also useful in this post. In the canton of Basel-Stadt, labor disputes which have not been able to be resolved by arbitration, and where the sum involved is less than CHF 30,000, come before the Labor Tribunal. This is made up of the presiding judge, one lay judge to represent the employer and one to represent the employee. As a NAV member, I am in the third group.

However, I have noticed – and this is also regularly mentioned by the presiding judge – that the main priority for this three-person committee is the welfare of the employee. Even in a complex situation, the employee is usually in a weaker po-

sition and the aim must be not to jeopardize his or her future on the labor market.

## **Preparation for a court hearing**

Since I took office, I have been called upon in six cases and the learning curve has been steep. When you receive the file, which consists of the complaint (and so far I have only dealt with complaints from employees) and the defendant's response (in these cases, the employer), you first try to get a general overview.

What is it all about? What is the legal position? Have there been any recent judicial rulings – even at federal level – which have already addressed the same topic?

I have found that there is rarely a simple answer. Each case is highly complex. Obviously, otherwise there wouldn't be any contentious issues! I have also learned that the impression you get after reading all the evidence from the complainant in detail can change massively when you read the defendant's response.

My cases so far have dealt with all kinds of subjects such as temporary contracts, the breakdown of a working relationship, sickness pay, a bad reference and annual leave arrangements. And of course they have often been connected with the situation during the coronavirus pandemic. Fewer orders resulted in shortfalls in working hours, people had to work at home, and so on.



How did the employer deal with this situation? Did they put the onus entirely on the employee, did they meet them halfway, were there any other reasons for disagreement? Perhaps their performance at work was also unsatisfactory?

What a person from a different cultural background perceives as justice may be very different from our own practices. Most cases involve a combination of the topics mentioned above, so it is up to the three-person committee to reach some kind of clarity during the court proceedings.

### Course of legal proceedings

I find the actual proceedings in the courtroom particularly fascinating. You are very familiar with the case and now you can see and hear the parties concerned, in person. They or, usually, their lawyers are listened to, and any unclear points must be clarified so that, ideally, you can come up with a proposal for a settlement. The human side is often quite moving, or things may become heated. You have to keep open-minded, trust your intuition and remain neutral. Both the law and natural justice apply.

After the first hearing, both parties are sent out of the courtroom while the committee of judges consult with one another and discuss how to proceed. As the judge acting for employees, my aim is obviously to get the best possible result for the complainant. It might be possible to pro-



pose a settlement already or there might be a second round. Sometimes, however, one party wants the court to make a judgment. You notice that during the negotiations or they say so directly. Often human emotions play an important role here, because the parties or witnesses may originally have been in a direct working relationship with one another, and sometimes even friends. Whatever the injured feelings or anger, the committee of judges has the task of seeing the case from the outside as objectively as possible.

Basel-Stadt Civil Court

Ideally, in the end both parties are satisfied with the settlement, or at least can live with it. If that is not the case, then the court decides.

I must mention that I have found that Novartis supported its employees generously and in a straightforward way during the Covid pandemic, compared with some other companies.

To gain an insight into and understand the complexity of labor relations and the people behind them – this is the fascinating, highly responsible and enriching task of a lay judge and I am glad that I decided to take on this role.



# The Novartis School<sup>Lab</sup> moves to the heart of the Novartis campus



**Anita Jesel**  
**Head School<sup>Lab</sup>**  
**Novartis**



**Markus Reinelt**  
**Head Early Career &**  
**Employee Assistance**  
**Novartis**

**30 years of actively promoting STEM subjects in the region – good reason to celebrate! On the occasion of the anniversary in early August 2023, the School<sup>Lab</sup> moved into new, prestigious premises at the heart of the Novartis campus.**

The official opening took place on August 16, 2023, in the presence of Jörg Reinhardt, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Novartis, Conradin Cramer, Canton Councilor and Head of the Education Department for the canton of Basel-Stadt, and other invited local politicians and community representatives.

“Moving the School<sup>Lab</sup> to this new site at the heart of the Novartis campus is a visible sign that reinforces our commitment to supporting education and research in Switzerland,” says Matthias Leuenberger, Country President at Novartis. “Lifelong learning and being committed to education are core values for Novartis, because, for us as a research company, learning, knowledge and science are part of our DNA. So the School<sup>Lab</sup> is part of our commitment to Switzerland as a center for work and study.”

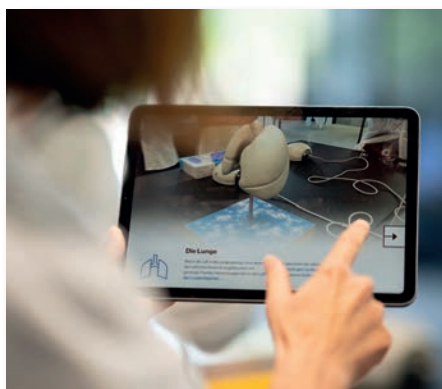
In order to maintain and build on the tremendous innovative strength that we have here, we need people who show not only initiative, courage and a willingness to learn, but above all a thirst for knowledge. With our School<sup>Lab</sup>, we want to stimulate this thirst for knowledge in students, and get them excited and motivated about a career in science. These young people work on exciting experiments and topics in the fields of chemistry, biology and medicine, including the world of drug research and development.

Over 3,000 schoolchildren from Switzerland and neighboring countries visit the Novartis School<sup>Lab</sup> every year, giving them a fascinating insight into the way scientists think and work, in a modern learning environment. The School<sup>Lab</sup> in-

## Connecting Talent, Science and Society

- The Novartis School<sup>Lab</sup> has moved from its previous site in Klybeck to new premises at the heart of the Novartis campus. There, it benefits from a modern learning environment and from its proximity to the School<sup>Hub</sup> in the Novartis Pavillon.
- The move coincided with celebrations by the Novartis School<sup>Lab</sup> on August 16, 2023 to mark its 30th anniversary. It was the first institution of its kind outside the school system in Switzerland.
- About 110,300 schoolchildren have carried out experiments in the School<sup>Lab</sup> since it was founded in 1993.
- The aim of the School<sup>Lab</sup> is to stimulate young people's interest in science. It also offers teachers further training and help with teaching experimental science.





spires future apprentices and university graduates to want to work professionally in the field of natural sciences or drug research and development. Teachers also appreciate the valuable help with how to teach experimental science, and the further training that's on offer from the Novartis School<sup>Lab</sup>.

Inspired by similar initiatives in other countries, the School<sup>Lab</sup> was set up in 1993 as the first laboratory of its kind in Switzerland, arising from an awareness that political and social debate in Switzerland was increasingly dominated by scientific and technical questions. During the 1990s, Swiss people were more and more often required to confront subjects such as gene technology and environmental matters. The School<sup>Lab</sup>, therefore, in partnership with schools, was intended to help young people to think about science and technology in a practical way and form their own opinions. Since then, over 110,300 schoolchildren have carried out experiments in this laboratory.

### What happens on a course for school groups at the Novartis School<sup>Lab</sup>?

Up to 24 young people can take part in a workshop. Depending on the course, the program may last from 3 to 7 hours. It usually begins at the SchoolHub in the Novartis Pavilion, which offers interactive activities for school groups and complements the School<sup>Lab</sup>. Afterwards, the young people go over to the School<sup>Lab</sup>, where they carry out their own experiments on specific issues, under the guidance of professionals.

### Facts & figures about the School<sup>Lab</sup>

- Official opening: August 16, 1993
- No. of visitors: since it was founded, approximately 110,300
- No. of school groups/workshops per year: approx. 180



- Target groups: schoolchildren at primary school and lower and upper secondary school
- Subject areas: chemistry, biology, medicine

### The School<sup>Lab</sup> offers the following services:

- Workshops for school groups
- Summer school for primary school children
- Discovery Week for secondary school and above
- "Life Science Week" for secondary school level and above
- Help for students taking school-leaving exams
- Workshops for teachers
- Distribution of about 80 teaching packages every year for experiments in the classroom
- Involvement in the tunBasel show and various job fairs

### For more about the history of the Novartis SchoolLab click here:

<https://live.novartis.com/article/the-home-of-explorers>

### For more information about the services currently provided by the Novartis SchoolLab click here:

<https://www.novartis.com/ch-de/karriere/schoollab>

### More detailed information and additional links:

The School<sup>Lab</sup> celebrates its 30th anniversary and opens new premises on campus | Novartis Switzerland

# Life doesn't always go according to plan!

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An unexpected turn of events and effective support in difficult times: a true story of how practical help can make a difference in overcoming life's crises.

## **Author's name known to editors**

It can take us on unexpected diversions and confront us with challenges that put our resilience to the test. This is the story of how I found myself in the middle of an unexpected crisis and how the support from NAV made all the difference in helping me to overcome it.

My career path has led me to different countries and projects in different parts of the company. Even while I was still studying for my degree in International Business, I was interested in the world of medicine, specifically in innovative treatment methods and therapies, in order to be able to offer patients the best possible support in helping them to heal. I also developed quite a passion for tackling complex economic and scientific problems, developing solutions for them and actually implementing them. In 2010, at Novartis, I found the opportunity to make use of my training and interests in all kinds of different projects and parts of the company.

## **What can we do when we are unexpectedly thrown off course?**

Sometimes life takes us in a direction that we would never have expected. A sudden turning point can wrench us out of our comfort zone and confront us with challenges that shake us to the core. That's what happened to me when I suddenly found myself in a health-related and personal crisis from which there seemed to be no way out.



At the peak of my career in 2019, I was unexpectedly overwhelmed by a health crisis which literally threw me off course. I found myself facing a drastic medical situation which affected not only my everyday life but also my professional future.

### **The fight for survival**

Within a very short time, an acute deterioration in my health resulted in a critical emergency. Doctors fought to save my life in a 14-hour operation. When I woke up, nothing was as it had been before. My life from now on would be dominated by machines and medication. The world I knew had changed forever and I had to learn to deal with this new reality. From now on, I was a patient, dependent on receiving the best treatment. For me, it was a new and dramatic change of perspective and it hit me completely out of the blue.

### **Guidance and support in a crisis**

During this difficult time, the Novartis Employees' Association (NAV) proved to be a valuable guide through my personal crisis. NAV provided not only a platform for direct communication but also support in my most stressful moments. They showed me that support can be more than mere words – it can bring about real change. For example, NAV helped me with my internal inquiries at Novartis and with administrative matters, and also offered practical assistance in my daily life when I was dealing with official bodies and public authorities. This support really helped me to come to terms with the new reality of my life.

### **The specialist attorney for social rights – a beacon of light**

The bureaucratic hurdles associated with claiming disability benefit (IV) added further stress to my anxiety. This was where a specialist attorney appeared on the scene, found for me by Davide Lauditi. The attorney fought for my rights and communicated on my behalf with the disability benefit authorities. Such support provided just the beacon of light that I needed during this dark period. The attorney not only clarified things for me but also took a weight off my shoulders, something I desperately needed. Thanks to this support I could finally see light at the end of the tunnel.

### **Stronger together in the face of challenges: an unexpected turn of events**

Since 2019 I have been battling with my health and with the uncertainties that chronic illness and frequent operations bring. The teamwork between NAV, Davide Lauditi, the specialist attorney and me has proved to be crucial. The combination of professional support and human empathy not only helped me to deal with bureaucratic hurdles and the complicated disability benefit situation, but also boosted my inner resilience. The disability benefit assessment that I recently received seemed like a minor miracle to me and brought me much-needed relief and acknowledgment.

#### **Conclusion: coming through a crisis stronger**

My story shows how, in the midst of unexpected events, targeted support can make a vital difference. In my case, NAV's approach and the support they offered demonstrated in very concrete and real terms just what effective help in times of crisis looks like. NAV and its representatives not only supported me, but also guided me during a time of great personal insecurity. Thanks to them, I was able to emerge from the darkness and today I can look to the future with renewed strength.



# Vogel Gryff – five tips for your next visit!

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Why people in Basel drink white wine first thing in the morning, grown men roam the streets wearing masks or make-up and yet it isn't Carnival time: welcome to a Basel gone crazy – it's January, and Vogel Gryff time!



**Alain Grimm**  
Cultural Manager Basel

Most people have probably had something to do with Carnival. Whether you love it or would rather escape it, you know that for three days everything goes haywire in Basel. But even many natives of Basel don't know very much about Vogel Gryff, as this wonderful Kleinbasel tradition is known.

## The tradition – a short explanation

The Vogel Gryff festival takes place every year in Kleinbasel, on January 13, 20 or 27. The date depends on which of the “Three Honorary Societies”<sup>1</sup> is in charge that year. Each honorable society has its own symbolic figure who parades through the streets on Vogel Gryff day. The society “zum Rebhaus” has the “Leu” (a lion), while “zur Hären” has the “Wild Maa” (a wild man) and “zum Greifen” has the “Vogel Gryff” itself (a griffin). This last one gives its name to the tradition. All day long, the men dressed up as these symbolic figures perform dances consisting of precisely defined steps that have been passed down by word of mouth through the generations. They are accompanied by drummers and standard bearers. As they process through Kleinbasel, they are greeted by huge crowds, and all day long there's an exuberant, festive atmosphere in the streets and bars. The parade never sets foot in Grossbasel. The Vogel Gryff festival has its roots in a tradition dating back to medieval Basel. Strictly speaking, though, in its present form it dates from the 19th century and the way it happens nowadays is even more recent. However, that is not to diminish the appeal of this wonderful tradition that everyone should experience at least once. And, incidentally, the next Vogel Gryff will take place on a Saturday, on January 20, 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> The honorable societies in Kleinbasel were, like the guilds in Grossbasel, originally medieval craftsmen's organizations with military and sometimes social responsibilities. Nowadays they play an important role in keeping traditions alive and contributing to Basel's welfare and attraction. More about Kleinbasel's honorable societies: <https://www.vogel-gryff.ch>.



The program for the day, the map of the route, is only published shortly beforehand, online at [www.vogel-gryff.ch](http://www.vogel-gryff.ch).

### Tip 1 – the raft ride

The sawing and banging begins at dawn in the Wild Maa's hideaway, to make sure that his raft is ready in time for him to go floating down the Rhine. Wondering what it's all about? No problem. Just go along and let yourself be carried away by the atmosphere and the crowds of children. Punctually at 10.30 am, with the crack of a gun salute, the Wild Maa sets off on his journey down the river. That marks the official start of the spectacular Vogel Gryff event. A short time later, the raft lands near the Klingental barracks, where the other two symbolic figures, the griffin and the lion, are eagerly awaiting it. From here, they set off together through the streets of Kleinbasel. Incidentally, it's very easy to find the Wild Maa's hideaway – it's one of the "Fischergalgen" (fisherman's huts) by the Grenzacher Promenade (Google Maps will help). It's probably best to follow the clamor of children's voices, then you'll find it right away.

### Tip 2 – the Antonierhof fountain

Once again, the terrifying Wild Maa is at the center of proceedings. You can see on the route map when the "Spiel," the whole group, will move on from dancing outside the Fischerstube restaurant to the Krafft restaurant, sometime between 11 and 12 am. It will only be a short time slot of about 5 minutes, it all happens very quickly. Position yourself by the Antonierhof fountain (Google Maps will help again) and you'll be amazed by the Wild Maa's antics. Watch out for the pine tree!

### Tip 3 – the apples

Why is the event actually called the Vogel Gryff, when I keep talking about the Wild Maa? I've no idea. But perhaps you have noticed the children running along behind the Wild Maa and trying to snatch something from his head and round his



hips. These are apples which, according to the legend, are supposed to have a very fruitful effect. Of course, we already know from other contexts about apples being symbols of fertility, the Fall of Man and global domination. That's nothing new. But for the children, it's a new kind of fun every year, and also a test of their courage in seizing an apple from the Wild Maa. But be careful, the Wild Maa doesn't exactly hold back when it comes to defending his precious apples, and he likes to give people a hefty whack with his pine tree! It can be quite painful! What he really doesn't like (and you should certainly avoid doing at all costs) is people pulling at his mask (dangerous for the dancer) or approaching when he's at a particularly tricky stage in his dance. Then it's strictly – hands off the apples!

#### **Tip 4 – the dances**

Don't be disappointed if you don't find a good place to watch the dancers in the morning. Give yourself a little break after the morning raft ride and the calmer period by the Antonierhof fountain. Eat the apple that a daredevil child has grabbed for you (seriously, leave the running around and chasing the apples to the children ...), or drop into one of the nearby restaurants. The dancing will carry on all day. And, "psst!", just between ourselves, there are generally the fewest people watching it between 4 and 6 pm. That's when your time will come to watch the stately movements of the Vogel Gryff, the leaping Leu and the wildly twirling Wild Maa at your leisure.

#### **Tip 5 – the Ueli collectors**

Anyone who spots one of the five "Uelis" (jesters) running along the street clutching a collecting tin is welcome to throw in a generous donation. The Uelis are collecting for citizens in need in Kleinbasel, whom they support by providing emergency aid or vouchers for clothes and shoes. The Ueli will thank you with a laugh and a loud rattle of his tin.

In fact, though, you probably don't need any tips from me. Just go along, allow plenty of time and let yourself be carried away by the festivities. Even after many years, you'll keep discovering new details, and will get quite fond of your very own Vogel Gryff.







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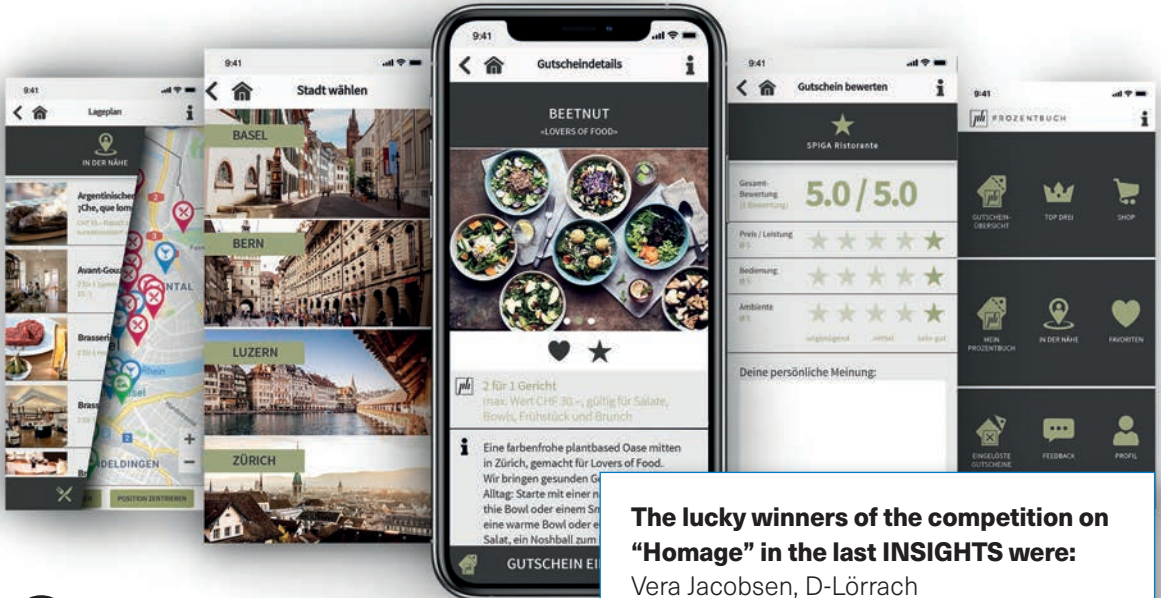
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Fill in the registration form, sign it and send it to: NAV Office, WSJ-200.P.84 (Forum 1) or scan and send to [nav.nav\(at\)novartis.com](mailto:nav.nav(at)novartis.com) or apply online at [www.nav.ch](http://www.nav.ch).



# Contest

**The lucky winners of the competition on “Homage” in the last INSIGHTS were:**  
 Vera Jacobsen, D-Lörrach  
 Bruno La Piana, D-Steinen  
 Leonhard Schätz, D-Lörrach

After having read this INSIGHTS 2/2023, we invite you to have a go at answering our three competition questions.

Three gift cards for the prozentbuch app will be drawn from among the correct entries – and with a smidgeon of luck, you will be one of the winners who will soon be able to discover the cities of Basel, Bern, Lucerne and Zurich plus

their gastronomy and entertainment offerings.

The prozentbuch is a dynamically changing compilation of vouchers from the gastronomy, nightlife and leisure sectors for the cities of Basel, Bern, Lucerne and Zurich. Most offers are based on the “2 for 1” principle – meaning that two people will save up to 50 percent on their enjoyment.

## Contest questions

**Submission deadline: 31 January 2024**

First name

Name

Home address

Zip/city

**1. What is Switzerland's reputation with regard to its bilateral agreements with the EU?**

- To always uphold neutrality
- Wanting to have its cake and eat it
- Being a stubborn negotiator

**2. What percentage of our industry's exports go to the EU?**

- 32%
- 38%
- 48%

**3. What coincidence led Riet Grond to accept a position at Novartis?**

- A mix-up between Job IDs
- A mix-up between cover letters
- A mix-up between job applicant files

Send your answers by post to: NAV Office, Contest, Novartis Campus, Forum 1, WSJ-200.P.84 / P.O. Box, 4002 Basel or scan and send to nav.nav(at)novartis.com

All members of the Novartis Employees Association NAV are eligible to participate (except members of the NAV board). The winners will be notified in writing. There will be no correspondence regarding the contest. Prizes will not be paid out in cash. There is no legal recourse.



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