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News Release

EPFL and UBS enter into strategic partnership to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and young talents in STEM subjects

The École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and UBS are launching a strategic partnership to promote innovation and young entrepreneurship. The cooperation also focuses on expanding access to education in STEM subjects for children and young people and promoting young talent.

Zurich, 14 December 2023 – Strengthening Switzerland as a leading international location for innovation is essential for our country's future competitiveness. This is where present and future young enterprises play a central role. In particular, start-ups in the polytechnic sector are important drivers of innovation and they develop solutions for global challenges, for example in the area of sustainability. At the same time, they create new jobs in Switzerland and train the next generation for future global market leaders.

A sharp increase in demand for skilled workers with a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) background is to be expected. That is why it is important to interest even more children and young people in the STEM subjects and with that also increase their interest in the associated career and educational options. EPFL and UBS are convinced that increasing the promotion of science, technology, education and entrepreneurship is critical in order to successfully develop and commercialize innovative products and services to solve global challenges.

Over a period of 10 years, UBS will invest up to CHF 15 million in joint projects and initiatives in the Romandie with an impact on Switzerland as a whole and beyond. With this partnership, EPFL and UBS will launch a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening Switzerland's capacity for innovation, as well as expanding access to the STEM field and promoting young talents (overview of initiatives below). Furthermore, the cooperation with the Enterprise for Society (E4S) aims to drive sustainable and social transformation by bringing applied research and established companies and start-ups together.

Sabine Keller-Busse, President UBS Switzerland: "UBS has a long tradition of collaborating with research, promoting education and training, and supporting entrepreneurship. We look forward to working with EPFL and are convinced that together we can make a difference – to strengthen the Swiss economy and its innovative strength."

Martin Vetterli, President of EPFL: "This partnership brings together two institutions with a high level of expertise. We are convinced that we will be able to provide even greater support for Switzerland's innovative strength, as well as access to the STEM field and the promotion of young talent."

The partnership is based on joint initiatives and projects in selected areas:

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Promoting innovation and young entrepreneurship

EPFL and UBS will establish joint formats and events for young entrepreneurs to provide them with the best possible support in developing innovative solutions. The events are intended to connect entrepreneurs and serve as a means of further education. For example, an annual **Investor Day** is planned to bring young entrepreneurs together with potential investors, such as experienced business leaders, to exchange ideas and learn from each other. UBS will also support EPFL's entrepreneurship **support program** to help start-ups reach market, product and investor maturity.

The **EPFL Innovation Park Foundation and UBS** will also jointly expand the Innovation Park in Ecublens on the EPFL site. This expansion, named Ecotope, will be built close to the campus and feature interactive architecture. Promotion and care of the innovation ecosystem will be at the heart of all of this, making the future Innovation Park the new home for the entire EPFL ecosystem for innovation and young entrepreneurship. UBS will support the expansion of the innovation park with a loan. On the ground floor of the future building UBS will now also be present with a multi-purpose area that is open to the public. In this way, students and aspiring young entrepreneurs benefit from the core competencies of both institutes on site for the development of innovative technologies to solve social challenges.

Promoting sustainable social change

Enterprise for Society (E4S) and UBS plan to bring applied research together with established companies as well as startups to accelerate the implementation of innovative and entrepreneurial solutions that have a positive impact on society and the environment. To this end, E4S and UBS intend to establish a sustainable business forum that brings together experts from academia and business (researchers, industry leaders, SMEs, start-ups, politicians). The platform has set itself the goal of discussing current challenges, developing concrete solutions and achieving tangible positive effects for industrial partners. In addition, UBS will participate in E4S's transformative projects and propose own projects based on real challenges from the world of business, which will be supported by students of the E4S Master of Science in Sustainable Management and Technology.

Expanding access to education in the STEM field and promotion of young talents

EPFL and UBS plan joint initiatives to promote young people's fascination and interest in technology and science and to expand access to education in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in rural areas of the Romandie. In addition, UBS and EPFL, together with ETH Zurich, plan to share existing platforms in the future in order to maximize reach throughout Switzerland.

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