

# 2017 Annual Report



This report is a performance report in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER 21.

**Title page**

In 2017 Professor Thomas Stocker, climate researcher at the University of Bern, was awarded the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize. The Foundation's chair, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, presented Professor Stocker with the prize at the awards ceremony held on 1 November 2017 in Bern.

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Ladies and gentlemen



2017 was a special year for Marcel Benoist Foundation, and one which gave us cause to celebrate for two reasons in particular.

For one thing, the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize was awarded for the 98th time to an excellent researcher in our country. Professor Thomas Stocker of the University of Bern is a nationally and internationally renowned climate researcher. His findings demonstrate quite clearly some of the fundamental challenges facing humans on earth. Changes in the climate and their knock-on effects will affect us all, whether in Switzerland, Europe or elsewhere in the world.

Secondly, in 2017 we successfully reorganised the traditional structures of the Marcel Benoist Foundation. A sound financial basis has been re-established; the Swiss National Science Foundation is now responsible for selecting the prizewinner; and the Confederation will continue to co-sponsor the Swiss Science Prize. The future of the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize is now secure! We can continue to give a public mark of recognition to the achievements of top researchers in Switzerland, thus highlighting the importance of research and innovation in this country.

My thanks go to all those who have supported the Marcel Benoist Foundation in some way in 2017. In particular, I would like to thank all the donors for their generous support. It is a potent sign that, 100 years after it was founded by Marcel Benoist, the Swiss Science Prize continues to be privately funded.

Let us continue to work together to support top research in Switzerland and, in this way, to promote innovation, prosperity and employment.

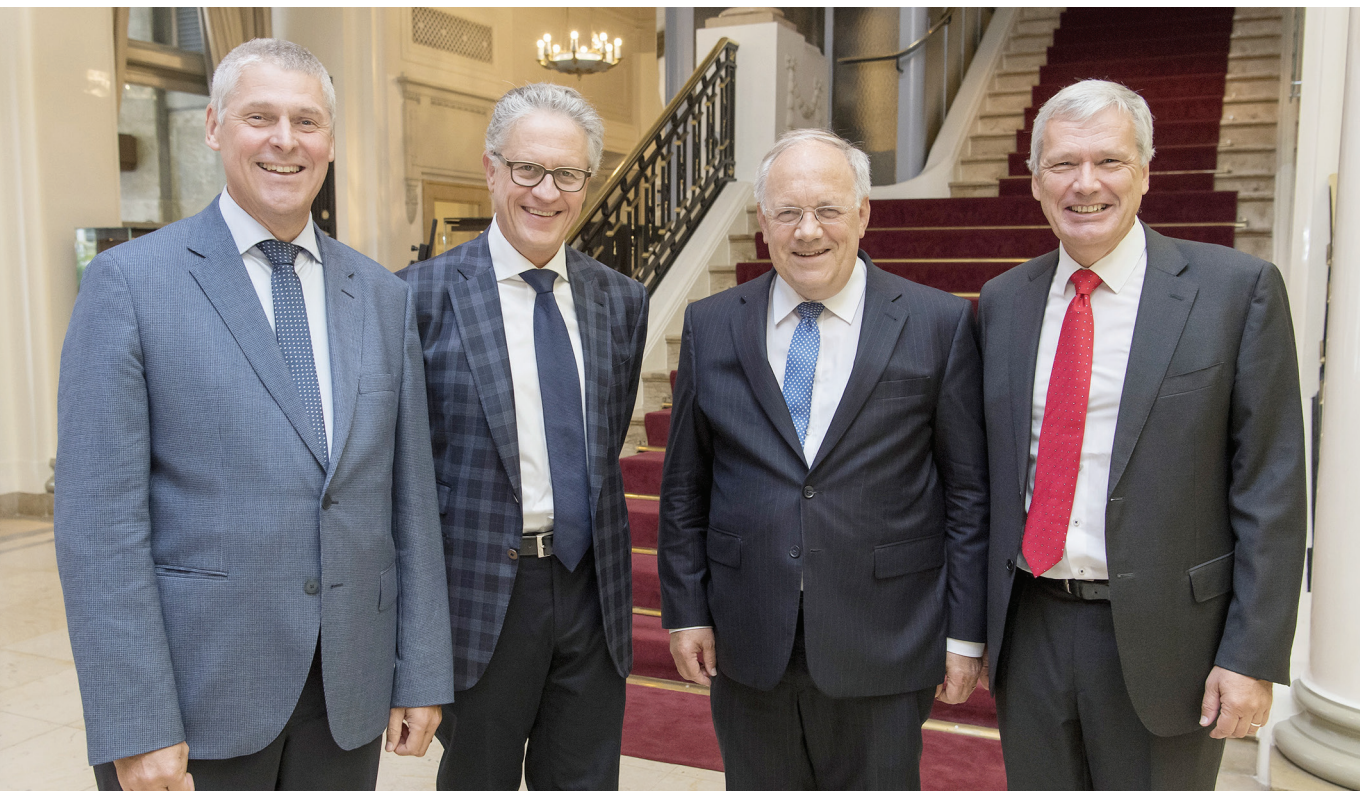
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Ammann', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann  
Foundation Chairman


2017 prizewinner: Prof. Thomas Stocker

## Contributing to a better understanding of the complexity of the global climate system and emerging climate change.

Using modelling and ice core drilling, Professor Stocker, climate researcher at the University of Bern, has been able to determine changes in the climate and the impact these have had. In keeping with the purpose of the Foundation, his research findings are of great importance to human life, and address one of the main challenges facing today's society.



Prof. Thomas Stocker, 2017 prizewinner (second from left) with Marcel Benoist Foundation Board members (from left to right): Prof. Christian Leumann, Rector of the University of Bern and First Vice-Chair, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, foundation president, and Prof. Dominique Arlettaz, representing the University of Lausanne.



Professor Thomas Stocker is a key player in climate research on the national and international stage. At the beginning of his research career in the late 1980s, his work focused on theoretical modelling. He later incorporated findings from various climate archives into these models, and discovered that there is a close connection between changes in ocean currents and climate. His team and his colleagues have conducted ice-drilling expeditions to Greenland and the Antarctic, and have been able to determine greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere over the last 800,000 years.

Prof. Stocker's research makes a significant contribution to a better understanding of the climate system and emerging climate change. He is one of the most widely cited scientists in his field in Switzerland, and the author and co-author of more than 200 scientific articles. He has already received several awards for his work.

Prof. Stocker understands the importance of explaining the issues in his field of study and his findings in a clear and comprehensible way, not only to the scientific community, but also to policy makers and to the general public. He is highly respected for his scientific findings, and is also a successful lecturer and mentor. Over the decades, he has passed on his knowledge to a large number of students and researchers. Some of them now hold professorships in Switzerland or abroad.

Prof. Stocker is a Swiss citizen born in 1959. He obtained his PhD from the ETH Zurich in 1987, and then did research in London, Montreal and New York. Since 1993, he has been the head of the Climate and Environmental Physics Division of the Physics Institute of the University of Bern. From 2008 to 2015, he was Co-Chair of Working Group I of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The report drafted under his chairmanship, adopted by all countries in September 2013, provided the scientific basis for the Paris Climate Agreement.

## Interview with Thomas Stocker



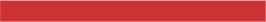
**"Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humankind. Yet protecting the climate, as the nations of the world have agreed to do under the Paris Climate Treaty, could also become one of the greatest opportunities we have in the 21st century to master the transition to a sustainable closed-loop economy."**

### **Contact**

Prof. Thomas Stocker  
University of Bern, Physics Institute, Climate and Environmental Physics  
+41 31 631 44 62  
[stocker@climate.unibe.ch](mailto:stocker@climate.unibe.ch)

### **Further information**

[www.climate.unibe.ch/stocker](http://www.climate.unibe.ch/stocker)



**You have already received a number of national and international awards. What does the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize mean to you?**

Prof. Thomas Stocker: First of all, this is an extraordinary honour for my team at the University of Bern and underlines the importance of this research topic for Switzerland. The award honours the work and countless ideas that have enabled us at the University of Bern to record the climate of the last 800,000 years in detail by analysing ice cores and to understand it better with our models. For me personally, it is of course gratifying and a delight to have the many years of work recognised with Switzerland's highest science prize.

**There have always been changes in the climate. What is particular about today's situation?**

Natural climate change is the focus of our scientific work. Recording glacier levels in the Alpine region in the Holocene, analysing the series of abrupt climate fluctuations during the last ice age or reconstructing greenhouse gas concentrations over the last 800,000 years: all these things enable us to classify today's climate change precisely and to assess it critically. We find that CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are now 30% higher than ever before in the last 800,000 years and methane concentrations are 150% higher. The increase is caused by the burning of coal, oil and gas and by land use. This has led to global warming of around 1°C within the last 100 years, caused our glaciers to disintegrate rapidly, Greenland and Antarctica to melt and sea levels to rise at an increasing rate. Such rapid and global warming is not found in the climate archives and cannot be explained by natural causes such as changes in solar radiation or other natural processes.

**What do you plan to do next?**

We have three goals. Firstly, we want to successfully conduct the last field test of the world's smallest ice drill this summer in Greenland. The 'dental drill', which was built in the workshop of the Physics Institute of the University of Bern, will provide definitive information about where to carry out deep drilling to reach the oldest ice on the Antarctic ice sheet. This drilling will be conducted by the European consortium in which we are a leading player. If all goes well, in about six years' time we should be able to analyse the oldest ice, and so reconstruct the climate history of the last 1.5 million years.

Secondly, we want to develop our climate models so that we can simulate the climate cycles recorded in this ancient ice. Our hope is that this will give us a better understanding of the slowdown and significant intensification in the Ice Age cycles that took place about one million years ago.

Thirdly, we want to measure the composition of the air enclosed in this ancient ice. We still know very little about the concentration of greenhouse gases from this time.

## Foundation activities in 2017

**Key activities in the Marcel Benoist Foundation 2017 calendar were the awarding of the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize, also known as the Swiss Nobel Prize, and the reorganisation of the foundation to create a sound basis for the future.**

### **Selecting the prizewinner**

In early February, the Marcel Benoist Foundation announced a call for proposals to all cantonal universities and the federal institutes of technology. The proposals received underwent an initial assessment by the members of the Board of Trustees in March and April.

Based on the procedure approved by the Board of Trustees and taking into account the assessments and the comments of the Foundation Board members, on 1 May the Foundation Committee made a shortlist of proposals and communicated their interim report to all members of the Board. Experts in Switzerland and abroad were asked to submit assessments of the shortlisted proposals.

On 21 and 22 August, the Board of Trustees convened for its annual plenary session, discussed the proposals in detail and finally decided to name Prof. Thomas Stocker of the University of Bern as the 2017 prizewinner.

### **A new direction for the Marcel Benoist Prize**

Since 1920 the Marcel Benoist Foundation has awarded the Swiss Science Prize annually for excellence in research. With the foundation's centenary approaching, the Board of Trustees, chaired by Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, has made some changes to the Foundation and equipped it for the future. The Foundation is to be recapitalised via private donations, the selection procedure will now be in the hands of the Swiss National Science Foundation, and the Foundation has been restructured. The Confederation will still co-sponsor the award, in the form of a public-private partnership.

The prizewinner is now selected by the Swiss National Science Foundation. This ensures a broad-based selection of candidates according to excellence criteria, and takes into account the various scientific disciplines on a rotating basis. There is an open nomination procedure in which the research community in Switzerland is invited to make proposals.

Much has been invested in publicity and in raising the profile of the awards ceremony. For this reason, the ceremony now takes place in Bern; it was first held in this central location on 1 November 2017. By the centenary year in 2020, it is hoped to realise the vision of a Swiss Science Day, a platform to raise the profile of excellence in research in Switzerland.

The Marcel Benoist Prize will still be worth CHF 250,000 in future. By the end of October 2017, the Foundation had managed to increase its funds considerably and to raise a little more than CHF 10 million privately. The donors sit on the

newly formed Patrons Committee. The Foundation's fundraising activities will continue in 2018, so that sufficient monies are available going forward.

As funds are increased, they are also being more professionally managed. A newly formed investment committee, a new investment strategy and new investment guidelines bear witness to this fact.

The Confederation will continue to support the Swiss Science Prize financially via the existing service agreement with the Swiss National Science Foundation, thereby highlighting the award's importance.

### **Vision of a Swiss Science Day**

The first milestone in the project was reached in 2017 thanks to the valued support of the Foundation's donors. Now there is both an appropriate amount of prize money, and the prize is presented at an awards ceremony in Bern.

The focus now is on completing the vision by establishing a Swiss Science Day to mark the 100th anniversary of the Foundation in 2020. This event will not only bring together the research community and showcase research in Switzerland in the media, it will also provide a platform for young scientists. It is aimed at all researchers and interested persons from the worlds of science, politics and society, and so will give excellence in science the public attention it deserves, thereby benefiting all those who promote research in some way. The Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize thus provides a unique opportunity to give research in Switzerland a national platform.

In order to realise the entire vision, the Foundation requires further donations. Join the Board of Trustees in promoting the future of the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize – in support of excellence! Donate to the Swiss Science Prize and contribute to raising its national and international profile.

Please contact us if you would like more information on the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize, the Swiss Science Day vision and on how you can contribute to the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize.

## Impressions from the 2017 awards ceremony



On 1 November 2017 the awards ceremony took place for the first time in the Bernerhof, Bern.



The large number of guests at the formal ceremony paid tribute to the prizewinner and his work of international importance.



Prof. Ulrich Althaus's jazz sextet provided musical accompaniment.



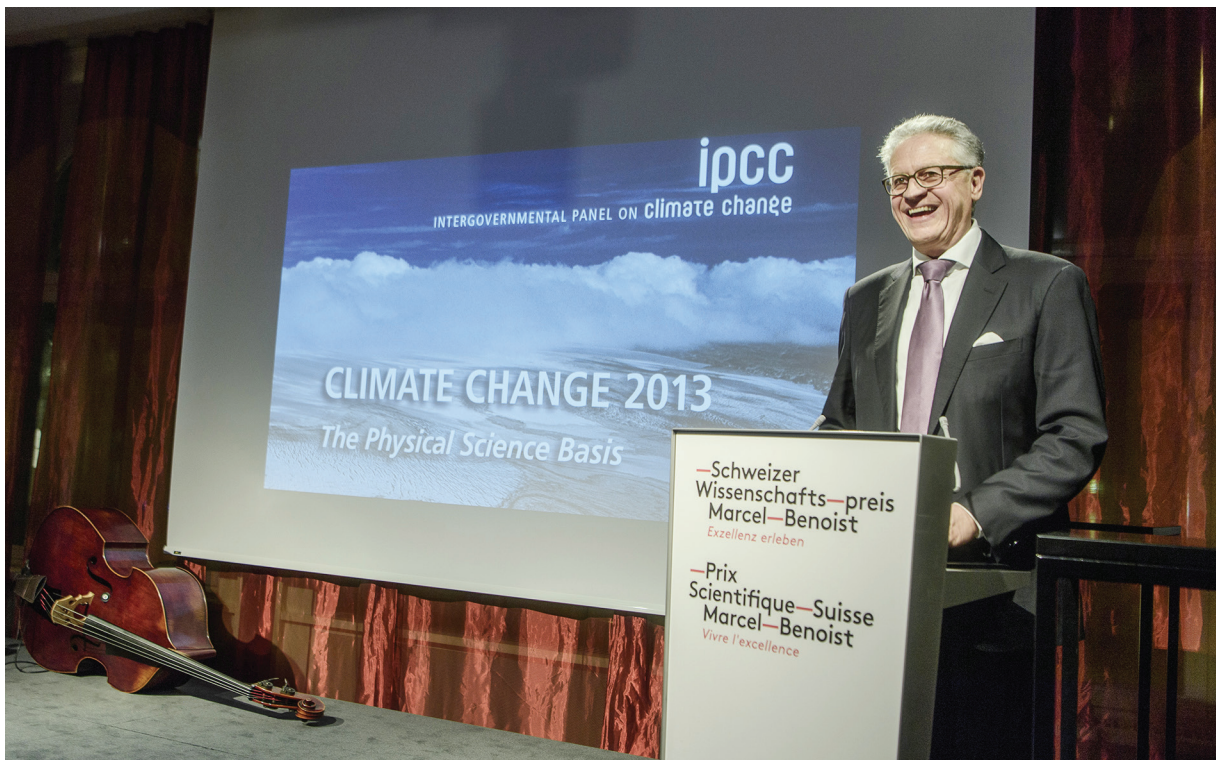
Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann gave the opening speech at the awards ceremony.



Prof. Konrad Steffen, Director of the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Re-search, praised the work of Prof. Thomas Stocker.



Prof. Martine Rahier, member of the Board of Trustees, also paid tribute to the 2017 prizewinner and his work.



Prof. Thomas Stocker gave the audience an interesting overview of his research.



Prof. Matthias Egger, President of the Research Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation, explained to SRF moderator Kathrin Hönegger how the prizewinner will in future be selected.

## Many thanks!

**Nearly 100 years ago, Marcel Benoist created the basis for the Marcel Benoist Foundation. In 2017 new donors helped to secure the long-term future of the Swiss Science Prize and increase the Foundation's assets considerably.**

We would like to thank all our donors for their valuable support. Our thanks also go to those who do not wish to be named here.

### **Private individuals**

Martin Haefner  
André Hoffmann  
Dr. Max Rössler  
Dr. Stephan Schmidheiny  
Dr. Ernst Thomke  
Dr. h.c. mult. Hansjörg Wyss

### **Foundations and companies**

Vontobel-Stiftung  
Schindler Group

### **Patronage committee**

Our Patronage Committee was also newly established in 2017. As ambassadors, the members of the Committee contribute to increasing the profile of the Marcel Benoist Swiss Science Prize and drawing the public's attention to the importance of top-level research for this country. At the same time, they encourage other partners to pledge their support to the Swiss Marcel Benoist Science Prize.

Information on the Patronage Committee can also be found at [www.marcel-benoist.ch](http://www.marcel-benoist.ch)

# The Marcel Benoist Foundation

## Foundation purpose

The Marcel Benoist Foundation was established on 19 November 1920. By accepting Marcel Benoist's legacy, the Confederation committed itself to respect the founder's wish – to fund an annual prize to promote scientific research which is awarded to a Swiss scholar or a scholar resident in Switzerland with the most useful invention, discovery or study in the sciences that is of particular relevance to human life.

## Board of Trustees

Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann  
Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER

Prof. Christian Leumann  
Representative of the University of Bern, First Vice Chair

Prof. Joël Mesot  
Director of the Paul Scherrer Institute, Representative of the Confederation,  
Second Vice Chair

Prof. Martine Rahier  
Representative of the University of Neuchâtel, Assessor

Prof. Adriano Aguzzi  
Representative of the University of Zurich

Prof. Dominique Arlettaz  
Representative of the University of Lausanne

Prof. Martin Brown  
Representative of the University of St Gallen

Prof. Anik de Ribaupierre  
Representative of the University of Geneva

Prof. Michael N. Hall  
Representative of the University of Basel

Prof. Jean-Pierre Montani  
Representative of the University of Fribourg

Prof. Michele Parrinello  
Representative of the University of Italian Switzerland

Prof. Jérôme Pousin  
Representative of the French Ambassador to Switzerland

Prof. Paul Richli  
Representative of the University of Lucerne

Prof. Michäel Unser  
Representative of the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne

Prof. Wendelin Werner  
Representative of the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich

The trustees are appointed by the Federal Council. Any connections between the individual members are publicly listed (federal extra-parliamentary commissions).

#### **Foundation Committee**

Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, Chair  
Prof. Christian Leumann  
Prof. Joël Mesot  
Prof. Martine Rahier

#### **Investment Committee**

Prof. Martin Brown, Chair  
Prof. Joël Mesot  
Prof. Paul Richli

#### **Secretariat**

The Foundation's secretariat is part of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI. The secretary is a SERI employee.  
Dani Duttweiler, lic. iur. HSG, Foundation Secretary

#### **Finance Secretariat**

Until the end of October 2017, the foundation's secretariat administered its accounts. Since November 2017, the Marcel Benoist Foundation has outsourced the management of its finances including its annual reports, which are drawn up in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER.  
Von Graffenried AG Treuhand, Bern  
Patrick Rüttimann, certified accountant

#### **Auditors**

Following the reorganisation of the Marcel Benoist Foundation, the Board of Trustees appointed Unico Thun AG in Thun as its new auditors. The company audited the 2017 financial accounts.

#### **Supervision**

Federal Supervisory Board for Foundations, Bern

#### **Bank details**

Donations in Swiss francs:  
Postfinance account  
89-32730-0  
IBAN CH73 0900 0000 8903 2730 0

## Annual financial statement

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 DECEMBER	2017	2016
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ASSETS	CHF	CHF
PostFinance AG, current account	7'237'551.56	0.00
Banque Lombard Odier & Cie SA, current accounts	0.00	98'760.36
<b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>7'237'551.56</b>	<b>98'760.36</b>
Federal Tax Administration, withholding tax	7'164.54	7'220.45
<b>Other short-term receivables</b>	<b>7'164.54</b>	<b>7'220.45</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>7'244'716.10</b>	<b>105'980.81</b>
Securities	0.00	1'757'477.64
<b>Financial investments</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1'757'477.64</b>
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1'757'477.64</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>7'244'716.10</b>	<b>1'863'458.45</b>

LIABILITIES	CHF	CHF
Deferred income	96'198.49	17'010.55
<b>SHORT-TERM LIABILITIES</b>	<b>96'198.49</b>	<b>17'010.55</b>
Unrestricted funds	7'148'517.61	1'846'447.90
<b>ORGANISATION EQUITY</b>	<b>7'148'517.61</b>	<b>1'846'447.90</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>7'244'716.10</b>	<b>1'863'458.45</b>

The funds in the account with PostFinance AG as of 31 December 2017 are donations and the proceeds of the securities investments at the previous bank that were liquidated in December 2017. Almost all these funds were transferred in mid-January 2018 to the Zürcher Kantonalbank AG and immediately invested there.

## Operating statement

OPERATING STATEMENT	2017	2016
	CHF	CHF
Unrestricted donations	5'750'000.00	0.00
<b>Donations received</b>	<b>5'750'000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Prize money	-250'000.00	-50'000.00
Award ceremony	-91'965.55	-600.00
<b>Project-related expenses</b>	<b>-341'965.55</b>	<b>-50'600.00</b>
Repositioning, Fundraising	-212'496.25	-286'871.05
<b>Fundraising/general marketing expenses</b>	<b>-212'496.25</b>	<b>-286'871.05</b>
Board of Trustees fees	-2'983.30	-3'044.40
Finance secretariat	-14'900.00	0.00
Auditors	-2'900.00	-2'160.00
Other administrative expenses	-482.10	-802.90
<b>Administrative expenses</b>	<b>-21'265.40</b>	<b>-6'007.30</b>
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>5'174'272.80</b>	<b>-343'478.35</b>
Current income from securities	20'470.12	20'629.84
Price gain on securities	141'524.81	25'279.96
Portfolio management costs	-11'101.13	-12'211.30
Selection costs/Management mandate implementation costs	-23'017.50	0.00
Bank interest and fees	-79.39	0.00
<b>Financial result</b>	<b>127'796.91</b>	<b>33'698.50</b>
<b>Result before change in fund equity</b>	<b>5'302'069.71</b>	<b>-309'779.85</b>

OPERATING STATEMENT	2017	2016
	CHF	CHF
<b>Result before change in fund capital (carried over)</b>	<b>5'302'069.71</b>	<b>-309'779.85</b>
Withdrawals from restricted funds	0.00	32'701.70
<b>Change in fund capital</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>32'701.70</b>
<b>Annual result (before allocations to e.g. withdrawals from organisation capital)</b>	<b>5'302'069.71</b>	<b>-277'078.15</b>

The consolidated statement of accounts was drawn up in accordance with the Swiss GAAP FER accounting standards and audited by Unico Thun AG.

### Governance and working methods

The Marcel Benoist Foundation to promote scientific research, based in Bern, is exempt from federal and cantonal taxes due to its non-profit status.

The Foundation's Articles of Association are drawn up by the Board of Trustees. The Board makes strategic decisions regarding the Foundation and ensures that the purpose of the Foundation is met. The Board of Trustees works on a voluntary basis.

Asset management is governed by the Foundation's investment regulations. The financial assets are invested in the medium to long term by an investment committee with a view to achieving security and a sustainable return.

The accounting records and financial statements are audited by Unico Thun AG. The Foundation is supervised by the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations.

Further information on governance and working methods can be found at [www.marcel-benoist.ch](http://www.marcel-benoist.ch) > Pledge Excellence > Tax-related and legal issues.

**Contact**

Marcel Benoist Foundation  
Foundation secretariat  
c/o State Secretariat for Education,  
Research and Innovation SERI

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We look forward to hearing from you.