



22 November 2014

Technorama: Main sponsoring event with Biogen Idec

Ladies and Gentlemen,

«We all know that chance, fortune, fate or destiny – call it what you will – has played a considerable part in many of the great discoveries in science.» That is what Sir Alexander Fleming said in his speech in 1945, when he received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of Penicillin. Surely, a bit of luck was also involved in the process that led to this generous sponsoring contribution of Biogen Idec here at the Swiss Science Center Technorama in Winterthur. However, it certainly has by no means happened entirely by chance.

You, Ladies and Gentlemen of Biogen Idec, are well aware that with this sponsoring, you are also investing in your own future: In your next generation. With more than 250'000 visitors per year, Technorama is not only one of Switzerland's largest leisure attractions but at the same time one of the most important extracurricular educational institutions of this country. Here, children and young people can experience natural science. Here, windows open up to the world of research. Here, they are getting intrigued. Science needs people who are curious. Inquisitive people made everything humankind has discovered, researched and achieved so far possible. Even Albert Einstein said about himself: «I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.»

If the Canton of Zürich intends to be a strong centre of research and science in the future, we need to maintain a culture of curiosity in our society. This will enable our curious children to grow up to become youngsters who intend to turn their passion for research and discovery into their profession. We need junior staff interested in natural science and technology. We need junior staff in the MINT-subjects: Mathematics, informatics, natural science and technology. For this purpose, we need strong teachers also in these fields.

The government of Zürich is aware of that. The strengthening of the MINT-subjects is one of the goals of the legislative period 2011–2015. For that, we are also – like Biogen Idec – counting on the Technorama as a strong partner. Strong partnerships are an indispensable element in successful research and innovation. The world of science lives from the exchange of know-how, which is done via networks. Beyond institutional and national borders. Manifold, maybe unexpected connections are needed. Which is how I see the engagement of Biogen Idec here at the Swiss Science Center Technorama. Thank you in the name of the government of Zürich for your generous sponsoring. You are betting on an established, for natural science valuable institution.

The Canton of Zürich has been supporting the Technorama since the year 1978. Call it fate or destiny: 1978 is also the founding year of the former company Biogen in Geneva. And it fits the picture that co-founder Charles Weissmann went to high school here in Zürich, studied at and graduated from the University of Zürich. The only disadvantage is that Biogen Idec's head office for markets outside the USA is located in Zug – and not in the strong Canton of Zürich ...

But who knows what will result from your contribution here in Winterthur for the Canton of Zürich. For science, research and innovation; for Biotech and Life Sciences. As the Health Minister of the Canton of Zürich and as a member of the foundation board of the Technorama, I am happy twice about your engagement. It is a great joy and honour to be able to personally say this to you. Thank you very much.