Catalyzer 17/07

International Chemistry Olympiad, Zurich, Switzerland

17 July 2023

Today's Weather

27°C

Schedule

09:30 – 11:00 Opening Ceremony

Students

14:00 – 18:45 Discover ETH and Zurich

Mentors and observers

13:00 – 15:00 Lab inspection, ETH Hönggerberg

16:00 – 18:00 Meet the authors, Crowne Plaza

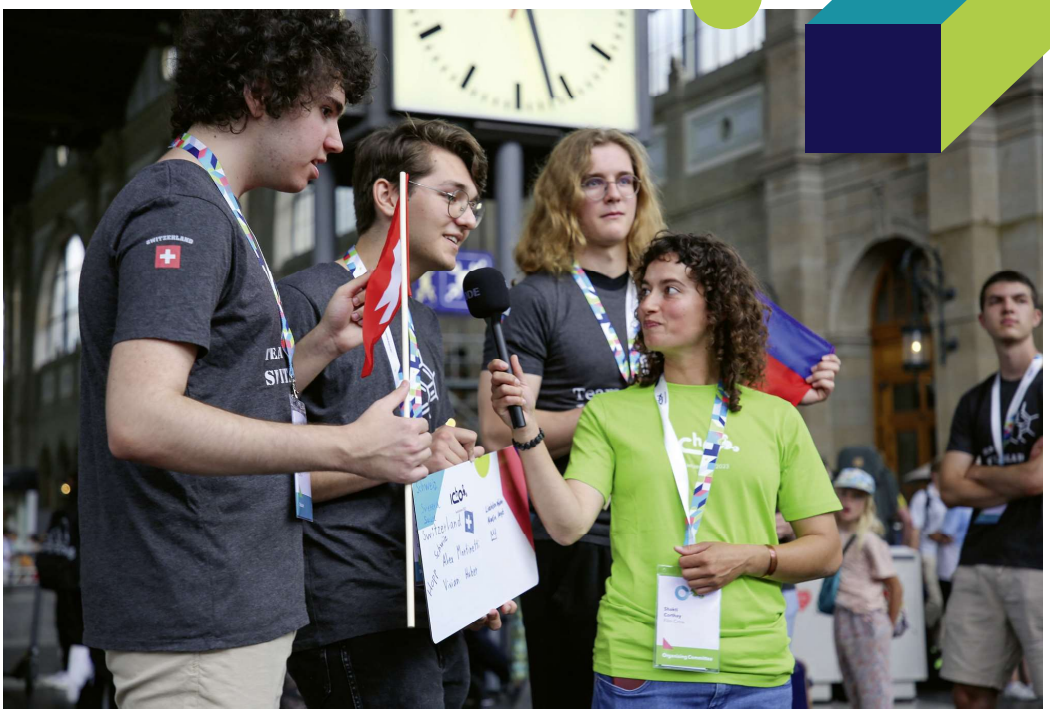
20:00 – 24:00 Jury Meeting 1, Crowne Plaza

Discovery Barometer

Everyone

Happy Birthday

Ayoub Al.Uwaisi
Oman, Observer



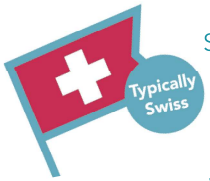
Registration Day – Let's Get Started

Yesterday was the big arrival day: 348 students with their 272 mentors and observers arrived in Zurich. For most of them, their stay in Switzerland started at Zurich airport, some teams arrived by train. From there, the students went to the hotel Aja for registration, and the mentors and observers to the hotel Crowne Plaza.

All in all, Zurich presented itself from its best side: blue skies, punctual trams and trains as well as a warm welcome by the IChO team. The anticipation of the IChO was great among participants, volunteers and organisers. Now the moment has finally come for everyone to physically meet at the venue. After three online IChOs, it is a truly great experience to finally meet in person again. Taiba from Kuwait already participated in the Middle East competition and is now excited for the IChO. She had a long but comfortable journey to Switzerland. Yavor, on the other hand, had a relatively short flight of about two hours from Sofia, the capital city of Bulgaria. This is his first time in Switzerland, but he is already considering studying chemistry at ETH Zurich after finishing school. Sabine from Switzerland reached Zurich by train: "I feel very comfortable in my team and I am looking forward to meeting new people and learning something new about chemistry during the exams. Even if I do not know how to answer the question directly, I will use my current knowledge to try to find a solution."

We are all looking forward to making the 55th IChO a great celebration of joy, togetherness and cross-border friendships and are ready to work together to find solutions that will advance our world and make it a better place. (*al/sa*)

Be Punctual



Swiss punctuality is not just a cliché, it is widely recognized and often seen as a cultural characteristic of Switzerland. The Swiss value punctuality and consider it an important aspect of their daily lives.

If you are more than 5 minutes late, you should announce this by phone. Especially in the working world, punctuality is very important. If you want to meet with somebody, you usually make an appointment beforehand. Even in private life, unannounced visits are not the norm either.

Swiss punctuality is rooted in a sense of respect for eachothers' time. Being punctual is seen as a sign of consideration and reliability, demonstrating that one values and honors the commitments made with others. But don't worry, as with all things that characterise a country: not all Swiss people are always on time! (*al*)

Helma Wennemers – Professor, Researcher and IChO-Moderator

Helma Wennemers earned her Ph.D. at Columbia University, New York, and pursued postdoctoral studies at Nagoya University before joining Basel University as Assistant Professor. In 2011, she was appointed Full Professor of Organic Chemistry at ETH Zurich.

Chemistry fascinates Helma since chemistry allows for a understanding of nature at the molecular level and enables the creation of molecules with tailored properties. Her research group focuses on the development of bioinspired asymmetric catalysts, functional collagen peptides for targeting diseases such as cancer, and uses molecular scaffolds for applications in supramolecular and biological chemistry.

Helma hopes that IChO will form bonds around the world through the passion for chemistry.

Question of the Day:

Which of the following acids is the main type of acid found in grapes?

A. Citric B. Malic C. Succinic D. Tartaric

Yesterday's solution: B: Francium is extremely radioactive, and the most stable sotope, francium-223, has a half-life of 22 minutes. The isotopes of francium quickly decay into astatine, radium and radon.

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Editorial Team:
Andrea Leu (al), Chiara Brändli (cb), Lea Hasler (lh), Lena Frölich (lf), Saulé Akavickytė (volunteer) (sa)
Pictures: various sources

Yesterday in pictures