



National Council's Environmental Committee at Eawag

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Topics: Organisation & Staff

On Tuesday 25 August 2015, the National Council's Committee for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy (CESPE) forsook its usual meeting room in Bern to pay a visit to Eawag.

After a welcome from Director Janet Hering, ETH board representative Barbara Haering emphasised the importance of continuous, guaranteed funding for research. The former member of the National Council did not miss the opportunity to appeal to the conscience of the 21 members of parliament with the warning that restricting people's freedom of movement was toxic for the scientific world – a statement that was met with nods on one side and murmuring on the other. Janet Hering then gave a concise overview of Eawag, stressing the importance of aquatic research for society and the public authorities.

Bridge between science and politics

The guests were taken on a tour to learn more about a selection of Eawag projects, including the Blue Diversion toilet and fertiliser production from urine; the diversity of whitefish; biodiversity monitoring using environmental DNA, and the removal of nitrogen and micropollutants from various kinds of waste water. Among those following the explanations closely were SVP President Toni Brunner (St Gallen) and ProNatura President Silva Semadeni (SP, Graubünden). Being in the sanitation business himself, and until recently the Swisstec President, Peter Schilliger (FDP, Lucerne) was very interested in the urine separation project and the information on Project Nest, given by Deputy Director of Empa, Peter Richner. In a lively atmosphere of exchange between the researchers and the politicians, several participants made a point of praising the work which Eawag and Empa do to bridge the gap between research and practice. Their visit has almost certainly helped to strengthen the bridge between science

and politics as well.

Pictures from the visit

(Photos: Peter Penicka, Eawag)

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