
Stefan Wiemer confirmed

New Director of the Swiss Seismological Service

Zurich, 28 May, 2013. **Professor Stefan Wiemer is the new Director of the Swiss Seismological Service (SED). The Executive Board of ETH Zurich has appointed the 46-year-old, who has been interim Director since January 2012, to succeed Professor Domenico Giardini.**

Stefan Wiemer will be responsible for further pursuing the manifold activities and mandates of the SED as the federal institute for seismology. The core objectives of the SED are seismological monitoring and hazard assessment in Switzerland. For Stefan Wiemer, communicating knowledge about seismological activity is particularly important. This means informing authorities, media and the public appropriately and comprehensively, as well as educating students. Additionally, Stefan Wiemer wants to create space for pursuing new developments. "The increased use of geo-energy also presents challenges to the SED, and I am really looking forward to meeting them head on", says Stefan Wiemer.

Stefan Wiemer attained a diploma in geophysics from the Ruhr University Bochum (D) in 1992. In 1999, after his PhD at the Fairbanks University in Alaska (US) and his postdoc studies in Tsukuba (Japan) he moved to the SED as a research associate, where he set up and led two research groups. He then took over as interim Director in January 2012. "We are very pleased to have Stefan Wiemer as the new Director. He brings a wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge of the SED", says ETH President Ralph Eichler. "This ensures continuity in an institute of great importance to the whole of Switzerland." The ETH Board recently appointed him as Full Professor of Seismology.

Earthquake hazard as a specialist field

Stefan Wiemer researches the effects of earthquakes and investigates which processes in the earth's crust trigger earthquakes. His research interest also include time dependent hazard assessment, which analyses whether it is possible to make more precise forecasts based on micro-seismic data. In the last ten years, he and his team have developed new methods and software solutions for analysing the quality of data catalogues that collate all the earthquakes recorded in a country. Since the 2006 geothermal project triggered earthquakes in Basel that were distinctly felt, Stefan Wiemer has also been working on tremors caused by human activity.

As an expert on seismic hazard, Stefan Wiemer is a member of numerous committees and provides professional reports, for example, as part of the "PEGASOS" studies on earthquake hazard analysis for Swiss nuclear power plants. He was also responsible for the calculation of the Swiss earthquake hazard map in 2004. At ETH Zurich he supervises numerous master and doctoral theses and gives lectures in Seismology and Earth Sciences.

Further information

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The Swiss Seismological Service

The Swiss Seismological Service (SED) is the federal institute for earthquakes and is located at the ETH Zurich. Its main tasks are to monitor the strength and frequency of earthquakes in Switzerland and to investigate the earthquake hazard. To monitor earthquake activity in Switzerland and its bordering regions, the SED operates a nationwide seismological measuring network with highly sensitive broadband seismographs and strong earthquake measuring devices. The SED has around 60 employees and also runs numerous research projects at the ETH Zurich, with 15 PhD students involved at present. As the federal institute for earthquakes, the SED provides advice to industries and the authorities on geothermal projects as well as on seismic monitoring that relates to site evaluations for nuclear power plants and potential geological deep repositories. Ultimately, the SED fulfils an important informative and educational role for the whole population. In the case of an earthquake in or outside Switzerland, SED staff put their expertise at the disposal of the media and the public. Further information on the SED available at: http://www.seismo.ethz.ch/index_EN.