



Newsletter November 2021

# 500 Women Scientists Bern-Fribourg

November has been a very fruitful and active month for our pod. We did networking and group bonding during our retreat in Kandersteg, we met the COO of Alliance F for one of our *Networking lunches* series, and we also had a meeting with the MVUB section of the University of Bern. We hope that we can continue riding high with many more activities in the upcoming months.

See more details below and join us!

**500 Women Scientist Bern-Fribourg Pod Coordinators**  
Claudia Kasper, Andrea Fortier and Ana I. Benítez-Mateos

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## TOP STORIES

### Retreat

On the 12-14 November, we held a retreat in Kandersteg (Bern). We enjoyed two days together in a cozy chalet getting to know each other, cooking, and spending long nights talking and having fun. There was time even for a short hike in the beautiful Oeschinensee region!



Moreover, we followed an excellent workshop by the coach [Tanja Wranick](#). During the different sessions, we learned about negotiation skills, emotions and conflict management, influencing, and power games. Our very own Claudia Kasper also organized a series of theater improvisation exercises which the group found very funny, interesting and didactic.

We thank the University of Bern for the funding of the [Promotion Fund Grant](#) that helped us to make it possible!

A memorable experience is stored in everyone's heart and we hope to repeat it in 2022!



## Meeting with MVUB

At the end of October, members of 500 WS working at the University of Bern received an invitation to participate in one of the regular board meetings of [MVUB](#) (Mittelbauvereinigung der Universität Bern). Three of us attended the November meeting, where we presented the pod and the main goals of 500 WS. The meeting was very constructive. We were able to identify common objectives and ideas, and potential collaborations. We discussed in particular our demands to address [Gender inequality in Academia | 500wsbern](#). MVUB fully supports the petition and will reflect this with a statement in their next Newsletter. We look forward to more fruitful discussions!

## *500 WS eat lunch with Alliance F*

On November 11, we met with Sophie Achermann, COO of [Alliance F](#), to discuss the activities of her organisation over lunch. Alliance F is the largest non-partisan umbrella organisation that represents the interests of women in Swiss politics. It was founded in 1900 and has achieved several important milestones, such as nation-wide women's suffrage (1971), “Fristenregelung” (impunity of abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy, 2002) and recently, paternity leave

(2020). We also discussed our role in fighting for gender equality and better working conditions at universities, the particular situation of women in Switzerland compared to other countries and violence against women in general. It has been enormously interesting and we hope for future cooperation and networking.

## Discussion “Sexualised violence in higher education”

As part of the "[16 Days against violence towards women](#)" action days, the feminist peace organisation [csf](#) organised a discussion on "Sexualised violence at universities - let's talk about it", which Andrea and Claudia attended. The [discussion](#) was recorded. Among the invited guests were representatives of the SUB, UniBe's student council and the gender equality office of UniBe, and a person from Artpolis, a feminist organization in Prishtina, Kosovo. The participants in the discussion agreed that the situation at universities is particularly delicate due to the pronounced relationship of dependency between professors and students, which is still not fully acknowledged by universities in Switzerland as well as in Kosovo. Both universities have implemented procedures for reporting sexual(ised) violence but those are rarely used due to different obstacles such as the fear of not being believed, an ingrained belief that those issues are not relevant enough and a lack of information about the consequences of reporting. See our initiative to improve the situation at universities [here](#), which has recently been endorsed by MVUB. s

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### READ

The blog post [How to end the hemorrhaging of senior women in STEM?](#) By Prof. Em. Patricia A. Maurice.

### DON'T MISS

A 2-year [Postdoctoral Fellowship for Women in Science](#) is offered by the NCCR Bioinspired Materials to work on your own research ideas The fellowship covers salary, consumables and travel expenses. Deadline: 31.01.2022

### SAVE THE DATE

27-28 January 2022 (12:00 - 17:30) [FemTechConf Women in Tech Q1 Summit](#). This event brings together 15,000 women in tech, allies and innovative organisations to Learn, Network and

Grow together.

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