



Professor G. Rosner

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: NuPECC/gr/090518

Herrn Bundesminister
Dr. Johannes Hahn
Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung
Minoritenplatz 5
A-1014 Wien
Österreich

18 May 2009

Dear Minister

Re: Termination of Austria's CERN membership

I am writing to you on behalf of the Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee, NuPECC, which is an Expert Committee of the European Science Foundation. NuPECC is charged with coordinating Nuclear Physics at the European level.

We are very alarmed at your announcement that Austria plans to terminate its CERN membership in 2011 and we urge you to reconsider your decision.

Not only has Austria contributed significantly to major LHC particle physics experiments such as CMS, but also to the large nuclear physics LHC experiment ALICE and, in particular, to the PS experiment nTOF and ASACUSA at the AD Ring. These investments will essentially be lost, if Austria pulls out of CERN.

Whilst it is true that large-scale facilities are expensive to set up and run, and need the robust long-term commitment of all participants, the return on the investment is large as well. Performing nuclear and particle physics experiments, we push the limits of our knowledge about the world around us to increasingly smaller dimensions, which is of very high intellectual value in its own right. In

addition, a host of cutting-edge technologies have been developed that have had, and will continue to have, a high economical impact.

With the renewed interest in nuclear technology worldwide (green energy: nuclear fission and fusion power generation, nuclear medicine: imaging and tumour therapy), we need to acquire more nuclear data. For example, we have to know precisely the absorption coefficients of fast neutrons in heavy targets to develop accelerator-driven sub-critical reactors. nTOF at CERN is one of the experiments where these measurements are being done. Another example, where CERN provided technical assistance, is the MedAustron project for hadron therapy.

We strongly support your intention to invest into large-scale facilities on the ESFRI roadmap such as FAIR. We believe however, this should not be done at the expense of the world's top particle physics laboratory, CERN. In our view, the European Research Area can only prosper by increasing rather than decreasing international collaboration. CERN is the prime example of an exceptionally successful international venture in basic science.

Physics underpins all other natural sciences and cognate fields such as medicine. It also has a high impact on the development of new technologies. We believe it is worth funding at a high level.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Rosner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'G'.

G. Rosner

On behalf of the Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee, NuPECC, European Science Foundation

cc
R.-D. Heuer, Director General, CERN