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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Letter of Support: FET Flagship – FuturICT

I am delighted to underline ETH Zurich's strong support of the FuturICT project and its candidature for the FET Flagship programme.

ETH Zurich has a long and outstanding history in being a pathfinder and incubator for new and visionary research ideas. It is one of the most important hubs of European research networks (involved in approximately 300 projects of the European Union's 7th Framework Program). We are fully aware that, in today's complex world, the next major scientific breakthroughs, along with their expected socio-economic impact, will require ETH Zurich to be a key player in a program of the ambition and size of FET Flagships.

FuturICT has been developed as a European-scale or even global project with a multi-disciplinary scope. Conceptually developed at ETH Zurich, it will be managed by the University College London (UCL), involving further European key institutions. FuturICT will be the first large-scale ICT project in the world addressing techno-socio-economic challenges. Aiming at major scientific breakthroughs, it will unleash huge business potentials and great benefits for decision makers and society.

ETH Zurich has an excellent core of scientists and infrastructure as it is needed for a project with the broad vision and exceptional scope of FuturICT. Special support will be provided by the Computer Science Department of ETH Zurich, the Swiss National Supercomputing Center and the recently established "Competence Center for Coping with Crises in Complex Socio-Economic Systems". Of course, many other research groups and scientists at ETH Zurich are very keen to support the FuturICT project with their individual expertise.

ETH Zurich is preparing to combat the challenges of humanity in the 21st century and to embrace upcoming new opportunities already for some time. The FET Flagship project FuturICT is crucial to reach this goal. ETH Zurich can build on the Competence Center for Coping with Crises in Complex Socio-Economic Systems (CCSS), which has gained a large international visibility in the areas of applied complexity research, complexity management, resilient networks and disaster response. As a further consequential step, ETH Zurich is currently launching an initiative to develop its Integrated Risk Management sector, with a portfolio of 40 risk-research-related professorships, which will have close ties with the financial and insurance cluster in the Greater Zurich area.

It is also important that ETH Zurich can unleash synergies with other large-scale projects such as the Climate Knowledge and Innovation Centre (Climate KIC), one of the first three KICs launched by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in the end of 2009. Furthermore, ETH Zurich has recently established a Future Cities program together with Singapore, which links ETH with an Asian hub and indirectly with Boston's MIT. Finally, there are strong connections with the Santa Fe Institute (SFI) and other US centres of ICT and complex systems research.

For all these reasons ETH Zurich strongly supports the FuturICT project and would be proud to actively take part in this important step towards the realization of the European Research Area and Innovation Union.

Prof. Dr. Roland Siegwart
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