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Professor Thomas A. Henzinger Appointed First President of I.S.T. Austria

The Board of Trustees of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria, in its meeting on Thursday, December 4th, has appointed Prof. Thomas A. Henzinger, of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Lausanne (EPFL), as the first President of I.S.T. Austria. Professor Henzinger, an outstanding internationally recognized Computer Scientist, has accepted the offer to lead the new Institute. He will start serving in a full time capacity on September 1, 2009, allowing for an orderly transition of his current responsibilities in Lausanne. Until that date, the Executive Committee of the Institute will continue to act in the role of President, with Prof. Henzinger serving as an active and frequent advisor, gradually taking charge of his obligations at I.S.T. Austria and spending part of his time at the Klosterneuburg campus.

Dr. Claus Raidl, Chair of the Board of Trustees of I.S.T. Austria, said: "We are delighted that such an outstanding scientist has agreed to accept the great challenge of building a new first class research Institute in Austria. We are particularly happy that our first President is an Austrian who is repatriated after many years and a distinguished career abroad. I assure Professor Henzinger that we will provide him with our total support."

Prof. Haim Harari, Chair of the Executive Committee of I.S.T. Austria, which also acted as the Search Committee for the President, added: "We have conducted a lengthy and thorough international search. Our decision was supported by evaluations and reviews of leading scientists and science administrators who praised Tom Henzinger as a remarkable scientific leader in his field and a man of great intellectual quality and integrity. We have been in contact with Tom for a long time now, and were impressed by his excitement and devotion to the idea of building a new Institute in Austria. I am happy to transfer to him the responsibility of leading the developing Institute. I will continue to do everything in my power to assist and advise Tom during the transition phase, and whenever required later."

Prof. Thomas A. Henzinger said in a first reaction: "The invitation by the Board of Trustees to become the first President of I.S.T. Austria is a great honor for me. Building I.S.T. Austria is a remarkable enterprise and a great challenge. The preparation work, so far, has set I.S.T. Austria on the right track for a great success. I feel privileged to be able to devote my knowledge and energy to the development of this endeavor in my home country."

Thomas A. Henzinger: Scientific Career

Thomas A. Henzinger was born in Linz in 1962. He graduated with distinction in Computer Science at Johannes Kepler University in Linz. After earning an M.S. degree in Computer and Information Sciences from the University of Delaware, he received his Ph.D. degree in Computer Science from Stanford University (1991), one of the top departments in the world in this field. He then held the positions of an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Cornell University (1992-95), and, successively, Assistant Professor (1996-97), Associate Professor (1997-98), Professor (1998-2004), and (since 2004) Adjunct Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley. From 1999 to 2000 Henzinger was Director at the Max-Planck-Institute for Computer Science in Saarbrücken. In April 2004 he became Professor for Computer and Communication Sciences at the ETH Lausanne (EPFL).

Thomas Henzinger is an ISI highly cited researcher, a member of Academia Europaea, a member of the German Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina), a Fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

Thomas A. Henzinger: Scientific Achievements

Prof. Henzinger's main field of research is the development of formal methods for program and system verification in Computer Science. This field aims to improve the reliability of software and hardware systems. Henzinger developed novel theories, algorithms, and tools for software checking that uncover bugs and errors in computer programs consisting of thousands of code lines. In addition, he made major contributions to the area of real-time and embedded systems. He developed "Giotto", a computer language that lifts the level of abstraction for real-time programming and eliminates common sources of timing errors. In recent years he continued his research in these areas but, simultaneously, he started

several other lines of research, in fields such as game theory, systems biology, and transactional memories. Among other achievements, he coined the term "Executable Biology". This describes the attempt to model the interaction of molecules or cells by an algorithmic description of the relevant processes. Henzinger is a prolific author of new publications in his various fields of research and he is one of the top-10 most cited authors in two different areas of Computer Science ("Software Engineering and Programming Languages" and "Real-Time and Embedded Systems").

The multidisciplinary approach of Prof. Henzinger – combining aspects of computer science and biology – is of special interest for I.S.T. Austria. He will continue his scientific work with his research group after resuming the position of the first President of I.S.T. Austria. His group will take up work once the first building for the theoretical sciences will be completed in the spring of 2009.

The Search Process

Today's decision of the Board of Trustees of I.S.T. Austria followed a recommendation of the Executive Committee, which also served, since June 2007, as a Search Committee for the first President. According to the law and to the report of the International Committee ("Recommended Steps Towards the Establishment of the Institute of Science and Technology - Austria" by Haim Harari, Olaf Kübler and Hubert Markl, 2006) the President must be an outstanding scientist with leadership qualities, both as a researcher and as a builder and organizer of scientific institutions.

The first phase of the search started with an appeal to Board members, committee members and leading international scientists to nominate suitable candidates, followed by advertising in the international scientific press and in the Austrian press. By spring 2008, approximately 100 names of candidates had been received. In a gradual process, the number was first reduced to about 30 candidates, and later to less than 10, who were evaluated by personal interviews, consultations with senior scientists, fact-finding and informal discussions. A leading candidate was selected and approved in June 2008, but, after indicating great interest, decided to decline. At that stage, the committee decided not to return to any of the previous candidates, but to search for additional new possibilities. Several new candidates of high quality were proposed and thoroughly evaluated, including written and oral consultations with international experts, Campus visits and in-depth interviews. Based on this

process, Thomas A. Henzinger emerged as the most promising candidate, supported by further reviews and a series of interviews with all individual members of the Search Committee. The Executive Committee made its final recommendation on December 1st and submitted it to the full Board of Trustees, chaired by Dr. Claus Raidl, which approved it on December 4th.

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Please note that all media contacts with Thomas A. Henzinger are handled through Oliver Lehmann.