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## To the CUMULUS Board Election Committee

Zürich, Switzerland, Mai 13<sup>th</sup>

### Letter of Motivation as candidate for the CUMULUS Board VIII

Professor Michael Krohn, Zurich University of the Arts.

Dear CUMULUS Family,

with this letter, I'm declaring my interest to be elected for the CUMULUS Board VIII at the virtual GA in June 2022.

The global Covid pandemic, followed by the war in Ukraine, fundamentally changed the design discipline and it's academical demand. Our concern for a healthy, sustainable and equal existence transformed the "new normal" to a "not normal". What we learned: the future is VUCA: **V**olatile, **U**ncertain, **C**omplex and **A**mbiguous. And here starts design: with at its core creativity and the potential to think different, it may transform the world in a more sustainable, inclusive and responsible one.

Since my graduation as an Industrial Designer in the early 90's, I followed a two-legged career: as an academic in design formation and -research, and as a practicing designer with own design agency in Zurich. My academical career led to several senior positions at the Zurich University of the Arts. Today I'm head of the Centre for Sustainability, coordinating education and research for a more sustainable society. This fruitful combination is the basis of my motivation: believing the next generation of designers understand the necessities of this coming VUCA-world: qualify students for complex tasks with the needed mindset, methods, skills and knowledge.

My personal and professional roots are in Switzerland. This not only shaped my love for of design (Swiss Design), also my understanding of democracy, participation, policy and inclusion of different cultures. Despite this, I'm internationally very active, with a profound experience in global design and culture. My projects take place in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. This resulted in a global network of institutions, enterprises and NGO's I'm collaborating with.

CUMULUS is the most important global network for design education, -practice and intercultural links, it shapes the future of the design discipline. Gathering 360 important design education institutions, CUMULUS today reached a size and a global significance that asks for a coherent global strategy, professionalisation, but also recognises its potential as political opinion maker.

Being part of such a precious network, and being re-elected as a board member, I have set myself a few goals that I like to develop with my colleagues of the board:

- Shaping the future of design: as discipline, as field of knowledge and educational framework and not at last as strategic thinking.
- Understanding design as a method for social- and sustainable transformation.
- Turning CUMULUS in a divers, plural, integrative and sustainable global association, considering its heritage and it's challenges.
- Enable participation of various cultures, gender and mindsets. But do not forget the design professions it represents.
- Making the network easier to access - especially for the global south and -east. Reconfiguring our conferences, considering easier access by digital technologies.
- Support initiatives of our member institutions, by providing access to knowledge and resources.
- Giving students a strong voice and visibility, see them as important stakeholder.

Serving the current CUMULUS Executive Board VII, and the former boards II and III, I am familiar with the required skills, dedication, responsibility and duties of a board position. Saying this: I know what is expected from a board member and what can be achieved with an Executive Board that collaborates well and foster it's close relation with the General Secretariat and its members. Developing the association further and bringing CUMULUS to the next level, would be an honourable task for me.

Therefore I would be honoured to be again elected at the General Assembly on June 16th. As a matter of continuity, I recommend my eligible colleagues Philipp Heidkamp, Anne Pikkov, Teemu Leinonen, Adam de Eyto and Mariana Matullo as president to be also re-elected.

**Yours sincerely**

**Professor Michael Krohn**

Zurich University of the Arts

