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To whom it may concern

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**Subject matter:** Eric R. Scerri's Lecture at the University of Zurich, September 2014

Eric R. Scerri asked me to provide a recommendation based on his visit to the University of Zurich (UZH), September 15-17, 2014 and his lecture in our departmental seminar entitled: "*How the Periodic Table Developed*". I follow this request with great pleasure.

The weekly seminar of the Department of Chemistry at UZH is organized by the Faculty Members and invites outstanding scientist from all over the world, researching in cutting-edge fields of science. Since we consider the seminar as a pivotal part of the student's education, quality is the major criterion for invitations. About one seminar per year is dedicated to scientific-historic aspects of chemistry. Last year, we decided unanimously to invite Eric as the leading expert in the development of chemistry in general and the Periodic Table in particular. Many of us very well know Eric due to his excellent books on this topic but also as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal "*Foundations of Chemistry*".

Eric provided a truly outstanding lecture, focusing on historical and even more on the scientific background of the Periodic Table. He scrutinized the different proposals about the ordering of the elements prior to Mendeleev and managed to guide the students (and the professors) in a rational and scientifically unambiguous way to the final Periodic Table as we use it nowadays. The lecture was enriched with "side-line" tales and stories, rendering it very diversified and vivid. In the course of the development of the Periodic Table, he ended with a provocative proposal about the electronic configuration of the elements. Eric is not only an expert in the Periodic Table but his detailed study of this subject combined with philosophical thinking may lead to totally new vistas. In any case, it powered the students to scrutinize some rock-solid dogmas in chemistry and we had a number of very interesting follow-up discussions.

The lecture was an overwhelming success. It showed all of us that the Periodic Table is not only boring piece of history but also that it still conceals many surprises and unexpected directions. Eric proved to be the expert we expected. His presentation was not only a scientific pleasure but was also from the



didactical point of view just great. The feedback from the students persisted well over the period as normally found after pure science lectures.

From all these points, I can very well recommend him as a lecturer on science, philosophy and history and especially the combination of the three fields to a general audience. Needless to say, the professors and the students had many different discussions over the three days he visited the University of Zurich.

Sincerely Yours

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Alberto'.

Roger Alberto