

The Treasurer Reports

The Treasurer, Ph. Choquard, had good news when he summarised the state of EPS finances to the Executive Committee last month in anticipation of a final report to Council in March. As can be seen from Table 1 giving income and expenditure for 1991, the budget approved by Council last May called for a surplus of some 60 kSFR. The revised estimate prepared by the Executive Secretary gives a significantly larger balance of income over expenditure of about 108 kSFR. However, uncollected outstanding fees of 37.5 kSFR had to be written off. The accumulated deficit therefore stood at 82 kSFR at the end of 1991, well down on the 153 kSFR at the end of 1990.

An Encouraging Year

On balance, 1991 was most encouraging. Contributions from Associates totalled some 30 kSFR more than anticipated, in part owing to a vigorous initiatives by both the President, M. Jacob, and the Treasurer in personally encouraging companies and institutes to directly support the Society's initiatives. In approaching potential Associates, they stressed the importance of coordinated European efforts in many aspects directly affecting physicists, such as student mobility, professional qualifications and help for eastern Europe in addition to EPS's well-established activities.

Several existing Associates had generously agreed to raise their contributions and nine new Associates joined the Society in 1991. They are: EPF Lausanne, Geneva University, Gordon and Breach, Hoffman La Roche, IRI Delft, JINR Dubna, MeV-CGR, Tungsram, and World Scientific Publishing. Four organizations (CRPP Lausanne, Grenoble University, MPI für Quantenoptik, Trondheim University) agreed in late-1991 to join in 1992.

The financial task force made up of members appointed by the Executive Committee, also played a useful rôle. It will continue to meet regularly to review the situation and to pin-point actions.

Income from *Europhysics News* was also better than planned (up from a budgeted 70 kSFR in 1990 to 114 kSFR in 1991) in spite of these difficult times when advertising is being drastically reduced. The increase in library subscriptions is heartening and the Treasurer recommended concerted efforts to boost this item. Some appropriate steps have already been taken.

The results for the sales of the *European Conference Abstracts* series were a little disappointing, the difficulties largely stemming from severe competition and the willingness of publishers to underwrite conference proceedings. It is worth recalling, however, that the *ECA* series aims to be extended abstracts of conferences of EPS Divisions and Groups. As such they give a homogeneous and concise overview of physics in an economic and efficient format. They are unique so every effort should be

made to increase their appeal to both subscribers and conference organizers.

Planning for gifts and donations is difficult, and the Treasurer has always been quick to point out that this entry has usually been smaller than one could perhaps expect. Nevertheless, in 1991, there was a donation of 12 kSFR from the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne to help meet the cost of training staff from the Budapest Secretariat in Geneva.

Stable Expenditure

On the expenditure side, salary expenses were in line with provisions and *Europhysics News* was able to contain an increase in distribution costs (primarily mailing from Budapest) through economies in production, notably the introduction of electronic text processing.

Moving more of the Society's administration has not led to a reduction in Secretariat expenses, which remained stable at around 145 kSFR in 1990 and 1991. Travel expenses to accommodate staff transfers between Geneva and Budapest were increased in 1991 by about 25% from the 1990 level. The primary savings in the move to Budapest therefore involve staff costs and there was a roughly 55 kSFR decrease in 1991 from the 1990 amount — an amount which corresponded to a reduced staff level as replacements had not yet been engaged.

Immediate Future Satisfactory

While the Society is on the course charted out by Professor Choquard of effectively eliminating the accumulated deficit by the 25th Anniversary of EPS in 1993, ensuring financial viability while providing the kinds of services expected of a European-level society at a time of great change remains a challenging task. The Treasurer's preliminary budget for 1992, which was also submitted to the Executive Committee last month, includes a substantial increase of 60 kSFR in Article 4b) and 4c) income owing to the increase in the unit fee from 12. — to 13.50 SFR at the beginning of 1992, but allowing for some deferred payment of fees by IOM's and societies in eastern and central Europe. Continuing efforts to boost contributions from Associates should yield a significantly better result than the budgeted amount.

Staff costs continue to rise owing to inflation in both Budapest and Geneva and to the need to ensure the planned full-time level of personnel. The printing cost of *Europhysics News* remains unchanged for the usual 20 pages published 11 times each year. However, with Hungarian postal charges fast approaching European norms, distribution costs are set to rise again and the time has probably come to consider a more efficient, and at the same time attractive, mailing procedure. Some economies may then be possible. Increased PTT charges will also show up in the general Secretariat expenses. Overall, a surplus on the order of about 58 kSFR can be foreseen, bringing the accumulated deficit to 23.4 kSFR (Table 2).

INCOME

	Budget accepted by Council	Final Estimate
Membership fees		
Art. 4a)	18 720	20 160
Art. 4c)	158 400	158 400
Art. 4d)	11 700	12 000
Art. 4b)	304 000	312 000
Associate Members	175 000	204 000
Gifts and Donations	—	12 000
sub-total	(667 820)	(718 560)
<i>Europhysics News</i>		
Bulk subscriptions	41 800	44 000
Library subscriptions	12 000	20 000
Advertisements	40 000	50 000
sub-total	(93 800)	(114 000)
Other		
<i>Europhys. Conf. Abs.</i>	35 000	21 000
Various sales	15 000	10 000
<i>Europhysics Letters</i>	10 000	2 500
sub-total	(60 000)	(33 500)
Total Income	821 620	866 060

Table 1 — EPS income and expenditure (in SFR) for 1991: as accepted by Council in May 1991 and the final estimate submitted to the Executive Committee in January 1992.

EXPENDITURE

	Budget accepted by Council	Final Estimate
Salaries		
Permanent staff (incl. social charges)	250 000	251 000
Auxiliary staff	15 000	15 400
sub-total	(265 000)	(266 400)
<i>Europhysics News</i>		
Editorial	135 000	135 000
Printing	135 000	115 000
Distribution	24 000	50 200
sub-total	(294 000)	(300 200)
Secretariat		
Office rent	37 500	45 000
Telephone, mailing, stationery, etc.	45 000	42 000
Duplication	12 000	8 000
General administration	14 000	12 000
Equipment maintenance, purchase	14 000	11 000
Promotion, EPS Poster	9 000	9 000
Divisions	6 000	6 000
Production <i>Europhys. Conf. Abs.</i>	10 000	8 000
sub-total	(147 500)	(141 000)
Meetings, travel		
Travel	35 000	35 000
Meetings: Council, etc.	15 000	10 000
Meetings: Ass. Mbrs	5 000	5 000
sub-total	(55 000)	(50 000)
Total Expenditures	761 500	757 600

Table 2 — Summary of EPS Finances for 1990-92 (in Swiss francs)

Item	1990 final estimate	1991 final estimate	1992 proposed
Total Income	819 628	866 060	926 710⁽ⁱ⁾
Total Expenditure	807 405	757 600	868 000
Surplus	12 233	108 460	58 710
Accumulated Deficit	153 040	82 080 ⁽ⁱ⁾	23 370

Notes: i) The accumulated deficit for 1991 includes an amortization of SFR 37 500.— for unpaid Associate Member fees accruing over several years.

ii) Allowances have been made for the deferred payment of Arts. 4b) and 4c) fees.

Restructuring

Current operations of course continue with restructuring as a back drop — both at the Society level and across Europe. The President summarises the current situation on page 34 of this issue, including some of the financial aspects. Professor Choquard is firm on one point. As implied by Table 1 for 1991, income is now entirely in convertible currency and this will remain a basic principle as all European countries now essentially permit full convertibility. There remain, however, serious problems at both the individual and national levels. Individual physicists are increasingly finding that fees to European-level societies (EPS is no exception) represent a large proportion of the personal income. Second, some national societies presently have great difficulty in paying their contributions following the

changeover to different forms of support. Appeals for sponsorship are being considered so that Member Societies and IOM's experiencing difficulties will be able to keep paying their fees. But this is hopefully an interim measure.

The long-term situation may depend on the outcome of the restructuring now being considered by the Executive Committee. The Treasurer is obviously mindful of financial implications, noting that an essential requirement is stable financing once the Executive Secretary returns to Geneva. He essentially sees 1993 as a buffer year while the Society, through Council, considers future priorities based on the working paper being prepared for Council. Finally, he wishes to remind the Divisions, Groups and the national societies of last year's appeal for membership campaigns.

Letter to the Editor

Of Mice and Elephants

Somehow we all associate with "cute" and "friendly" a notion of smallness, and this is definitely true when we think of people. But when you dig a little deeper, you notice very quickly that there is a lot more emotional attachment to big beings. The cute toys in your children's room will be a crocodile, or perhaps a dinosaur. Elephants, gorillas and bears are the preferred toys, and jumbo-sized should be anything that wants to attract our attention.

There are many more mice than elephants, what could be clearer than that. It is, however, less evident that there are also many more tonnes of mice than of elephants, and probably yet even more tonnes as you go down the ladder to spiders and to insects. Being a physicist, I prefer not to speculate — although I have some guesses.

A similar relationship holds in the world of research projects. Much attention is given to the big projects in the range of several millions of ECU's. But mice, not elephants, are the more abundant species, by number and by importance: far more researchers are involved in small-scale activities. Consequently there should be far more money available to small-scale projects. Assuming, of course, that small really is beautiful, and that the quality of small-scale research and its impact on the future course of science

are not inferior to those of mega-projects. How about the initial work on buckyball chemistry, ceramic superconductors, the Mossbauer effect, noble gas compounds, dye lasers, the structure of photosynthetic reaction centres? Each was carried out in rather small groups, which cooperated with others but were rather generously funded at levels that made them indeed small projects.

Such small science is funded in the responsive mode by British research councils, or by what the German DFG calls their normal procedure. There is nothing wrong with having large facilities such as sources for neutrons or synchrotron light, or even the big accelerators and the space missions. What matters is the perspective. The really revolutionary ideas are usually not planned, or anticipated in the design of a huge research cooperation. So let us not divert all resources to the type of project where you have to know a few years ahead what you will be doing. As the people in research councils ought to know, you cannot afford failures when too much investment is involved, but the really interesting projects are risky, and some will have to fail. It is nothing to be proud of if every single project delivers the expected results.

Even international science is not necessarily of elephant size, as CERN and ESA and the like would suggest. Such institutions have their importance, and who would

question the enormous knowledge we have gained from those enterprises about the Universe, the solar system and the fundamental forces of nature. They probe questions which affect deeply our view of the world and allow experiments on questions which were until very recently the realm of metaphysical speculation. What should be known by more people, however, is that small-scale science benefits just as much from international cooperation as the big programmes.

It is of course commonplace that science is international, that scholars share their ideas at international conferences and publish in journals held by most (they hope) libraries of institutes doing related work. But on top of this there is great advantage to be gained by providing mechanisms for intense international collaboration. In a small country, *e.g.*, Denmark, you have to be very lucky to find several colleagues with whom you can closely cooperate and discuss particular projects. But even in countries as large as France or the U.K., it is not always possible to assemble all the techniques required to answer questions in interdisciplinary fields such as the biophysics of photosynthesis or bio-inorganic chemistry.

The SCIENCE programme of the CEC, and its successor in the new Framework Programme, have a little of that flavour, but individual grants there are still huge compared to the small-scale networking mechanisms afforded by other institutions such as the European Science Foundation. The internationalization of small projects has yet to be established fully.

So come out from the holes, you mice. Foot-soldiers of science, leave the trenches and speak up! Let the world know about the glory of the small project! University presidents and science ministers love the tremendous visibility of the big programmes, and are assured good coverage in the press if they appear as their benefactors. Is it possible that our preference for big animals as childhood companions shows its effect here? The thinking needs to be changed. Let us work at making it socially unacceptable behaviour to praise a big project without proper tribute to the small grant which is so much more important to science. Nobody should be allowed to inaugurate a large facility without some ritual to the benefit of the small projects. It could at least be a tangible contribution towards a supporting university programme, and some strong commitment for "small science" in general ought to become the rule.

M. Mahnig
European Science Foundation,
Strasbourg

An Apology

We apologise for referring to Professor S. Porowski as the President of the Polish Physical Society on page 18 of the January issue of *Europhysics News*. The President is in fact Professor S. Pokorski.