

this difficult task. A few countries had already established, or were creating, national titles in science but the European Community's intentions were unclear, especially since it now appeared possible to obtain an "EC endorsement".

Publications

E. Buckel handed over the position of Editor-in-Chief of *Europhysics Letters* to R. Balian for whom the "privilege had given me duties". Professor Balian is the proud co-author of the very first paper to have appeared in the journal. Professor Buckel explained that *Letters* had to cope with an increase in the number of submissions by increasing the number of annual volumes.

P.G. Boswell speaking on behalf of F. James (Chairman, *Europhysics News* Editorial Board) described the progress that had been made in publishing more Directory-type information and more news — both technical and otherwise. The number of general review articles was significantly smaller in 1991 than in 1990, this being compensated for by "targeted" collections of shorter features. Lower costs arising from the introduction of electronic production techniques had unfortunately been swamped by increases in mailing charges. It was planned to modernise distribution to the IOM's by introducing more cost-effective plastic wrappers.

Council closed a constructive, busy and largely optimistic meeting with a short tribute by H. Ryde to the President's enthusiasm and drive.

Decisions of EPS Council

At its meeting on 27-28 March 1992, the Council made the following decisions:

- To admit the Physical Societies of Albania, Croatia, Estonia, and Lithuania.
- To accept 397 new Individual Ordinary Members and 8 new Associate Members.
- To accept the proposed budget for 1992 that seeks a surplus of almost 60 kSFR.
- To endorse the proposals for a restructured society, as outlined in the discussion document *A New EPS Structure*, and to have detailed proposals for implementation tabled at the next Council Meeting.
- To approve the formation of an Astrophysics Division jointly with the European Astronomical Society.
- To accept the appointment of A. Landesman as the Chairman of the East-West Task Force which now becomes the East-West Coordination Committee (EWCC).
- To endorse the initiatives of the East-West Task Force (now the EWCC) and its plan to develop further actions in cooperation with the American Physical Society.
- To endorse the proposed arrangements for the 1993 General Conference and for the 25th Anniversary of EPS.
- To approve the launching of the European Mobility Scheme for Physics Students.
- To accept the notion of a European professional title in physics and to seek proposals for its implementation at the next Council Meeting.
- To consider nominations for Honourary Membership at the next Council Meeting.
- To elect as the Executive Committee for the year 1992/3 the following:

President:	M. Jacob, Geneva	Members:	A.F. Andreev, Moscow
Vice-President:	N. Kroo, Budapest		C.M. Ferreira, Lisbon
Secretary:	A. Taroni, Brescia		E. Osnes, Oslo
Vice-Secretary:	C. van der Leun, Utrecht		E. Schopper, Geneva
Treasurer:	Ph. Choquard, Lausanne		I. Slaus, Zagreb
Vice-Treasurer:	E. Jakeman, Malvern		

- To hold future Council Meetings as follows:

1993: 26-27 March, Nice	1996: 29-30 March, Portugal
1994: 25-26 March, Cracow or Warsaw	1997: 21-22 March, Spain
1995: 31 March-1 April, Berlin or Bad Honnef	



Europhysics Notes

Compiled from correspondents' reports.

Contributions should be sent to the Editor.

● Dutch React to Shortened Degree

Degree courses for physicists in The Netherlands were reduced in length in 1982 to four years in both the universities (*doctorandus*, drs.) and technical universities (*ingenieur*, ir.). The average graduation time has meanwhile gone from 6.9 years to 4.9 years in 1991. A report of The Netherlands Physical Society by G. Maurice, published last month, of a survey finalised in October 1991 gauges the effects of the change for the first time. Considering students starting "old style" (OS) courses in 1979-84 and "new style" (NS) courses in 1985-90, the percentage of the numbers of drs. and ir.

moving on to further studies (mostly Ph.D. level) increased from 64% for OS to 77% for NS. Of students moving to full-time employment, the percentage of drs. moving to major industrial companies nearly halved (35% to 19%) as compared with ir. where the decrease was much less (55 to 48%). Smaller industry increased its share of physicists in first-time employment by roughly the same amount for both drs. (37 to 44%) and ir. (26 to 37%). Drs. moving to (semi)-government organisations increased from 27 to 36% while the percentage for ir. actually decreased from 19 to 15%.

E.W.A. Lingeman, the secretary of the Commission which made the survey, thinks the trends reflect the belief among graduates that industry seeks a longer training. It will therefore be interesting to see if new style Ph.D.'s presently starting to enter employment favour industry. For old style Ph.D.'s covered by the survey, the main part (44%) moved to (semi)government, 35% to major industry, and 19% to small companies. Moreover, will equivalent reactions materialise elsewhere? Germany is thinking about reducing, and the UK extending, first-degree courses.

The 1982 changes also led to a surge in the numbers (both total and first year) of physics students enrolled in Holland's four technical universities [*FOM Report 68747*

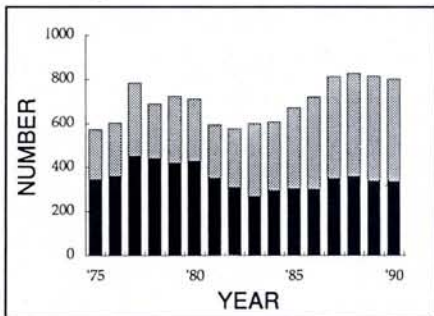


E.W.A. Lingeman, Chairman of the EPS Physics and Society Committee and Secretary of the EPS East-West Coordination Committee, speaking at Council in Athens.

(May 1991)]. The number of first years at TU Delft, the largest, in fact now appears to exceed the number at the largest university physics department for the first time (this is currently being checked). The universities have responded by opening technical physics departments of their own.

● FOM towards 2000

In outlining the rôle it sees for itself in the coming years, the Foundation for Fundamental Research on Matter (FOM), Holland's largest government-supported organisation in physics, recently published a strategic plan (*FOM Towards 2000*) as an



The numbers of first-year student in physics (solid black) and technical physics (shaded) in The Netherlands [*FOM Report 68747* (1991)].

explicit policy statement to clarify its position in the Dutch scientific arena. The main task remains the promotion of fundamental research based on scientific importance and technological relevance. Its "outputs" are new knowledge and highly qualified research staff and technicians. FOM's support of physics is not seen as a strict, discipline-oriented approach but an engagement wherever there is a fundamental physics component. This means that FOM will support research at both the 'heart' of physics as well as at the many interfaces with other fields without, however, claiming fields where research is already well-organised. FOM's working area is determined by whether or not a topic brings an innovative contribution to physics.

This policy statement endorses an earlier decision [EN 22 (1991) 103] to reduce the percentage of the basic operational subsidy (82 MHFL in 1992) spent on sub-atomic physics from 44 to 33% by the year 2000. Part of the funds released will go to both "curiosity driven" and strategic/technologically relevant (S/T) research in the same "mainstream" branch of physics (atomic & statistical, quantum electronics, condensed matter, or phenomenology). In addition to the basic operational subsidy FOM receives about 10-15 MHFL a year in ear-marked funds for S/T research from sources such as the EC, Euratom, the Dutch Technology Foundation, the economic affairs ministry, etc. This means that FOM spending on S/T oriented research will rise from today's $\approx 33\%$ of total annual budget to $\approx 40\%$ by 2000.

Implementing the policy has led to some clear objectives in fields of big science of interest to FOM as well as to top-down priority programmes in soft condensed matter and scientific instrumentation. Networks mirroring European trends are being reinforced by giving, for instance, increased management responsibilities to FOM working communities. These communities, made up from professors receiving FOM grants for a given field of research ($\approx 60\%$ of all Dutch physics professors are funded by FOM) provide a way to coordinate research efforts.

Dr. Hans Chang, FOM Director, Professor Lev Blinov, head of the laboratory for liquid crystals, ICM, and Dr. Boris Ostrovsky, ICM, (from left to right) signing an agreement for joint research efforts as part of a Dutch support programme for physicists in the former Soviet Union (photo courtesy of FOM).



● Swiss Supercomputer Centre



The Centro Svizzero di Calcolo Scientifico (CSCS), the Swiss National Supercomputing Resource in Manno on the outskirts of Lugano, started pilot operation last October and its 26 user groups became official last month. The Centre's NEC SX-3, twin processor supercomputer (with a theoretical peak power of 5.5 Gflops) makes it a reference site among other similar European centres in Germany, Holland and the UK. The CSCS, funded by a 40 MSFR federal government grant and managed by the ETH-Zurich, provides computing facilities to Swiss universities, thus complementing Cray-equipped centres at the ETH-Zurich and the EPF-Lausanne. It is planned to reduce the universities share from 90% to 80% of available CPU time as industry becomes more involved. The Director, Dr. Alfred Scheidegger, a biochemist by training, aims to expand applications in climate research where there is now one project with a 4% share of CPU time, as compared with 26% for quantum chemistry, 22% for solid state physics and 18% for high energy physics.

● Dutch Support Physicists in Former Soviet Union

Conditions in the scientific world in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are as bad as they are in most parts of public life. Governments and intergovernmental organisations in the rich industrialised world are preparing support programmes (page 70) but it will take time before they yield improvements in the daily situation of most citizens.

Pending implementation of these programmes and to demonstrate more than verbal solidarity with colleagues, H. Eggen writes to say that the Dutch physics research organisation FOM, has set up a short-term support scheme for some research groups in physics institutes. FOM's national funding agency NWO quickly joined the initiative. The first agreement (covering joint research on the structure and properties of ordered organic films and expiring at the end of 1993) was signed in Amsterdam on 10 March between FOM and a group at the Institute for Crystallography in Moscow (ICM): FOM/NWO funding is US\$ 64000.-.

Since the problems in the former Soviet Union as so vast, any small support effort will be a mere drop in the ocean. For support to be as effective as possible, FOM has decided to sign agreements only with research groups with which it already cooperates formally. It is expected that more agreements will follow soon. FOM hopes that other physics research organisations in Europe will launch similar efforts to support colleagues in the CIS, not forgetting the Baltic states.

● Physique en Herbe 92



Physique en Herbe 92, the European Congress for young physicists, takes place at the Luminy campus (see photo) of the University of Marseilles, France, on 6-10 July. Contact: PEH 92, CRMC2-CNRS, Campus de Luminy, Case postale 913, F-13288 Marseilles Cédex 9 (Tel./Fax: +33 - 91 17 28 08 / 91 41 89 16).

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(The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of the human race than the discovery of a star.)
Jean-Anthelme de Savarin (1755-1826)

Writing about the application of chemistry to the art of cookery: "In what art or science could improvements be made that would more powerfully contribute to increase the comforts and enjoyments of mankind."
Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford (1753-1814)

GENERAL INFORMATION

For information please contact, by April 15, 1992, preferably by mail, or Fax:

Monsieur Hervé THIS
"Pour la Science"
8, rue Férou
F-75006 PARIS, France

Telephone: +33 1 4634 2142
Telefax: +33 1 4325 1829

Participation by invitation only

N. KURTI - N. MCGEE - H. THIS
DIRECTORS OF THE WORKSHOP

A. ZICHICHI
DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE