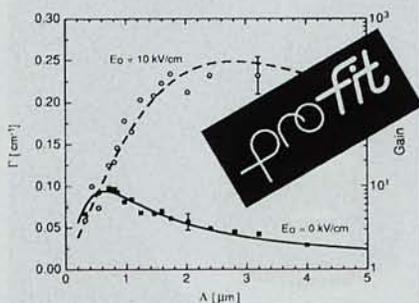


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Ambitious Japanese Target for FSU Collaboration

Science in the former Soviet Union (FSU) is considered by Japan to be so strategically important that the President of the government's Science Council appealed last January for help from learned societies. This followed discussions initiated by the physics community within the National Committee for Physics forming part of the Council. Maurice Jacob, the President of EPS, reports following a recent visit to Japan that the 17 000 member Physical Society of Japan (PSJ) decided at a special forum at its 1992 annual meeting in March to expand an established journals donation scheme (about 30 sets are presently being sent to the FSU) and to encourage collaborative research.

The Council's appeal also led to the formation of a group of eminent physicists chaired by Professor K. Husimi, a PSJ Past-President, to raise finance from industry for a special fund to be managed by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). Some 300 kSFR has so far been pledged for fiscal 1993. The target is a million Swiss francs for three years to support collaborative research, topical meetings, and a fellowship scheme to supplement JSPS plans to expand short-term visits.

Professor Husimi and Professor M. Konuma, the immediate Past-President of PSJ, made a fact-finding trip to Moscow in September, partly to find out how the PSJ can build upon existing EPS and American Physical Society initiatives. However, the PSJ will continue to focus on the FSU and its eastern

parts, and not on east and central Europe.

Separately, the Toyota Foundation is supporting projects aimed at coordinating communication and collaboration in science. These include a survey by Professor Konuma and Professor Y.H. Ichikawa, another PSJ Past-President, of existing and future research institutes in the FSU, starting with physics and extending to technology.

There is also The Japan Society of Applied Physics (JSAP) which has doubled to 20 000 members in ten years, mostly by attracting physicists working in industry (63% of members). While both societies hold annual meetings and publish monthly bulletins, the JSAP, unlike the PSJ, has a divisional structure, professional groups, and publishes an international journal with a circulation of 4000. The JSAP does not yet have a major programme in favour of the FSU and Professor T. Kawakubo, the JSAP President, thought joint EPS-JSAP initiatives could perhaps start by sponsoring meetings.

The two Japanese physical societies are thriving. This is to some extent because the government policy to increase domestic spending means funding for basic research and higher education is increasing at a healthy 15% p.a. They share, however, the universal concern that fewer high school students are choosing to study physics at university. Following a PSJ appeal, a first step in seeing what can be done will be a study symposium attended by university staff and high school teachers.



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In addition to the texts of the four plenary talks titled Science in a changing Europe (G. Metakides), Magnetic X-ray scattering (G.H. Lander and W.G. Stirling), Applications of amorphous silicon devices (P.G. LeComber), and Some lessons from soap froth for the physics of soft condensed matter (D. Weaire), the issue contains 62 invited contributions. The latter were presented in sessions on high T_c superconductivity; magnetism and heavy fermions; semiconductors and low dimensional physics; condensed matter systems with complex structures, fluids and glass transitions; *ab initio* computations and surface physics; and new developments.

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