

## Moving Ahead Together

Council this year in Nice on 26-17 March, at the turn-of-the-century Atlantic Hotel under clear Mediterranean skies, was hosted by the French Physical Society (FPS). There was record attendance, and Mrs. Sébenne and the French society's local section chairman ensured an extremely smoothly running occasion. D. Kaplan, the FPS President, greeted Delegates before, Maurice Jacob, the outgoing EPS President, stressed in his welcome the changes that were taking place within the physics community. His aim had been to deal with them by direct contact with all the Society's components and collaborators. Helping east and central Europe remained a priority, and he acknowledged the great effort the region's members had made in meeting their obligations to EPS. He was pleased to announce that there had been some recent headway with the Journals for Russia scheme as the CODEST evaluation committee of the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) had recommended a substantial programme for one year, to be carried out via an Association to help science in the former Soviet Union. The EC Council of Ministers will decide in early-June.

The President stressed the drive to boost help for education to combat the worrying trend for fewer and fewer students to take up physics. He emphasized the versatility of physics which naturally implies that physicists work in many fields, especially the younger generation in areas such as biophysics with its important funding opportunities. EPS must develop contacts with these communities, a point endorsed by T. Henriksen, (President, Norwegian Physical Society), a biophysicist.

The founders of EPS had hoped the Society would act as a forum for discussing and analysing future facilities and fields of research independently of national hierarchies. The President had requested ideas from the Divisions and Groups for presentation to the CEC, which welcomed proposals for prospective studies for it recognized in EPS a natural partner. One or two concrete proposals had already been submitted but more are needed. Proposals for library aid to east and central Europe and for a data exchange network have been submitted directly to specific EC programmes by the East-West Coordination Committee.

A. Taroni highlighted in his report as Secretary the return of G. Thomas, the Executive-Secretary to Geneva, who was congratulated for excellent work in expanding the Budapest operation. Duties at the Geneva secretariat had been reorganized on C. Bouldin's departure, with E. Thomas taking over as the Staff Editor of *Europhysics Letters*. He recommended membership for 150 new IOM's, 7 new Associate Members, and 3 new Member Societies.

### Finances Stable

Ph. Choquard, the outgoing Treasurer, made a thorough assessment of EPS finances since he took office in 1990 before glimpsing into the future. Audited figures for 1990 and 1991 will soon be available: they

match reported balance sheets. This is also likely to be the case for the provisional figures for 1992 summarized in *EN 24* (1993) 16. It has taken a great deal of hard work to ensure that the accumulated deficit will essentially be eliminated by the end of 1993, while at the same time developing specific activities and *Europhysics News*.

The budget for 1993 involves a cautious appraisal of income and a trimming of expenditures all around. Audited Divisional and Interdivisional Group balances totalled 136 kSFR at the end of 1991. A ramping of contributions over several years had been intro-

## Education Group Launched

The creation of an EPS Interdivisional Group on Physics Education was endorsed unanimously by the 1993 EPS Council in Nice last month. C.M. Ferreira, General-Secretary of the Portuguese Physical Society and a member of the EPS Executive Committee, remarked in presenting the proposal that the new Group would provide essential support for the many teachers who belong to EPS member societies.

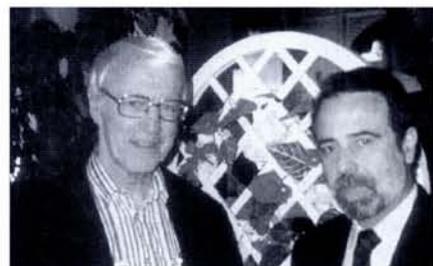
Under the theme "today's students become tomorrow's presidents", a **Forum on Education** led by G. Tibell (Uppsala) and G. Marx (Budapest) will cover pre-university teaching. Its activities include the selection of the winner of the Amaldi Prize for Physics textbooks [see *EN 24* (1993) 46] and the organization of specialised meetings to shape the future of physics education in schools. These will be coordinated with the vigorous international programme of major conferences on physics teaching and with activities run by several organizations (UNESCO, GIREP, IUPAP, AAAS) that include projects to determine education needs (Project 2061 in the US and UNESCO's Project 2000\*).

A **University Teaching Section** will absorb the activities of the former EPS Education Committee, notably surveys and evaluations of curricula; it also takes care of the Editorial Board of the *European Journal of Physics*. A new initiative is a meeting of the physics network coordinators in the European Community's ERASMUS programme just before the EPS-9 General Conference in Florence this September (for further information, contact G. Tibell — see below).

The **European Mobility Scheme for Physics Students** (EMSPS) with over 120 participating institutions forms the third leg. E. Heer, Chairman of the EPS Mobility Committee, reported that the scheme is in the final stages of implementation ready for the first exchange of students this autumn. The database is being filled and student files must be sent to host coordinators by 21 April. G. Tibell said Sweden will fund special mobility grants for students moving from east and central Europe. Applications have been made to the EC's ERASMUS and TEMPUS programme for similar grants.

duced for Member Societies, especially new ones, having difficulty in paying fees. The Executive will review, by 1995, non-paying societies and maybe ask some to become observers. The President commented that while the Society was not a funding organization it appreciated the need for seed money to initiate new activities. This item had therefore been increased in the 1993 budget.

In discussing the proposal to increase the unit fee in 1994, the Treasurer noted that maintaining the present SFR 13.50 and simply increasing expenses and income in line with inflation would mean a 50 kSFR deficit in 1994. The increase had thus to be considered by Council and not postponed until after a possible restructuring. The proposal was to increase the fee by SFR 1.50, where SFR 1.00 is for inflation over the two-year



G. Tibell, President, Swedish Physical Society (on the left) and C.M. Ferreira, President, Portuguese Physical Society.

Delegates welcomed the new Group as it would: enhance the status of teachers by improving evaluation procedures and employment conditions; provide criteria for teachers (so that governments could not "play tricks") and for professional qualifications; develop curricula in the light of industry's need; interact with education divisions in member societies. Others urged the Group to examine issues such as student evaluation and the problem that physics was increasingly being taught in schools by people without formal qualifications in physics. The EPS President urged the development of innovative activities such as having teachers visit major research centres. CERN had arranged this with great success for groups from Italy, and from Portugal as part of a national programme of extended training.

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