

Group Corporate Membership Introduced

The EPS Interdivisional Group for Experimental Physics Control Systems (EPCS) aims to promote the development of controls systems by working closely with industries and institutes specialising in both hardware and software aspects. The group at present includes a network of contact persons who serve as channels for information and play an active role in setting up joint projects.

Many medium-sized companies and organizations have a keen interest in accessing the Group's know-how, expertise and activities as well as in developing synergies with specialists in the field. The group therefore decided at its last Board meeting in November to introduce Group Corporate Membership for medium-sized organizations and companies with up to about 100 staff members.

Group Corporate Members enjoy certain privileges and each can nominate a contact person who becomes an Individual Ordinary

Member of EPS. They are systematically informed about the EPCS Group and are able to participate in, and help decide upon, the Group's activities. Consequently, they are informed of Board meetings and invited to add to the proposed agenda: they can attend the Board's open sessions and receive the minutes of Board meetings as well as relevant documents issued by other members. They also have free access to membership lists and are encouraged to propose workshops and working groups and to nominate experts to take part in activities.

The minimum annual fee for Group Corporate Membership is set at SFR 500.-. Further information and an application form can be obtained from:

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BOARD ELECTIONS

Atomic and Molecular Physics Division Chemical Physics Section Molecular Physics Section

Elections to the Board of the Atomic and Molecular Physics Division (AMPD) of EPS and to the Boards of the Division's Sections for Chemical Physics and for Molecular Physics will take place during the 5th European Conference on Atomic and Molecular Physics (ECAMP-5) held in Edinburgh on 3-7 April 1995. Lists of the members of these three Boards were given in *Europhysics News* 25 (1994) 126-126. Most of the members will be replaced since they have served for the maximum period.

Nominations for new members, specifying the Division or Section, that give the name, address and telefax number of the candidate and include a brief supporting statement, should be sent to the AMPD Chair (H. Hotop, Fachbereich Physik, Universität Kaiserslautern, D-67653 Kaiserslautern; fax: +49-631-205 39 06) and arrive by 28 February 1995. The nomination should preferably be accompanied by the candidate's written consent and be endorsed by other members of the AMPD Division.

Information on ECAMP-5 can be obtained from the conference secretary,

Dr. Nigel Mason, Physics Dept., University College, Gower St., London WC1E 6BT, UK
(fax: +44-71-380 71 45; email: ucaps7n @ ucl.ac.uk).

CMD GENERAL CONFERENCE

Joint Events May Be the Answer

As announced briefly last month in *Europhysics News*, the next General Conference of the Condensed Matter Division (CMD) of EPS will take place in 1996 (in Stresa, Italy). P. Wyder, the Division's Chairman, explained why at the EPS Executive Meeting last month in Geneva.

It has proved difficult to consistently attract a large audience to the CMD conference — certainly one that reflects the strength and depth of condensed matter research in Europe. The average attendance of about 600 since the event started to be held annually in 1980 is significantly smaller than for national meetings in large countries (Germany: annual/March/2000-3000 participants; UK: annual/December/850-1000; France: biannual/August/=1000). A CMD working group feels the national events will remain successful because:

- Decisions on research funding are still largely taken at a national level so participants are motivated to attend national events.
- Exposure in seeking posts and information about career opportunities are essentially

nationally-based, especially in condensed matter where relatively few posts exist in large institutes.

- The scientific programme reflects the needs of a tightly knit community.
- The cost to attend can be kept fairly modest as travel distances are limited and local knowledge to organize cheap accommodation is widely available.

- National meetings provide an opportunity to make a first presentation in one's mother tongue.

- Information circulates rapidly these days so younger, more technically active scientists tend to prefer specialised rather than general meetings.

Nonetheless, a European-level general meeting as opposed to say a series of spe-

cialised workshops throughout Europe, remains viable because:

- Smaller countries account for a large number of condensed matter physicists.

- Science is increasingly judged with reference to international standards, so while applications may be processed nationally, one must often convince international panels.
- More and more young physicists leave home to study and work abroad.

- Companies increasingly view their personnel needs in an European if not an international perspective.

- Condensed matter physicists are increasingly involved with major facilities.

- The potential participation is growing as Europe becomes more "equilibrated", economically speaking.

- Sponsorship of European-level events is becoming more readily available.

There have been discussions with the European Materials Research Society (EMRS) to see if a joint meeting was feasible. The EMRS felt parallel events were more appropriate since the materials community takes an integrated view, with conference topics tending to be organized horizontally by application rather than vertically by field. This has many advantages but there are disadvantages, especially when dealing with frontier topics where one needs to focus on precisely formulated issues. Finding common ground in a fairly short time meant that a slightly uncoordinated proposal for support sent to the Euroconferences activity of the EC Human Capital and Mobility Programme was unsuccessful.

It had by now become difficult to organize a high-level meeting for next year. So the CMD Board decided to cancel the 1995 conference, but to continue with the 1996 event in Italy and to explore the possibility of arranging a regular series jointly with the major national meetings. The joint conferences could take place every three years to allow the CMD conference in intervening years to be held in a more peripheral region while profiting from the scale and exposure provided by the joint meetings.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECISIONS

The Executive Committee meeting in open and closed sessions in Geneva on 11-12 November decided the following:

- To reduce the number of issues of *Europhysics News* to a minimum of six issues of 20 pages each year (*EN* next year is sent in bulk, and *pro rata* depending on fee payments, to all national societies except the German and UK societies). Meanwhile, ways will be explored to expand the magazine, including collaboration with a commercial publisher.

- To cease operating the East West Coordination Committee in its present form. A meeting with the Presidents of eastern and central European societies to be held early next year in Budapest will decide on future action and a more appropriate form of coordination.

- To endorse guidelines for operating the EPS Solidarity Fund. The Fund earmarks a part of conference fees for use by Division and Groups to develop meetings and schools and to sponsor conference participation.

- To recommend to organizers of EPS conferences that National Society Members (a new category agreed to by the last Council) attending EPS meetings pay the normal fee,