

• Organizations

Academia Europaea, the independent organization of European scholars aims to be a focus on an individual level for the discussion of common European problems and for interdisciplinary studies. Its Council decided in October to reduce the number of subject groups to 11 to allow for a critical mass. Physics is grouped with engineering sciences which means that astronomers and space scientists need to consider joining the geosciences group. With some 1600 members, the Academia is approaching its stable target of 2000 members, so it is endeavouring to make sure that more members will be appointed from east and central European countries to achieve a better balance. This year's new members in physics include: V. Braginsky (CIS), S. Drell (USA), A. Galindo Tixaire (Spain), Y. Kagan (CIS), A. Maréchal (France), V. Telegdi (CH), T. Vicsek (H) and F. Ynduráin (E). P. Colyer, the European Science Foundation's Coordinator of Scientific Networks became the Executive Secretary on 1 January 1995, succeeding C. Sinclair who retired owing to poor health. The Academia, whose President is H. Curien, has its next general meeting in Barcelona on 27-29 June 1996.

Edith Cresson, the EU Commissioner for science, will conclude the 7th **Engelberg Forum** (Engelberg, CH; 26-29 March 1996), of which H. Curien is also the President. Entitled Europe-Asia: Science and Technology Policy for the Future, it aims to understand better the remarkable growth of Asian economies, and the consequences. Contact: Mme Th. Wolf, C.P. 112, CH-1000 Lausanne 1000 (fax: +41-22-320 82 88).

The **European Space Agency** Council Ministerial Meeting in Toulouse on 18-20 October announced that: "Recognising that the Scientific Programme constitutes a fundamental and highly successful element of the Agency's activities, Council unanimously approved the Level of Resources for the mandatory activities for the years 1996-2000, covering the Agency's Scientific Programme and the General Budget. Funding for the Scientific Programme will now be constant for the next five years". Under largely UK pressure, this means that the ESA Science Programme budget is no longer corrected for inflation so there will be a roughly 15% loss of purchasing power over the period. The programme's Space Science Advisory Committee will meet in January to assess where savings can be made without affecting activities. The Ministers "endorsed the Horizon 2000 Plus long-term space science plan, thereby ensuring programme continuity". Recognising that the International Space Station project is "the most important cooperative endeavour ever undertaken...", the Ministers agreed the funding for the European contribution" and gave "a clear commitment to support the exploitation phase". There will be no cross-coupling between the 2000 Plus and Space Station because the Station cannot be used for the main science missions.

The EU Council of Ministers decided at the end of October that the EC will chair the **INTAS** general assembly (which next meets in February 1996) to have more direct control now that most Ministers have decided that national contributions to INTAS come from the EU Framework Programme (8 MECU in 1995, 13 MECU for 1996 and the same level

expected for 1997 and 1998). INTAS supports scientific collaboration with the FSU and calls for proposals are now announced on WWW (<http://www.rubr.ru/kon/intas/>), the next deadline being 31 January 1996 for Kazakhstan and the Ukraine (contact: intas@infoboard.be).

• European Commission

Following the entry of Austria, Sweden and Finland into the EU, the 4th Framework programme's budget has been increased by 6.87%. Another increase (of 700 MECU) was deferred when the programme was adopted and a decision is expected at the end of 1996. Intense discussions are underway to see if it should be attributed to the six **Task Forces** established by the new science commissioner. The Task Forces are also being felt elsewhere, notably in the Training and Mobility of Researchers programme where networks are being linked to the Task Forces. The networks are also much larger than in the past in order to incorporate significant support for postdocs. This means that the success rate of applications is now down to only about 7%, and scientists are complaining that the level of support for some networks exceeds the capacity of research groups to absorb the support.

• Sociology of science

The French CNRS plans to counsel members of its research staff when they reach **45 years of age** so that they can make known their professional aspirations and how their careers will evolve. General adoption will follow a pilot phase if the results are convincing.

Meanwhile, the European Committee for Future Accelerators (ECFA) has issued a *Report on the Sociology of Large Experiments* based on a survey. Questionnaires were sent to 182 groups involved in large collaborations at CERN (Geneva) and DESY (Hamburg), each averaging about 7 members, including about 5 students. The long time-spans of experiments means that the recruitment of young physicists is in general becoming more difficult. But the situation is better for hardware-related research, so the report recommends accepting technical topics for PhD theses, especially since there should be a commitment between physicists and students at the construction stage. Large collaborations appear intimidating, and this is reflected by the 41% of replies indicating that collaboration within groups could be improved (the report recommends having connections between hardware, software and analysis contributions). But the report did not make proposals about what to do with those long authors' list, which many dislike.

• Research reactors

Construction of a "supra-regional" reactor neutron source beside TU Munich's 38-year old **Forschungsreaktor München** is due to start in December 1995 (new facilities are justified by a shortage of available beam time in Germany, and an upgrade was rejected because of a poor cost-performance ratio). It will burn the recently developed uranium silicide high-dispersion fuel in combination with highly enriched uranium to provide a high flux (10^{14} n/s²) of thermal neutrons from a compact, low power reactor generating a minimum of radioactive waste. Some 20 experiments over a broad energy range are planned.

A worrying decrease in the number of effective radiation facilities around the world prompted the **Belgian Nuclear Research Centre** to start last June a 18-month refurbishment of its 32 year old BR2 materials testing reactor to allow operation for 15 more years.

• LEP upgrade

CERN's LEP collider observed collisions for the first time at 130 GeV on the first attempt after a "LEP 1.5" energy upgrade from 90 GeV. A second stage upgrade is planned, with experiments at 180 GeV starting in the second half of 1996. So the race is now on to detect lost energy revealing the existence of supersymmetric particles (if theory is correct, the chargino could be within LEP's reach). CERN's Director-General reported at Council that negotiations on a planned US contribution to **LHC** will start on 8-9 January 1996.

• Publications

Europhysics Letters will donate up to 30 subscriptions to university physics departments in east and central Europe. National societies have been asked to indicate interested libraries.

11 of the **IEEE Proceedings Journals** will be available over Internet in January 1996 using the OCLC graphical interface.

31 **IOPP** journals will be available electronically next year to institutional subscribers at no extra cost. Librarians will need to register (contact (<http://www.iop.org> for information).

An Internet-based full-text database of **US patents** called QPAT-US is being demonstrated by Questel-Orbit to assess the market.

The Swedish telecom company Telia is putting 50 M\$US into giving **every school** in the country access to Internet. Most schools are being offered free connection and 10% of teachers will be trained as information-technology instructors.

The EPS Internet Coordination Group and the EPS Publications Committee's *ad hoc* working group on electronic publications will organize a meeting in late-January/early-February 1996 at the ENS, Paris, to discuss extension of the EurophysNet **PhysDoc** index service. Contact laloe@physique.ens.fr

• International awards

M.V. Berry (Bristol University), winner of the 1995 Hewlett-Packard Europhysics Prize (with Y.V. Aharonov), has been awarded the 1995 Dirac Medal of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (Trieste) for his discovery of the "Berry" phase.

J. Mlynek of the University of Constance and formerly chairman of the EPS Quantum Electronics and Optics Division has been awarded The Institute of Physics (UK) 1995 Max Born Medal and Prize.

W. Schmidt-Parzefall, Professor of Experimental Particle Physics at the University of Hamburg and the spokesman of DESY's ARGUS experiment, has been awarded the Prix Gentner-Kastler which was awarded this year by the French Physical Society.

A plaque honouring **P.A.M. Dirac**, the 1933 Nobel laureate who died in 1984, placed next to Newton's grave was unveiled at Westminster Abbey, London, in November. A public garden has been named after Dirac in St. Maurice, CH, where his family originated.