The aim of the Joint Astrophysics Division

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Chairman of JAD

There is at present a thriving interface between physics and astronomy and the purpose of JAD is to respond to the need of the fast expanding community of scientists working in that domain by organising workshops and conferences and providing forums for discussion whenever needed. JAD should eventually become a grassroots partner for research organisations that try to co-ordinate their programmes as, for example the newly created AstroParticle Physics European Co-ordination (APPEC). In 2000, JAD organised the first ESA-CERN workshop on "Fundamental Physics in Space", which was held at CERN [1]. The past and present chairmen invested much effort in helping to establish permanent links between ESA and CERN, and the two organisations have actually found several areas of fruitful collaboration.

The Joint Astrophysics Division has two sections:

- one on "Solar Physics", which has long existed and which organises a well-attended European conference in that domain every three years (Chairman: Jan Kuijpers, Nijmegen);
- the other on "Gravitational Physics" (Chairman: Gerhard Schaefer, Jena), which has been established earlier this year and which brings together gravitation theory and experimentation with, in particular, the search and — hopefully soon — the study of gravitational waves.

The activities of this second section began in 2001. JAD will continue to develop its structure. A new section on "Astroparticle
In order to facilitate a more extensive collaboration, the large European International Research Organisations (EIROs) have recently created the EIROFORUM. The Forum, consisting of the Directors General of the European Organisation for Particle Research (CERN), the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), the European Fusion Development Agreement (EFDA), the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Southern Observatory (ESO) and the Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL), meets bi-annually to review and pursue issues of common interest. By exploiting the links between the Organisations and their respective European research communities, they will thus mobilise the substantial combined expertise in basic research and in the management of large international projects for the benefit of European research and development.

A hyphen is used here in 'astro-physics', in order to convey the difference to astrophysics, a sub-discipline of astronomy. Astrophysics began with the development of spectroscopy in the nineteenth century. One of its main aims was determining the abundance of the chemical elements. Today, the expression is often used arbitrarily to describe investigations that are based on a combination of methods employed in physics and astronomy.