



2017-01

February 2017



## European Astronomical Society e-Newsletter 2



EAS News

### EWASS 2017 in Prague, 26-30 June 2017 Registration and abstract submission open



EWASS 2017 is organised by the EAS, in collaboration with the Czech Astronomical Society (CzAS), and will be held in Prague from 26 to 30 June 2017. The organisers have selected 16 Symposia and 22 Special Sessions that cover nearly all fields of astronomy and astrophysics, in addition to several plenary talks, prize awards, exhibitions, etc. Registration and abstract submission are now open. Note in particular that the deadline for [very early bird registration](#) is 10 February 2017, and the one for [abstract submission and grant application](#) is 8 March 2017. All information can be found on the [EWASS 2017 website](#).

EAS News

### EWASS 2018 in Liverpool, 3-6 April 2018 Proposals for Symposia and Special Sessions due 7 July 2017



EWASS 2018 will be held in Liverpool, from 3 to 6 April 2018. A total of up to 1200 participants are expected to attend the four-day conference and exhibition at [ACC Liverpool](#), located on the banks of Liverpool's world heritage waterfront. The meeting will be organised by the European Astronomical Society, in collaboration with the UK's [Royal Astronomical Society](#). The call for proposals to organise a Symposium or a Special Session on EWASS 2018 will be released on 8 March 2017, with a submission deadline of 7 July 2017.

EAS News

### Call for proposals to host EWASS 2019 Letters of Intent due 1 March 2017



The European Week of Astronomy and Space Science (EWASS) is organized every year in a different country by the European Astronomical Society (EAS). EWASS 2017 will be held in Prague, Czech Republic, and EWASS 2018 in Liverpool, UK. The call for proposals to host EWASS 2019 is now open. Proposals can be submitted by affiliated societies or by institutes whose national society is affiliated to the EAS and shall follow the bidding guidelines that can be found [here](#). The deadline for the submission of letters of intent is

## News from the EAS Council

### Report from the EAS Council meeting, 23-25 January 2017



On 23-25 January 2017, in Geneva, the EAS Council held its first Council meeting of 2017, as well as the yearly meeting with the Affiliated Societies. Many of the items discussed during the meeting are reflected throughout this e-Newsletter, especially concerning the organisation of the upcoming EWASS meetings. Two other agenda points might be of interest to all EAS members.

[▼ Read more](#)

- Council has discussed a proposal to change the by-laws with regard to how elections of Council members are conducted. A proposal, which will involve an easier route for members to propose candidates, is being prepared by Council and will be sent, via e-mail, to all EAS members for approval.
- Council has created a working group with the mandate to produce a paper on Ethics. We hope to be able to publish this report within the next year.

Serena Viti, Secretary of the EAS

Contributed News

## The Astronomical Science Group of Ireland

### A new affiliated society of the EAS



The EAS welcomes the [Astronomical Science Group of Ireland \(ASGI\)](#) as a new affiliated member. Irish astronomy has a long history, with notable contributions from [Henry Plummer](#), [William McCrea](#), [Jocelyn Bell Burnell](#), [Sir William Rowan Hamilton](#) and [Lord Rosse](#) of the Great Leviathan Telescope of Birr Castle amongst many others. ASGI was founded in 1974 to encourage collaboration in astronomy and astrophysics between research groups from Ireland and Northern Ireland.

[▼ Read more](#)

Consisting of a number of affiliated universities and other organisations (e.g. amateur astronomy societies), ASGI is one of the oldest cross-border bodies on the island of Ireland and has a current mailing list of around 300 individuals. The group's activities are funded by annual institutional and individual subscriptions and through sponsorship. The main activity of the ASGI is to host the Irish National Astronomy Meeting (INAM), an annual 2 day gathering of the community, that alternates venue between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. INAM offers a platform for early career researchers to give poster and oral presentations on their research. Networking and career development events are also scheduled.

There are currently about 30 permanent astrophysics faculty in the Republic of Ireland and about 60 postgraduate students and post-doctoral researchers. The Irish astrophysics community is active and internationally competitive, conducting research in areas such as stellar physics, solar system science, cosmology, high-energy astrophysics, gamma-ray bursts, supernovae, star formation, extrasolar planets, and solar physics. Irish researchers use scientific instruments on European Space Agency



Participants in the 2016 Irish National Astronomy Meeting, University College Dublin, including keynote speaker Tim de Zeeuw, ESO Director General.

(ESA) and NASA missions, and at a variety of ground-based observatories. They also design and build hardware for space and ground-based astrophysics facilities.

All of the major universities run BSc degree programmes in physics with astronomy/astrophysics, which contribute 30-50% of physics FTEs in the country. There are also substantial Educational & Public Outreach activities being undertaken on national, regional and local scales. For example, Blackrock Castle Observatory in Cork sees 100,000 visitors annually and was the coordinator for the first national Space Week that took place in October, with more than 250 national events organised.

Ireland has recently joined the LOFAR consortium and [the I-LOFAR station](#) is currently under construction at Birr. Negotiations are underway with a view to Ireland joining the European Southern Observatory (ESO), possibly as early as 2018. In parallel with this, the ASGI is seeking to strengthen its ties with the Royal Astronomical Society, continues to be a subscribing member of the International Astronomical Union and the ASGI has recently become an affiliated member of the EAS.

EAS and Matt Redman, National University of Ireland Galway

EAS News

## Società Astronomica Italiana

### An organisational sponsor of the EAS



The Italian Astronomical Society (Società Astronomica Italiana, SAIt) has become an organisational sponsor of EAS. Since 1920, SAIt aims to promote astronomical studies and to spread scientific culture in Italy. Supported by the Italian Ministry of Research and Education, SAIt is composed of more than 400 members, which include active professional researchers from the National Institute of Astrophysics (INAF) and universities throughout Italy, school teachers and amateur astronomers. More information on the SAIt can be found

[here](#).

Contributed News

## International Time Programmes on the Canary Islands telescopes

### Proposals due 28 February 2017



The International Scientific Committee of the Roque de los Muchachos (La Palma) and Teide (Tenerife) observatories invites applications for International Time Programmes (ITP) on night-time telescopes installed at these Observatories for the period 2017-2018. The ITP offers up to 5% of the observing time, evenly spread throughout the year and the lunar cycle, at the telescopes listed on the [ITP web page](#). It is particularly appropriate for European collaborations requiring several telescopes to achieve their scientific

goals. The deadline for submissions is 28 February 2017. More details on this call for proposals can be found [here](#).

Contributed News

## European Forum of Astronomical Communities in the New Member States

### A joint EAS-ASTRONET initiative



EAS and ASTRONET are joining forces and initiate an EWASS forum for discussing the progress of astronomy in new European countries with small astronomical communities. The aims of the action are to increase the readiness to use of the next generation of large research infrastructures by the entire European scientific community, to help to develop and realign their human resources with large European projects, to inform more effectively on suitable visitor programmes and exchange schemes, and to develop and maintain a plan for effective mid-term measures to promote progress. [▼ Read more](#)

The organizers (Johannes Andersen, Lex Kaper, Denis Mourard, Birgitta Nordstrom, Sofia Feltzing and Jan Palouš) try to initiate a set of pragmatic bottom-up actions to make visible progress wherever possible. The outcome of the Forum should be a plan for the development, with specific actions, coordinators and reporting periods, based on a draft and preparatory work by ASTRONET.

The first meeting of this European Forum will be as [Special Session 1](#) on 28 June 2017 during [EWASS 2017](#). It will be a brain storming meeting that should conclude on thematic circles and launch the semi-permanent activity. We intend to review the outcomes of the annual national fora, to speak on publication policies, and to discuss the connection of small and big projects.

Jan Palouš  
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Contributed News

## A new stimulus for the Sub-Regional European Astronomical Committee

### Report on an Awareness Conference in Macedonia



Continuing with its practice of enhancing community skills and promoting collaboration among European observatories, Opticon has organized one of its "Awareness Conferences" in September 2016 in Macedonia, on the shore of Lake Ohrid. These conferences usually present hot topics in astronomy to a variety of students (end of Masters or beginning PhDs) to help them to better define their future career, but also to more senior participants to broaden their horizon. But this time the scope was even larger, as it was also the occasion to

gather again the members of the Sub-Regional European Astronomical Committee (SREAC). This organisation was established many years ago, under the auspices of Unesco-Roste, with the aim of enhancing astronomical research and observations in south-eastern Europe. But since the Unesco funding faded out, the collaboration slowed down also, and it was thus a good opportunity to review the situation and stimulate new projects. [▼ Read more](#)

About 30 participants came from Armenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey,... plus some lecturers from western Europe. Besides lectures on hot topics (which encompassed AGNs, galaxy evolution, the first stars and galaxies, the variable sky, etc.), a very interesting part of the meeting was the presentation of the status and availability of astronomical instrumentation in the various countries.

- Armenia has refurbished its 2.6m telescope in Byurakan observatory, and equipped the 1.3/1m Schmidt with a new 4k x 4k Kodak CCD.
- In Bulgaria, the 2m telescope at Rozhen Observatory continues to be widely used



The 1.3m telescope at Skinakas Observatory in

(together with the smaller 60cm Cassegrain and 50/70cm Schmidt telescopes) and plays a role of regional telescope for the surrounding countries. It has recently been equipped with a new Echelle spectrograph called ESpeRo.

Crete is one of the most widely used telescopes in south-eastern Europe. (Credit: Municipality of Anogeia)

- Serbia has recently inaugurated its new 1.4m Milankovic telescope at Mt Vidojevica, partly funded by an FP7 grant, and is planning for its instrumentation suite.
- In Greece, the 1.3m telescope at Skinakas Observatory (Crete) is widely used, including by foreign observers (a Neon school was held there last summer) and has been recently equipped with a new polarimeter Robopol. A fully robotic and remote controlled 40cm telescope is operating at the University of Athens Observatory, the only one of its kind in the region. The 2.3m Aristarchos telescope at Mt Helmos observatory is now operational and has recently entered the Opticon Access program. And the University of Thessaloniki is developing a new complex at the Orliakas Astronomical Park, which will include a 1.5m reflector and a solar and a radio telescope, to be hopefully operational in 2020.
- Turkey, with its large astronomical community (about 120 astronomers with PhD and about as many PhD students) has several small university telescopes (Ankara, Bosphorus, Canakkale, Ege, Istanbul,...) used for research, but the main observatory remains the Tubitak National Observatory with its 1.5m as the largest telescope. This is obviously a bit short for such a wide community, and the main project at present is the construction of a new 4m optical-infrared telescope, DAG, with 2 Nasmyth platforms, to be erected in eastern Anatolia. Its Zerodur mirror blank has been received at Schott last summer and a first, prospective, science workshop on infrared astronomy is planned in Erzurum in 2017.

The south-eastern European astronomical community is therefore very active, despite some obvious funding limitations, and is very keen to get collaboration and technical advice from their western colleagues. The presentation of ESO instrumentation during the meeting was setting a very high-level goal to reach at some point in the future...but in the mean time, exchanges of experience or even instruments would be very beneficial to this community. Opticon can certainly contribute to this with its various networks, and in particular its Telescope Director's Forum.

One sometimes hears western colleagues arguing that, instead of constructing small telescopes in average, local sites, those communities would be better inspired to invest money in the existing, western facilities. However, before being able to use the large and complex facilities (and to write competitive observing proposals for them), new communities need to gain self-confidence and experience in observations. This is best provided by smaller and more easily accessible telescopes, provided they are equipped with modern instrumentation. Moreover, before all that, one needs to attract the students to astrophysics and the availability of small telescopes within easy reach from a university might be a key to that goal. Indeed, few things can replace the excitement and the motivation of practical work at the telescope (as is also shown by our experience in the NEON schools).



The senior participants to the Awareness Conference in Macedonia.

This meeting was very well received, and enriching for all participants, and should be repeated in the future, eventually also with other communities. SREAC, with its new president (Prof. Renada Konstantinova-Antova, from Bulgaria) will actively continue its coordinating activity, and Opticon can certainly contribute to it, within its new H2020 contract. The new Opticon network for Time Domain Astronomy offers, for example, a new and challenging science activity for

"small" telescopes.

The success of this meeting is largely due to the warm hospitality of the Macedonian Astronomical Society, in the beautiful region of Ohrid, and particular thanks are due to our Makedonian Colleagues, Prof. G. Apostolovska, and Prof. O. Kuzmanovska, for their fine and careful organisation.

Michel Dennefeld  
IAP and Université Paris 6  
Chair of the Opticon "Training" WP13

EAS News

## Reminder: renewal of the EAS membership for 2017

### Membership fee payment due 31 March 2017



The EAS is a society of professional astronomers. Through your membership you strengthen the voice of European astronomy, support the various EAS activities and enjoy many benefits. The deadline for the payment of the membership fees for 2017 is 31 March 2017. More details can be found [here](#).

#### About the EAS and the e-Newsletter

The European Astronomical Society (EAS) is a society of professional astronomers founded in 1990 and aiming at promoting and advancing astronomy in Europe.

Started in 2016, the e-Newsletter is a prime communication tool between the society and its members. It supersedes the short [e-News](#) and the [paper Newsletter](#) and is foreseen to be issued three to four times per year.



You prefer paper? Please, print the e-Newsletter from the PDF icon at the top-right.

If you would like to contribute, please contact [Maarten Baes](#) (Ghent University, Belgium), the EAS e-Newsletter editor.

#### Composition of the EAS Council

President:

Thierry Courvoisier, *Switzerland*

Vice-Presidents:

Emmanouil Angelakis, *Germany*  
Roger Davies, *UK* (President Elect)

Secretary:

Serena Viti, *UK*

Treasurer:

Johan Knapen, *Spain*

Councillors:

Sofia Felting, *Sweden*  
Lex Kaper, *The Netherlands*  
Georges Meylan, *Switzerland*  
Coralie Neiner, *France*  
Olga Sil'chenko, *Russia*