



EUROPEAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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Press Release

For immediate release

First Tycho Brahe Prize Awarded to Swedish Astrophysicist

The European Astronomical Society¹ announces that the first winner of its newly created Tycho Brahe Prize is the Swedish astrophysicist Prof. Dr. Göran Scharmer. The Tycho Brahe Prize will be awarded annually in recognition of the development or exploitation of European instruments, or major discoveries based largely on such instruments. The Tycho Brahe Prize carries a monetary reward of 6000.- Eu and is sponsored by the Klaus-Tschira foundation which is based in Heidelberg, Germany. The Tycho Brahe Prize will be awarded to Prof. Scharmer at the opening ceremony at the next European meeting JENAM2008 taking place in Vienna, Austria, from September 8-12, 2008.

Prof. Göran Scharmer is one of the leading solar physicists with a remarkable track record in advancing ground-based solar observations. The unprecedented sharpness of solar images taken with telescopes that Scharmer developed is currently leading to new insights into the physics of the photosphere and chromosphere of our Sun. The planning and construction of these telescopes which are located on Roque de los Muchachos, a mountain peak on the Island of La Palma, differs from many other recent advances in astronomical instrumentation in that one person - Goran Scharmer - is clearly identifiable as the originator of the concepts and driver of their realization.

The Swedish 1-m Solar Telescope (SST) is currently the world's best solar telescope, capable of reaching the highest angular resolution. It was the first solar telescope to reach an angular resolution of 0.1 arc sec (this is about one twenty thousandth of the solar diameter!). Among other things, the SST has discovered new features in sunspots, clarified the nature of solar faculae (which are emission areas brighter than the rest of the solar surface), and made high-temporal resolution observations which have led to great leaps in our understanding of chromospheric phenomena (the chromosphere is the lowest part of the solar atmosphere). Prof. Scharmer has also established most successful scientific collaborations with the strongest solar groups in Europe and the USA.

Göran Scharmer, born in 1951, is director of the Institute for Solar Physics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and professor at Stockholm University, Sweden.

¹ The European Astronomical Society (EAS) was founded in 1990 as an association to contribute and promote the advancement of astronomy in Europe. In particular it is meant to deal with astronomical matters at a European level. It is a society of individual members, professional astronomers. The EAS is the only organisation in which all European astronomers can be members independent of their field of work or

country of work or origin. The society offers a forum for discussion on all aspects of astronomical development in Europe and is also the organisation which represents the interests of astronomers in discussion of Europe-wide developments. President of the European Astronomical Society is presently Prof. Joachim Krautter, Heidelberg, Germany; Vice-Presidents are Prof. Thierry Courvoisier, Geneva, Switzerland, and Prof. Yaroslav Yatskiv, Kiev, Ukraine.

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