



EUROPEAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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Press Release

For immediate release

Tycho Brahe Prize 2009 Awarded to French Astrophysicist

The European Astronomical Society¹ announces that this year's winner of its Tycho Brahe Prize is the French astrophysicist Prof. Dr. Françoise Combes. The Tycho Brahe Prize is 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. Combes on the opening day of the 'European Week of Astronomy and Space Science' (JENAM2009)² which will take place at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield, United Kingdom, from April 20-23, 2009.

Prof. Françoise Combes is one of the leading astrophysicists in the field of extragalactic astronomy. She has done fundamental work in the area of dynamics of galaxies, on the interstellar medium in extragalactic systems, molecular absorption lines in the intergalactic medium, and on Dark Matter in the Universe. The basis of her work is formed by observations in the optical spectral range with the Very Large Telescope of the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO) and in the radio domain with telescopes of the Institut de Radioastronomie Millimétrique (IRAM). These observations are then combined with theoretical studies. Françoise Combes is a prototype of the "New Astronomer" who combines observations at multiple wavelengths and theory.

Françoise Combes is professor at the Observatoire de Paris. She is author or co-author of more than 500 astronomical publications and has established most successful scientific collaborations with many groups in Europe and the USA. Chairing one of the five panels of the European initiative ASTRONET, she has substantial influence on the planning of future European instrumentation. She is presently editor of the European journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics* and was President of the French Society of Astronomy and Astrophysics. She has many distinctions among which that of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, the Silver Medal of the CNRS, and the IBM Prize in physics. She is a member of the French Académie des sciences.

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Prof. Françoise Combes

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 an 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 the organisation that represents the interests of astronomers in discussions of Europe-wide developments. The current President of the European Astronomical Society is Prof. Joachim Krautter, Heidelberg, Germany; Vice-Presidents are Prof. Thierry Courvoisier, Geneva, Switzerland, and Prof. Jan Palouš, Prague, Czech Republic.

² Further information on the 'European Week of Astronomy and Space Science' (JENAM2009) can be found at the following URL: <http://www.jenam2009.eu/>