

European Astronomical Society

19th Council Meeting
Prague, Thursday August 17, 2006

Minutes

Attendance:

A) Council members:

- Harvey Butcher (President)
- Michel Dennefeld (Councillor & Webmaster)
- Álvaro Giménez (Councillor)
- Joachim Krautter (Secretary)
- Birgitta Nordström (Treasurer)

B) Representatives of Affiliated Societies:

- Gerhard Hensler (Astronomische Gesellschaft)
- Areg Mickaelian (Armenian Astronomical Society)
- Paul Laskaridis (Hellenic Astronomical Society)
- Laurits Ledjäv (Estonian Astronomical Society)
- Philip Münz (Czech Astronomical Society)
- Magda Stavinschi (Romanian Astronomical Society)
- Grazina Tautvaisiene (Lithuanian Astronomical Society)
- Iryna Vavilova (Ukrainian Astronomical Association)

C) Guests:

- Elias Brinks
- Vassilis Charmandaris
- Thierry Courvoisier
- Anne Dutrey
- Alexander Stepanov

1) Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

2) Adoption of the minutes of the 18th Council Meeting in Liege

The minutes were adopted without changes.

3) Report by the President

The President H. Butcher started his report that there was no JENAM because of the IAU GA. While he considered the finances of EAS being stable, he also recognized a lack of finances for larger projects and recommended that Council should in future increase the finances. He thanked the outgoing council members. He explained the election procedure of the new Council members. A search committee had proposed slate of members as the new Council members. Since no additional names had been proposed the suggested members were elected. They will start their office after the General Assembly.

H. Butcher described ongoing activities: JENAMs have been established as a successful conference series, the grants program, which gives travel money to many young astronomers, the Newsletter of which three issues were now edited by Vasillis Charmandaris, the EAS Publication Series, the Job Market - which, however, needs more effort -, the Survey of Astronomy in Europe, of which ASTRONET will do an update, a proposal for a Survey of national training programs, and other ad-hoc activities. H. Butcher was asked as EAS President to advise EU in several matters. He mentioned in particular the ERC which has been a tremendous success and whose grants are only based on scientific quality.

4) Report by the Treasurer

The Treasurer B. Nordström thanked the Executive Secretary Martine Logossou for her very good work and the very pleasant collaboration. She presented the Income and Expenditure for 2005 (see appendix). While the main income is stable, she stressed that the donations should be increased. The cost of administration decreased in 2005, mainly due to the decrease of the Newsletter production cost which could be lowered thanks to M. Logossou. B. Nordström emphasized that the net result is positive. She cautioned to use much of the relatively high capital because of the low income.

The budget proposed for 2007 (see appendix) was unanimously approved. For the first time Euro had been used.

B. Nordström concluded her report with the economical development from 2001 to 2005 (see appendix).

5) Report by secretary

The Secretary J. Krautter gave a report on his activities during the last year.

6) State of the membership

EAS has now 900 members; the membership list had been cleaned of non-paying members. T. Courvoisier considers this number ridiculously low, it has to be increased by several factors. A discussion took place how to increase the number of members. M. Dennefeld suggested an automatic membership link between Affiliated Societies and EAS. A. Mickaelian suggested to approach European IAU members for joining EAS. G. Tautvaisiene considered it very important to raise the quality and significance of the EAS meetings, comparable to the AAS meetings. A general problem is that potential members first ask what they get from EAS. G. Hensler pointed out that there are also problems to convince young people to even join national societies like Astronomische Gesellschaft.

It was suggested to interest more commercial companies in astronomy and in the EAS. The participants agreed that EAS should handle EAS and non-EAS members in a different way. H. Butcher suggested to form a working group for fund raising. The question came up whether JENAMs could be considered by IAU as Regional Meetings. Council had already undertaken steps into that direction; however, so far they have been unsuccessful.

7) Membership fee

Council suggests to keep the membership fees constant.

8) Development fund

B. Nordström reminded Council that the new name is Travel Grant Fund.

9) EAS homepage and mailing list.

The webmaster M. Dennefeld mentioned that there were differences between the data bases in Paris and Geneva. He explained that the decrease of number of messages as compared to the previous year was due to decreasing input from the EAS members. He urged EAS members to send in their job advertisements early and not two weeks before the deadline. He suggested that a big improvement would be if a person who is continuously available would take care of the job page. He was satisfied that people started to realize that an EAS European-wide distribution is very useful. In order to overcome the problems mentioned, the EAS needs a coherent plan. The future Vice-president T. Courvoisier will coordinate the efforts. It was suggested that the society should offer assistance to young colleagues looking for a job. It was realized that this needs a fair amount of work, since each country is different. Council realized that the Affiliated Societies have to play a crucial role in such a process, they have to identify senior members who are willing to coach young members.

10) EAS Newsletter

The Newsletter editor V. Charmandaris described his philosophy for articles, they should be largely original and not be easily accessible on the web. There are still problems getting all articles on time for publishing. It was suggested that the new Council members should be

introduced in the Newsletter. The editor asked for suggestions for articles, particularly for those who pay for articles.

11) Joint Division EAS/EPS

Nobody from the Joint Division was present.

12) JENAM 2007, Armenia

Council considered the creation of a SOC and a LOC as very urgent. The conveners of the mini-symposia should be included. Council also agreed to call the mini-symposia in future EAS symposia. A discussion on the scientific content of the next JENAM took place. It was agreed that there should be one or two open sessions where everything could be included. One full day should be dedicated to European facilities.

13) Future Activities of EAS

In addition to the activities discussed already it was suggested that EAS should be present with a booth of its own at the next IAU GA in Rio de Janeiro.

14) Next General and Council Meetings

Council agreed that it would be very useful have a Council meeting in between the meetings at the JENAMs.

15) Other Business

There was no other business.