



Hellenic Astronomical Society (Hel.A.S.)

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Some facts

- ❑ The Hellenic Astronomical Society (Hel.A.S.) was established in 1993. 20th anniversary this year.
- ❑ This September, we will have our 11th biannual meeting. No big celebration though.
- ❑ Currently, Hel.A.S. has about 200 members. 2/3 of them in Greece and 1/3 abroad.
- ❑ The ones abroad keep their membership for sentimental reasons. They do not really count in what I would call "Greek Astronomy".

First, the bad news:

- ❑ As I said last year, the majority of the Astronomers in Greece are “dead wood”.
- ❑ Fortunately, they will retire soon, but ...
- ❑ due to a hire freeze, the positions will remain unfilled.
- ❑ I cannot predict when, some of these positions, will be filled. Thus, my advice to the young astronomers is: stay abroad until we see “light at the end of the tunnel”.

Then, the good news:

- ❑ The majority of the relatively young (age < 50) members of the Hel.A.S. are “international players”.
- ❑ Their PhDs find postdoctoral positions abroad. One of the 12 Einstein Fellows this year is from Athens.
- ❑ They are successful in their observing and funding proposals. My young colleague A. Zezas obtained a Chandra Large Project (Msec).
- ❑ Caltech signed a MoU with Skinakas Observatory to monitor in the next three years simultaneously in optical and radio the polarization of 100 blazars.
- ❑ The Group in Crete obtained an EU grant for this.

Research conditions

- ❑ Our politicians, as a group, have been corrupt. Proof: the state of the country! They are not the only ones to blame, though.
- ❑ To all rules, though, there are exceptions.
- ❑ A recent Minister of Education and Research appointed a truly first class National Research Council consisting of Greeks mainly from abroad.
- ❑ They initiated Programs like those of the ERC and the Marie Curie Networks, at smaller scale, of course. Three-year grants of 300 k and 600 k, respectively.

Research conditions

- ❑ The first round of the EXCELLENCE grants were announced last year.
- ❑ Four Astronomers obtained EXCELLENCE grants.
- ❑ The next round of EXCELLENCE grants is currently being decided. The refereeing process is similar to the ERC's.
- ❑ The first Network grants are also out. Emphasis was given in applied research. No Astronomy grants.

Future

- ❑ As I said last year, the EAS can help young Greek Astronomers become more visible internationally.
- ❑ The Hel.A.S. is too small a Society.
- ❑ Therefore, more power to the EAS!!!
- ❑ THANKS