

Hubert Reeves on “Humanity and Astronomy” placed the associated themes into a larger perspective.

They were succeeded by the showing of ten Laureate Videos selected by the jury for the VT-2004 Video Contest. The participants accorded a “*Prix du Public*” to the Video “... 121 ans après” produced by a team of Belgian students led by Audrey Coeckelberghs and Aurore Genicq. The three top prizes went to the following teams:

1st Prize: “The Venus Transit in the Golden Valley” by Matthews Biggs, James Hendry, and Louisa Llewellyn, (Herefordshire, UK).

2nd Prize: “Venus in Sole Visa” by Martin Lhotak and Robert Smolik (Prague, Czech Republic)

3rd Prize: “Millenium Transit” by Piotr Majewski and Jerzy Rafalski (Torun, Poland).

The Jury, in agreement with ESO, and in recognition of the excellent quality of all three winners decided to award all three teams a trip to Paranal, a gesture that was received with much emotion by all.

On the second day of the conference, reports were given by experts in various areas e.g. primary and secondary schools, media and amateur astronomers, which demonstrated the success of the entire effort but also served to identify some areas in which experience was gained that will become useful for future projects of this kind. National Committees from about 25 countries, either orally or by posters, documented in a comprehensive way the individual approaches taken in different regions and cultural environments and reported many useful “lessons learned” within the unique VT-2004 pilot project.

This was also the opportunity to announce the interesting outcome of the vast “VT-2004 Observing Campaign” that was organized to re-enact the historical determination of the distance to the Sun (1 AU) by

The winners of the VT-2004 Video Contest show their joy when they learn they are good for a trip to Paranal.



Hannes Hever (ESO)

means of timings of the four contacts made by observers in and outside Europe. A large number of groups of observers registered; at the end, there were 2763 all over the world and among these almost 1000 school classes. As expected, not all groups delivered timing observations of the transit. In some places, the weather did not co-operate, some observers may have had instrumental problems, e.g., with the time signals, and others may not have felt confident to send in their measurements. Still, the resulting database is impressive: by the stipulated deadline on July 10, 2004, no less than 4550 contact timings had been received from 1510 registered observing teams.

Following extensive analysis of this large material at IMCCE, the final result was: $1 \text{ AU} = 149\,608\,708 \pm 11\,835 \text{ km}$, or just 0.007% larger than the currently accepted value, as determined by radar measurements – a splendid outcome of a truly unique international collaboration! More details are available at the VT-2004 website (<http://www.vt-2004.org>).

On the last day of the meeting, represen-

tatives of the National Nodes met with the International Steering Committee members to discuss how to build on the enormous momentum gained throughout the VT-2004 project. By unanimous vote, it was decided to work towards the creation of a continent-wide “*European Astronomy Day*” (an attractive name still to be found!) in autumn 2006, aimed at the broad public in general, and the schools in particular. The intention would be to manage it in a wide collaboration between European astronomy-oriented organizations and institutes, science communication institutions (planetaria, science centres) and amateur organizations, all bound together by a network with national/regional nodes, based on the current VT-2004 National Nodes, but suitably modified and amended to reflect the change of emphasis.

Everybody agreed that the “Venus Transit Experience” meeting proved very successful and was a nice conclusion to a unique public education project. Most of the presentations given at this conference are available on the web at <http://www.vt-2004.org/FinalEvent/>.

Personnel Movements

(1 September 2004 - 31 November 2004)

ARRIVALS

EUROPE

BEDIN, Luigi (I)	Fellow
BIK, Adrianus (NL)	Fellow
BORTOLUSSI, Alessandro (I)	Paid Associate
CASALI, Mark (I)	Astronomer
DI CESARE, Stephane (F)	Software Engineer
FEYRIN, Sylvie (F)	Software Engineer
GERKEN, Bettina (D)	Student
JORDAN, Andres (CL)	Fellow
JÖRVINEN, Arto (FI)	Student
KELLERER, Aglae (D)	Student

KIRCHBAUER, Jean Paul (D)
KJAER, Karina (DK)
KNIAZEV, Alexei (RU)
MESSINEO, Maria (I)
MORA, Marcelo (CL)
RZEPECKI, Jaroslaw P. (PL)
SEDGHI, Babak (IR)
SEICHTER, Nicole (D)
SEIFAHRT, Andreas (D)
THEBAUD, Nathalie (F)
UTTENTHALER, Stefan (AT)
VANDAME, Benoit (F)
WEHNER, Stefan (D)

Mechanics Technician
Student
Paid Associate
Fellow
Student
Student
Paid Associate OWL
Paid Associate
Student
Paid Associate
Student
Fellow
Software Engineer

ESO PRESENTATION IN COPENHAGEN

C. MADSEN AND S. D'ODORICO (ESO)

On November 8, ESO continued its series of presentations in member-states with an event in Copenhagen. So far events have been organised in Belgium, Finland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The purpose of these presentations is to raise the awareness of ESO amongst decision-makers, academia and the media. Over time, the scope and specific focus of the national events have varied, considering the particular circumstances and the wishes of the national hosts, and accordingly, the presentation in Denmark was primarily oriented towards industry. The meeting was initiated by the Royal Danish Consulate General in Munich in conjunction with the Confederation of Danish Industries and the Ministry for Science, Technology and Innovation. Leading up to the meeting, several articles about ESO had appeared in the Danish press and the 2nd TV Channel featured a report on the ESO projects also in connection with the event.

A total of 12 companies and 7 research institutes, covering a wide spectrum of activities including systems engineering, antenna technologies, mechanical engineering, construction, software development, optical systems and composite materials participated in the meeting, together with a number of representatives of the relevant authorities, including the Danish members of the ESO Council, and the Confederation itself.

In the morning, the participants were welcomed by the deputy Director General of the Confederation of Danish Industries Mr Ole Krog and by Mr Leo Bjørnskov, Permanent Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Innovation. During the morning session, the ESO Director General

and several ESO staff members gave talks about ESO and its projects, especially the VLT 2nd generation instrumentation, ALMA and the 100-m OWL project. These talks were complemented by presentations by Danish astronomers and high-tech industries that had been involved with ESO projects.

In the afternoon, the meeting continued with dedicated workshops about the ALMA and OWL projects as well as a presentation about ESO procurement policies and practices. The workshops discussed a host of technical and procurement issues and gave the participating companies ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with the technical and commercial requirements by ESO.

As far as the industry presentation was concerned, the companies expressed great satisfaction with the information provided by ESO and many participants showed strong interest in a follow-up visit to the ESO Headquarters in Garching. It is the intention, with the help of the Consulate General, to organise such a visit in late January 2005.

In a separate ceremony in the afternoon, the ESO Director General and the Vice-Chancellor of the Copenhagen University, Mr Jørgen Olsen, signed the agreement for the construction of the *X-shooter*, a second generation VLT instrument scheduled to go into operation at one of the VLT Unit telescopes at Paranal in 2008 (see Page 7). The *X-shooter* will have the unique capability to



The ESO Director General addressing the participants to the industry presentation in Copenhagen.

obtain in a single exposure a high quality spectrum of a faint celestial target from the atmospheric cut-off in the UV to the near infrared. It will be particularly suited for the follow up of rapidly varying objects with an unknown spectrum like the powerful Gamma-Ray Bursts. *X-shooter* is a joint project of ESO with institutes in France, Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands. The Niels Bohr Institute (NBI) of the University of Copenhagen will provide several subsystems of the instrument including one of the spectrographs. For this project, the NBI will invest 19 man-years and has benefited from a grant by the Carlsberg Foundation and funding by the Descartes Prize.

Rounding up the visit, ESO's Director General gave a well-attended colloquium entitled 'ESO after 5 years of VLT', reviewing the most significant scientific results and the status of the ESO's projects, at the University of Copenhagen's Rockefeller complex.

CHILE

ANDERSSON LUNDGREN, Andreas (SE)	Fellow
BAES, Maarten (B)	Fellow
BORISSOVA, Jordanka (BG)	Astronomer
CARUSO, Fabio (I)	Instr. Engineer
HERMANT, Charlotte (B)	Logistics Officer
LYNAM, Paul (UK)	Fellow
MIRABEL, Igor-Felix (F)	Repres. of ESO Chile
SUC, Vincent (F)	Student
STEFL, Stanislav (CZ)	Op.staff Astronomer
TELLO, Cristobal (CL)	Officer Chilean Affairs

DADDI, Emanuele (I)	Fellow
ETTORI, Stefano (I)	Fellow
GUZMAN, Ronald (BO)	Student
HEMPEL, Maren (D)	Student
KHRISTOFOROVA, Maria (RU)	Student
MASSERON, Thomas (F)	Student
MULLIS, Christopher (US)	Fellow
PIRENNE, Benoit (B)	Head, Ots Group
RICCIARDI, Francesco (I)	Software Engineer
PACE, Giancarlo (I)	Student

DEPARTURES

EUROPE

BERRINGTON, Sylvia (PL)	Legal Advisor
BIANCHINI, Andrea (I)	Student
CRETTON, Nicolas (CH)	Fellow

CHILE

BLANCO LOPEZ, Leonardo (F)	Student
EHRENFELD, German (CL)	Mechanical Engineer
GUEGUEN, Alain (F)	Student
GUZMAN, Juan Carlos (CL)	Application Programmer
HUNTER, Ian (UK)	Student
MATHIEU, Michele (CL)	Logistics Supervisor
RAHOUI, Farid (F)	Student