

Secondly, it is expected that during 2012 the construction of the European Extremely Large Telescope (EELT), “the world’s biggest eye on the sky”, can be submitted to ESO Council for approval. The Member State delegations are working hard to obtain the funding and approval from their governments for this challenging but captivating project. We are all glad to see that, even in the current difficult economic circumstances, a number of Member States are already prepared to commit funding.

Finally, this is a very special year since ESO is celebrating its 50th anniversary. I recommend reading the preamble of the ESO Convention in order to appreciate the enormous progress achieved in the five decades of ESO’s existence. We should take this opportunity to convey to the governments and the full population of our Member States our pride in being able to build the most powerful and productive ground-based astronomical observatories in the world. This achievement is the result of sustained

cooperation, a lively community, an enthusiastic staff and a careful balance between operations of world-class facilities and construction of new ones for the benefit of ESO Member States.

References

Barcons, X. 2007, *The Messenger*, 127, 2

Report on the
ESO Fellows Days in Chile 2011

held at the ESO Offices in Santiago, Chile, 21–25 November 2011

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The 2011 ESO Fellows Days were held in Chile and brought together over 30 ESO Fellows from Garching and Chile. As well as presentations of research and social activities, the Fellows Days included a visit to San Pedro de Atacama and the ALMA site.

The ESO Fellows Days were held in Chile from 21–25 November 2011 and brought together more than 30 ESO Fellows from Garching and Chile, as well as the two Heads of the Offices for Science. The purpose of these gatherings is to learn more about the exciting research being done by the impressive group of ESO Fellows in Vitacura and Garching and hopefully to stimulate new scientific collaborations.

ESO Director General Tim de Zeeuw kicked off the meeting with warm words

of welcome to the Fellows, reminding them of the importance that ESO places on its Fellowship programme and its value in the development of their careers.

The first three days of the meeting were devoted to short presentations about each Fellow’s current research activities. ESO Chile astronomers and students in Vitacura also attended many of the talks.

Figure 1. Social activities on the Fellows Days included lunch and a tour of the Casa del Bosque winery near Santiago.



A special lunchtime talk by Massimo Tarengi provided an interesting historical and personal overview of the development of the La Silla and Paranal observatories. The programme also included career-training workshops led by the Heads of the Offices for Science on the topics of “Fine-tuning Your Job Applications” and “How to Give a Good Job Interview”, with the goal of enhancing the marketability of ESO Fellows and students. A lunch and tour at one of Chile’s many wonderful wineries provided a nice opportunity for Fellows to get to know each other better and to gain a deeper appreciation of Chilean culture (see Figure 1).

A highlight of the Fellows Days was a visit to the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) on Chajnantor (Figure 2), including an overnight stay in San Pedro de Atacama. Everyone was excited to see ALMA operations in action at the Operations Support Facility (OSF) and the ALMA Operations Site (AOS), and ESO ALMA COFUND Fellow Anaëlle Maury gave a very informative tour of the ALMA facilities. During the visit the Fellows had an opportunity to discover the unusual local ice and snow formations (see the Figure on the Astronomical News section page, p. 37).



Figure 2. More than 30 ESO Fellows and students visited the ALMA site on Chajnantor, accompanied by the Heads of the Offices for Science in Garching and Chile.

Many thanks are due to all the ALMA staff who made this visit possible, and especially to Paulina Jiron of ESO for all her hard work organising the travel and accommodation. We were greatly impressed by the efficiency and professionalism of everyone at ALMA. It’s not easy to handle visits by a group of this size to an altitude of 5000 metres, but ALMA managed it perfectly. ALMA hats to block the fierce sun quickly became

prized souvenirs for the Fellows and students as a nice reminder of their exciting visit!

The next ESO Fellows Days will take place in Garching during 2013.

Call for Nominations for the European Extremely Large Telescope Project Science Team

The European Southern Observatory invites the astronomical community to nominate candidates for the European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT) Project Science Team.

The E-ELT Project Science Team is an advisory working group that will support the E-ELT programme during the construction phase. The E-ELT Project Science Team is not an ESO oversight committee.

Specific tasks of the Project Science Team include responding to specific requests from the Programme Scientist and providing input and advice to ESO and the E-ELT programme to help:

- Refine as necessary the E-ELT science goals;
- Refine, as necessary, the Observatory Top Level Requirements, including the science requirements and performance metrics and objectives for the telescope, the instrumentation, the

operations and other scientific aspects of the project;

- Develop the instrumentation plan for the E-ELT and set the scientific priorities for the instrument procurement;
- Develop a science perspective on any major cost/schedule/science trades brought forward by the project.

In addition the Project Science Team is expected to:

- Participate in the E-ELT reviews in order to coordinate scientific requirements