

# The ESO Historical Archives (EHA)

INVENTORY PER DECEMBER 1992

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Historical archives provide us with the beacons along which historians steer their stories about the past. When I wrote my articles on the history of ESO for *The Messenger* and the book "ESO's Early History", I was guided by a small, but very valuable collection of documents pertaining to the years of ESO's beginning. They originated from people who had been intimately involved in the creation of ESO (J.H. Oort, O. Heckmann, J.H. Bannier and myself) and had been transferred to ESO as a nucleus for its Historical Archives; a nucleus to be cherished and, hopefully, to be extended in the years to come. Most of the documents dated from before 1975. Subsequently some more recent items were incorporated, however only on the basis of provisional classification; their incorporation should be subject to future scrutiny.

Naturally, these archives are useful only if there is a guide to tell the student what is available and where it may be found. Such a guide is now provided in my booklet "ESO's Historical Archives

(EHA); Inventory per December 1992" that appeared in December 1992. In it, the documents (letters, circular letters, maps, etc.) have been ordered in a system that takes into account the origin of the document and subsequently classifies it into categories and sub-categories. For instance, item I.C.2.3.a refers to a report on a meeting of the Working Group for site tests in South Africa of January 1958, and in this case the first, roman classification number, I, tells that this document belongs to one of the collections originating from outside ESO; the letter C means that it belonged to the collection contributed by myself; the next number, 2, refers to the subdivision dealing with the early site testing; and the subsequent number, 3, to the folder containing some test reports. The system was used in my historical accounts mentioned before.

For the moment, the booklet is primarily meant as an internal ESO publication and therefore has been distributed outside ESO on a limited scale

## Access to the ESO Historical Archives

The ESO Historical Archives described here, are accessible to outside professional researchers by special permission only. Note, however, that the Archive is still in the process of being supplemented with new materials from different sources and that certain, more recent parts are not yet released for general use.

For more information, please contact:

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only, among some historians of astronomy or astronomers known to have a strong historical interest. A wider distribution may be considered at a later stage.

The Collection is in the care of ESO's Librarian at the Garching Headquarters. The documents are stored in cardboard boxes in a special room where it is supervised by the Librarian, and access may be requested through her. As some of the correspondence in the archives still is of a confidential nature, not everything is accessible yet.

## The ESO C&EE Programme Begins

The ESO programme to support astronomers in Central and Eastern European countries, also known as the ESO C&EE Programme, was adopted by the ESO Council in its meeting in December 1992, cf. *The Messenger* 70, p. 8 (December 1992).

By this important action, the ESO Council recognizes the great potential of astronomy and astrophysics in the C&EE countries and the need to ensure its continuation during the present transitional period. The Programme will begin in early 1993 and have an initial duration of 3 years. It will be carried out within the financial frame stipulated by the ESO Council, and will be administered with a minimum of bureaucracy.

The details of the Programme were worked out during the month of January and a document, from now on referred to as the "Application Document", was produced. It contains all details about how to apply, the general conditions of the Programme, and the standardized application forms and was sent to about 1000 addresses at the end of January 1993. This included more than 700 as-



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tronomers, most of which are IAU members, in the C&EE countries and all major astronomical institutes in the ESO member states. Additional copies of the Application Document may be obtained

by request at the address listed below. Judging from the number of inquiries received since then, the interest is intensive and by early March quite a few applications had already been received at ESO.

A guiding principle of the ESO C&EE Programme is that support will be provided on the basis of scientific and technical merit. It is the aim to help C&EE astronomers to continue to do good research at their home institutes, thus contributing to the maintenance of the scientific level and, thereby, to the survival of C&EE astronomy, and also to provide potential benefits to astronomy in ESO member states.

The Programme initially encompasses a number of well-defined subprogrammes, with the following titles and definitions (all further details are available in the Applications Document):

A. *ESO C&EE Scientific and Technical Programmes*: support of a well-specified and/or technical Programme within astronomy and astrophysics, to be carried out at one or more C&EE institutes/observatories;