

Supplementary and Modifying Agreement Regarding the 1963 Convention Between The Government of Chile and The European Southern Observatory (ESO)

The delegations of the Government of Chile and of the International Organisation ESO report on the outcome of their discussions regarding the installation of the largest telescope in the world "The Very Large Telescope" and "Very Large Telescope Interferometer" (VLT/VLTI) at Cerro Paranal (in the Chilean region II – Antofagasta) and the clarification of the future relations between ESO and Chile. The object of these discussions was a closer cooperation between ESO and Chile to the mutual benefit of this country and the eight European member countries of ESO.

On October 5, 1962, a Convention was signed in Paris between Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden in order to establish the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO). Subsequently, Denmark (1967), Switzerland and Italy (1982) joined the Organisation.

On November 6, 1963, Chile and ESO signed a Convention by means of which Chile granted facilities for the installation and operation of an astronomical observatory (La Silla) on the territory of Chile.

On November 11, 1991, the Government of Chile requested ESO to modify the Convention of 1963 in view of the construction of the Observatory on Cerro Paranal and because of the necessity of including important aspects for Chile, especially in the scientific and technological fields.

Initial negotiations took place in Santiago on April 18 and 19 of this year. Those participating included the Director General of ESO, Members of the ESO Council, a group of consultants and, for Chile, representatives of the

Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education, Labour and the Office of the General Secretary of the President, together with legal and scientific consultants.

During further meetings held in the chancellery from June 18 to 22 of this year, the delegations of the Government of Chile and of ESO decided on the text of a Supplementary and Modifying Agreement regarding the Convention of 1963.

The following aspects were included in the Agreement:

- Construction and installation of the VLT: The Government of Chile confirmed to the ESO delegation its invariable support for the development of the VLT/VLTI project at Paranal which represents a capital investment of approximately 570 million DM.
- Legal aspects: A Supplementary and Modifying Agreement regarding the Convention of 1963.
- Labour aspects: It was agreed to modify the ESO Regulations for the local personnel hired in Chile by the incorporation of elements of Chilean labour law, specifically the right to associate and the right of collective bargaining. An ad-hoc tribunal will resolve collective conflicts.
- Scientific aspects: The Chilean delegation pointed out the necessity of regulating the access of the national scientific community by a fixed percentage of observation time at all ESO installations. For this purpose, it was agreed on 10 per cent of the observation time available to ESO for scientists affiliated to Chilean institutions, on the basis of the merit of the projects and at all of the telescopes already installed and to be installed at

La Silla and Paranal, with the exception of the VLT and VLTI (The Very Large Telescope).

- In addition, scientists affiliated to Chilean institutions shall be entitled to up to 5 per cent of the observation time at the VLT and VLTI. This percentage will be reached gradually within a period of five years, starting from the date of commissioning of the first unit telescope. Moreover, this percentage may be increased up to 8 per cent, provided a sufficient number of high-quality Chilean projects are available.
- Collaboration Chile-ESO: ESO will continue to support the development of astronomy in Chile with training programmes and by means of contributions submitted via a joint Chile/ESO Committee.
- The Government of Chile, on its part, will attach increasing importance to the financing of training and research activities in the field of astronomy and related disciplines and technologies with the aim of supporting the efficient use by Chilean scientists of the astronomical installations located in Chile.

The Supplementary and Modifying Agreement will establish a sound basis for scientific and technological collaboration between the European member countries of ESO and the Republic of Chile.

The "Mega-Project" in Northern Chile (the VLT/VLTI) will open up a giant eye towards the Universe which is unique in the world.

The Agreement will be submitted for ratification to the Congress of Chile and to the Council of the ESO.

(From ESO Press Release 06/93)

The VLT: Important Contracts Concluded

M. TARENGHI, ESO

VLT Enclosures

The manufacture of the VLT Telescope Enclosures has been awarded to the SEBIS Consortium in Italy. The leader is the Company SOIMI S.p.A., Milan, and the other members are EIE S.r.l., Mestre, BERENGO SpA, Marghera, and IDROMACCHINE S.r.l., Marghera, and

SOIMI COSTRUTTORI S.p.A., Marghera.

EIE and SOIMI are also member of the AES Consortium, now in process of executing the Contract for the VLT Telescope Structures. The proposed technical solution offers substantial modifications as compared to the original ESO

design concept, with a simplification and optimization of the general architecture of the enclosures and of some sub-systems (e.g. rotation system, cladding, roof cover, air conditioning and control system). Figure 1 shows the model which was submitted as part of the original SEBIS offer.