



Signing of the Portugal-ESO Agreement on June 27, 2000, at the ESO Headquarters in Garching. At the table, the ESO Director General, Catherine Cesarsky, and the Portuguese Minister of Science and Technology, José Mariano Gago. Photographer: H.-H. Heyer

Uniting European Astronomy

In his speech, the Portuguese Minister of Science and Technology, José Mariano Gago, stated that “the accession of Portugal to ESO is the result of a joint effort by ESO and Portugal during the last ten years. It was made possible by the rapid Portuguese scientific development and by the growth and internationalisation of its scientific community.”

He continued: “Portugal is fully committed to European scientific and technological development. We will devote our best efforts to the success of ESO”.

Catherine Cesarsky, ESO Director General since 1999, warmly welcomed

With a decision about the intercontinental millimetre-band ALMA project expected next year and the first concept studies for gigantic optical/infrared telescopes like OWL now well under way at ESO, there is certainly no lack of perspectives, also for coming generations of European astronomers!”

Portuguese Astronomy: a Decade of Progress

The beginnings of the collaboration between Portugal and ESO, now culminating in the imminent accession of that country to the European research organisation, were almost exactly ten years ago.

the Portuguese intention to join ESO. “With the accession of their country to ESO, Portuguese astronomers will have great opportunities for working on research programmes at the frontiers of modern astrophysics.”

“This is indeed a good time to join ESO”, she added. “The four 8.2-m VLT Unit Telescopes with their many first-class instruments are nearly ready, and the VLT Interferometer will soon follow.

On July 10, 1990, the Republic of Portugal and ESO signed a Co-operation Agreement, aimed at full Portuguese membership of the ESO organisation within the next decade. During the interim period, Portuguese astronomers were granted access to ESO facilities while the Portuguese government would provide support towards the development of astronomy and the associated infrastructure in this country.

A joint Portuguese/ESO Advisory Body was set up to monitor the development of Portuguese astronomy and its interaction with ESO. Over the years, an increasing number of measures to strengthen the Portuguese research infrastructure within astrophysics and related fields were proposed and funded. More and more, mostly young Portuguese astronomers began to make use of ESO’s facilities at the La Silla observatory and recently, of the Very Large Telescope (VLT) at Paranal.

Now, ten years later, the Portuguese astronomical community is the youngest in Europe with more than 90% of its PhD’s awarded during the last eight years. As expected, the provisional access to ESO telescopes – especially the Very Large Telescope (VLT) with its suite of state-of-the-art instruments for observations at wavelengths ranging from the UV to the mid-infrared – has proven to be a great incentive to the Portuguese scientists.

As a clear demonstration of these positive developments, a very successful Workshop entitled “Portugal – ESO – VLT” was held in Lisbon on April 17–18, 2000. It was primarily directed towards young Portuguese scientists and served to inform them about the ESO Very Large Telescope (VLT) and the steadily evolving, exciting research possibilities with this world-class facility.

Scientific Preprints

(March – June 2000)

1364. E. Pancino et al.: New Evidence for the Complex Structure of the Red Giant Branch in Centauri. *ApJ*.
1365. S. Bagnulo et al.: Modelling of Magnetic Fields of CP Stars. III. The combined interpretation of five different magnetic observables: theory, and application to Coronae Borealis. *A&A*.
1366. M. Chadid: Irregularities in Atmospheric Pulsations of RR Lyrae Stars. *A&A*.
1367. T. Broadhurst et al.: Detecting the Gravitational Redshift of Cluster Gas. *ApJL*, and A Spectroscopic Redshift for the CL0024+16 Multiple Arc System: Implications for the Central Mass Distribution. *ApJL*.
1368. R. Falomo and M.-H. Ulrich: Optical Imaging and Spectroscopy of BL Lac Objects. *A&A*.
1369. O.R. Hainaut et al.: Physical Properties of TNO 1996 TO₆₆. Lightcurves and Possible Cometary Activity. *A&A*.
1370. B. Leibundgut: Type Ia Supernovae. *The Astronomy and Astrophysics Review*.
1371. Contributions of the ESO Data Management and Operations Division to the SPIE Conference “Astronomical Telescopes and Instrumentation 2000”. Conference 4010. D.R. Silva et al.: VLT Science Operations: The First Year.
- P. Quinn et al.: The ESO Data-Flow System in Operations: Closing the Data Loop.
- A.M. Chavan et al.: A Front-end System for the VLT’s Data-Flow System.
- P. Amico and R. Hanuschik: Operations of the Quality Control Group: Experience from FORS1 and ISAAC at VLT Antu.
- P. Ballester et al.: Quality Control System for the Very Large Telescope.
1372. S. Hubrig et al.: Magnetic Ap Stars in the H-R Diagram. *ApJ*.
1373. J.U. Fynbo et al.: The Sources of Extended Continuum Emission Towards Q0151+048A: the Host Galaxy and the Damped Ly Absorber. *A&A*.
1374. S. Stefl et al.: The Circumstellar Structure of the Be Shell Star Per. *A&A*.
1375. M. Kissler-Patig: Extragalactic Globular Cluster Systems. A New Perspective on Galaxy Formation and Evolution. *Reviews in Modern Astronomy*, vol 13.
1376. E. Scannapieco et al.: The Influence of Galactic Outflows on the Formation of Nearby Galaxies. *ApJ*.
1377. J.D. Landstreet et al.: Magnetic Models of Slowly Rotating Magnetic Ap Stars: Aligned Magnetic and Rotation Axes. *A&A*.
1378. S. Cristiani et al.: The First VLT FORS1 Spectra of Lyman-Break Candidates in the HDF-S and AXAF Deep Field. *A&A*.
1379. D. Hutsemékers and H. Lamy: The Optical Polarization of Radio-Loud and Radio-Intermediate Broad Absorption Line Quasi-Stellar Objects. *A&A*.
1380. C. Stehlé et al.: Polarised Hydrogen Line Shapes in a Magnetised Plasma. The Lyman Line.