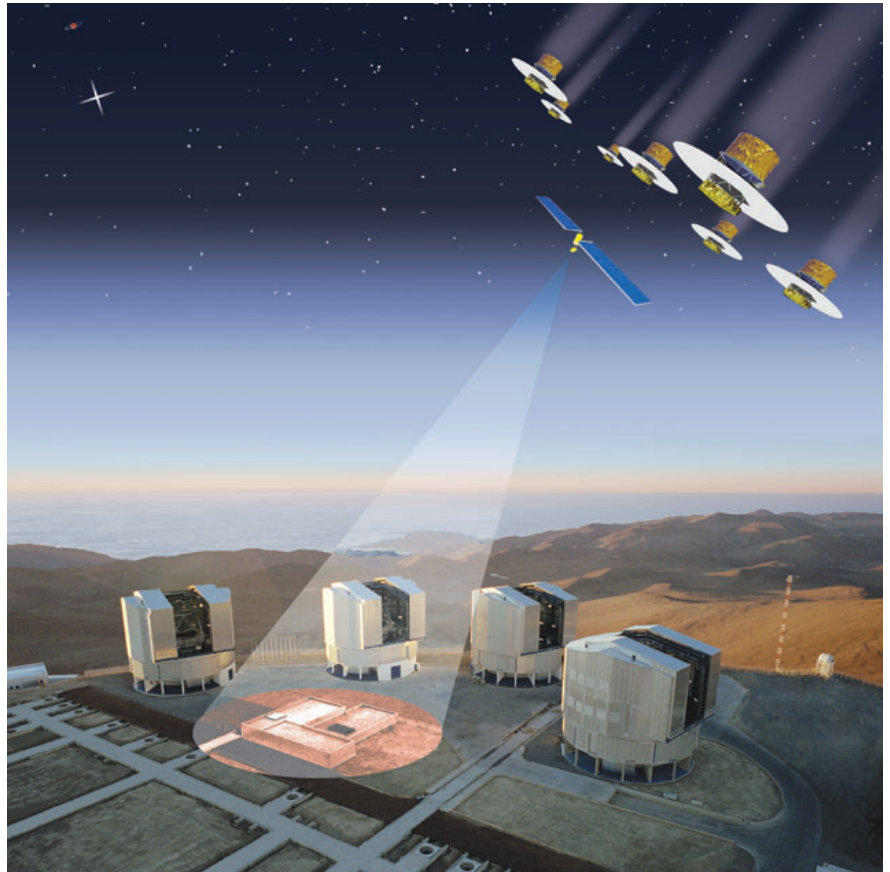


necessary technology in a real interferometer environment and to become a full facility science instrument for the VLTi.

From June 3–6 a workshop took place at Leiden University, jointly organised by NEVEC, ESA and ESO, to discuss the Nulling technology and the science that is expected with GENIE. The number of participants, 83 in total, exceeded the expectations by far and demonstrated the large interest of the community in this subject.

The GENIE concepts discussed during the workshop concentrate on a two/four-way beam combiner operating in the infrared (L, M or N band). Although the N band is better suited for detecting planets from space, on the ground the calibration of the enormous thermal background poses a severe problem. Therefore the question remains open as to whether the L/M bands are better suited for DARWIN system tests. The science objective of GENIE is to observe a couple of hundred candidate stars for DARWIN in order to measure the zodiacal light and bright extra-solar planets. Many other science programmes (AGN, binary stars, T Tauri disks around young stars, or debris disks around main sequence stars) with faint matter close to a bright source could also take advantage of GENIE. Kick-off for GENIE is in summer 2002, and the instrument is scheduled for commissioning in 2006.

Andreas Glindemann



The poster image for the GENIE workshop held recently in Leiden. It shows an artist's impression of a possible DARWIN space interferometer superimposed on a photograph of the VLT/VLTi, with the central beam combining satellite highlighting the VLTi beam combination laboratory. Figure courtesy of NEVEC.

## Young Stars in Old Galaxies – a Cosmic Hide and Seek Game

A group of researchers around M. Kissler-Patig (ESO) studies the formation and evolution history of galaxies through the study of their globular clusters. Recently, the combination of optical and near-infrared images allowed them to detect a “young” population in a galaxy that was believed to be old. Are some old ellipticals hiding their true story? (See ESO Press Release 11/02.)

The figure shows a colour composite of the elliptical galaxy NGC 4365, prepared from two exposures with the HST and one from the VLT. Many of the objects seen are stellar clusters in this galaxy. There are also a large number of background galaxies in the field. The distribution of “old” (red circles) and “young” (blue circles) stellar clusters in NGC 4365 are shown.

