

amongst young people. The recent celebration of Hubble's 15th year in orbit has had a very high worldwide visibility with more than half a million copies of the DVD "HUBBLE – 15 years of discovery" being distributed. The web site (<http://www.spacetelescope.org/>) has become one of the most visited science sites in the world.

Future role

In the post-Hubble era, both ESA and ESO will continue to share common interests and goals. Given their common obligations to astronomy and the very large overlap between the communities they serve, both organisations have expressed a desire to maintain a joint ESA/ESO activity based at the ESO Headquarters in Garching. This group will carry out a range of technical, outreach and coordination tasks of interest and benefit to both parties.

The current plans for such a group, which would evolve from the ST-ECF, have been developed with ESA and ESO over the last year or two. They include a continuation of the high-quality science-data product initiative which necessarily forms the foundation of the VO endeavour. Target projects would come from both ESA and ESO instrument developments. In addition, there are a number of coordination activities between the two organisations that would benefit from a joint group in Garching. The first steps have already been taken with the publication of the ESA/ESO Working Group report on extra-solar planets described in the previous issue of *The Messenger*. This will shortly be followed by a report on the synergies between Herschel and ALMA and then by one on Fundamental Cosmology. These are anticipated to be the beginning of a continuing series of initiatives that map out the joint interests and capabilities of both ESA and ESO to address major scientific problems.

Finally, the continuation of a vigorous public outreach programme is considered to be vital to ensure a continuing interest in the progress of science into the next generation and the future ST-ECF will carry out part of this programme for ESA in close collaboration with ESO.

As a footnote to this description, it should be pointed out that the ST-ECF has been in the past and is currently a substantial contributor to the ESO Astronomy Faculty and the scientific environment. With seven of its staff being Faculty members, it is well represented on Faculty committees and currently holds the (elected) Faculty chairmanship.

Reference

Sansonetti, C. J., Kerber, F., Reader, J., and Rosa, M. R., "Characterization of the Far-ultraviolet Spectrum of Pt/Cr-Ne Hollow Cathode Lamps as Used on the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph on Board the Hubble Space Telescope", 2004, *Astrophysical Journal Supplement Series* 153, 555–579

PPARC Council at ESO

On October 27, members of the PPARC Council paid a full-day visit to the ESO Headquarters. The Council members were welcomed by ESO's Director General, Dr. Catherine Cesarsky, and in the course of the day received an extensive briefing on key ESO activities including the current science activities at ESO's La Silla Paranal Observatory in Chile, the status of the ALMA project and the OWL project for an extremely large optical/near-IR telescope. Furthermore, ESO's instrumentation programme – arguably the world's most comprehensive and ambitious instrumentation development programme in astronomy – was described as well as industrial relations and technology transfer, and ESO's substantial education and public outreach activities. The Council members also had an opportunity to see the ESO Science Data Archive and the Integration Hall where new instruments are tested prior to being shipped to the observing sites in Chile. During lunch, the participants had a chance to meet UK and Commonwealth staff working at the Headquarters.



Photo: H. H. Heyer, ESO