ESO is the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere. Whilst the Headquarters (comprising the scientific, technical and administrative centre of the organisation) are located in Garching near Munich, Germany, ESO operates three observational sites in the Chilean Atacama desert. The Very Large Telescope (VLT), is located on Paranal, a 2,600 m high mountain south of Antofagasta. At La Silla, 600 km north of Santiago de Chile at 2,400 m altitude, ESO operates several medium-sized optical telescopes. The third site is the 5,000 m high Llano de Chajnantor, near San Pedro de Atacama. Here a new submillimetre telescope (APEX) is in operation, and a giant array of 12-m submillimetre antennas (ALMA) is under development. Over 1,600 proposals are made each year for the use of the ESO telescopes.

The ESO Messenger is published four times a year: normally in March, June, September and December. ESO also publishes Conference Proceedings and other material connected to its activities. Press Releases inform the media about particular events. For further information, contact the ESO Public Affairs Department at the following address:

ESO Headquarters
Karl-Schwarzschild-Straße 2
85748 Garching bei München
Germany
Phone +49 89 320 06-0
Fax +49 89 320 23 62
information@eso.org
www.eso.org

The ESO Messenger:
Editor: Jeremy R. Walsh
Technical editor: Jutta Boxheimer
www.eso.org/messenger/

Printed by
Peschke Druck
Schatzbogen 35
81805 München
Germany

© ESO 2007
ISSN 0722-6691

Contents

The Organisation
C. Cesarsky – Editorial 2
Tim de Zeeuw to Become the Next Director General of ESO 3
X. Barcons – Astronomy in Spain 4

Telescopes and Instrumentation
R. Gilmozzi, J. Spyromilio – The European Extremely Large Telescope 11
M. Arnaboldi et al. – ESO Public Surveys with the VST and VISTA 28
F. Malbet et al. – AMBER, the Near-Infrared Instrument of the VLTI 33
F. Malbet et al. – First AMBER/VLTI Science 37
V. Dhillon et al. – ULTRASPEC: High-speed Spectroscopy with Zero Read-out Noise 41

Astronomical Science
Supernova 1987A – 20th Birthday 44
J. Danziger, P. Bouchet – SN 1987A at La Silla: The Early Days 49
Y. G. Tsamis et al. – Integral-field Spectroscopy of Galactic Planetary Nebulae with VLT FLAMES 53

Astronomical News
M. Grenon – Nature Around the ALMA Site – Part 1 59
M. Böcker, J. Vogt – Research Project “Safety and Health in High-altitude Observatories” 64
F. Barrientos, N. Nagar, F. Mirabel – Report on the Fourth Advanced Chilean School of Astrophysics 67
W. Gieren et al. – Report on the Third Advanced Chilean School of Astrophysics 68
H. Boffin, C. Madsen – ESO at the AAS, the AAAS and in Dublin 69
Announcement of the ESO Workshop “12 Questions on Star and Massive Star Cluster Formation” 70
Announcement of ONTHEFRINGE: The Very Large Telescope Interferometer Training Schools 71
ESO Studentship Programme 72
Fellows at ESO – A. Jordan, P. Lynam 73
Vacancies 74
Personnel Movements 75
List of Proceedings from the ESO Astrophysics Symposia 75
New Editor 75
Announcement of the ESO Workshop “12 Questions on Star and Massive Star Cluster Formation” 70
Announcement of ONTHEFRINGE: The Very Large Telescope Interferometer Training Schools 71
ESO Studentship Programme 72
Fellows at ESO – A. Jordan, P. Lynam 73
Vacancies 74
Personnel Movements 75
List of Proceedings from the ESO Astrophysics Symposia 75
New Editor 75
Annual Index 2006 76
Front Cover Picture: The European Extremely Large Telescope
(Artist’s Impression by Herbert Zodet, ESO PR Photo 46/06)