Announcement of

ESO Large Programmes on the Gran Telescopio Canarias

The accession agreement of Spain into ESO includes the allocation of 122 clear nights with the new 10.4-m Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC) to proposals by PI's from ESO member countries (including Spain).

The ESO/GTC programmes must satisfy the following conditions: (1) each programme should request a minimum of 20 nights; (2) the observations will be conducted either in Service or in Visitor Mode by the ESO/GTC PI teams according to the standard GTC operational procedures.

The mechanism for submission and evaluation of ESO/GTC proposals, and the duration of the programmes will be the same as that for ESO Large Programmes. There will be two calls for proposals for the first year of operations with deadlines 21 April 2008 for observations starting in March 2009, and 16 October 2008 for observations starting in September 2009. For the first (this) call, the available instruments will be the optical imager and multi-object spectrograph OSIRIS and the mid-IR imager-spectro-polarimeter CanariCam, which will be commissioned during 2008. Proposals should be prepared using the information available on the web, which includes exposure-time calculators. Technical information about the telescope and the instruments OSIRIS and CanariCam is available through the GTC web pages, *http://www.gtc.iac.es/.*

The ESO rules for Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO) will apply to the ESO/GTC programmes recommended by the OPC. Please refer to the ESO Call for Proposals for Period 82 and to the ESO web pages *http://www.eso.org/sci/* for additional information on this call.

Announcement of the

ASTRONET Infrastructure Roadmap Symposium: An Opportunity to Contribute to the European Astrophysical Strategy for the Next 20 Years

16–19 June 2008, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Faithful readers of the ESO Messenger might experience here a slight feeling of *déjà vu*. A year or so after the Astronet Poitiers Symposium, where the community at large provided precious feedback on the European astronomical Science Vision, it is time for another call for arms … and brains. This second and last time is to invite every European researcher in the scientific, technical, educational and communicating astronomy fields to help in the building of an Infrastructure Roadmap for the next 20 years. You are strongly encouraged to participate in the 16–19 June 2008 Astronet Infrastructure Roadmap Symposium in Liverpool, United Kingdom. Please note also that, in preparation for the Symposium, a web-based discussion of the Infrastructure Roadmap draft document will open by the end of April 2008 and your input is eagerly sought as well.

Establishing a Science Vision was the first segment of the process conducted by ASTRONET (*http://www.astronet-eu.org/*), the consortium created by a group of European funding agencies, and financed by the European Commission, in order to establish a comprehensive long-term planning for the development of European astronomy. The Science Vision was released at the end of September 2007 (*http://www.strw.leidenuniv.nl/scienecevision/*). It covers all wavelengths and observing means from ground and space and provides a set of prioritised science goals as well as an analysis of the generic facilities needed to attain them.

The next and last phase is the building of a prioritised 'Infrastructure Roadmap', elucidating the ways and means to implement the Vision. This process (*http://www.astronet-eu.org/-Infrastructure-Roadmap-*) started in March 2007. Thematic panels drawn from the astronomical community have since addressed the whole astronomical 'food chain' from infrastructure and technology development to observation, data access, modelling, theory, education, training and public communication. Their input is currently being distilled by the Infrastructure Roadmap Working Group, which is composed of the panel chairs and co-chairs plus external experts, with the release of the draft roadmap on the Astronet web pages, expected by the end of April 2008.

Your contributions, via a forum discussion of the draft document, will be incorporated by the panels and the Working Group in the presentation of their preliminary conclusions at the 16–19 June 2008 Astronet Infrastructure Roadmap Symposium in Liverpool, United Kingdom. The Symposium will provide a live – and hope-fully lively – platform to refine the roadmap. Through this two-step process, for which your participation is essential, ASTRONET will finally deliver its full bi-decadal, long-term plan to the European Commission and its funding agencies by the end of 2008.

Do not miss this golden opportunity to contribute to this crucial milestone.

Please join us in Liverpool next June to help ensuring a vibrant future for astronomy in Europe.

For further information and to register for the Symposium, please visit *http://www.astro.livjm.ac.uk/~airs2008/.*

Announcement of the MPA/ESO/MPE/USM 2008 Joint Astronomy Conference on

Chemical Evolution of Dwarf Galaxies and Stellar Clusters

21–25 July 2008, ESO Headquarters, Garching, Germany

Small stellar systems, like dwarf galaxies and globular clusters, may be well suited in order to study galactic nucleosynthesis and chemical evolution as, to a first approximation, they can be treated as simple, homogeneous one-component objects.

Currently there is intensive work on determining stellar abundances in Galactic stellar systems (notably globular clusters) and in local-group dwarf galaxies. Many of these projects are actually pursued with the latest instruments, and have revealed surprising results.

Stars in globular clusters, on the one hand, are characterised be a well-defined iron abundance with a small spread, which indicates that they formed from gas that has been pre-enriched. This narrow spread in iron abundance, on the other hand, is in contrast with the widespread abundance anomalies in light elements which are preferentially explained by 'primordial pollution' scenarios. The latter may imply, at least to some degree, internal chemical evolution, where presently observed stars formed out of cluster matter polluted by earlier generations of stars, or at least by the more massive objects of the same generation. There are also scenarios which claim that this pollution was due to external field stars in the surroundings of the proto-globular cluster cloud which was part of a small, dwarf-galaxy-like substructure of the Galaxy. This host galaxy was later disrupted by the Milky Way, while its globular clusters survived and are now part of the Milky Way system.

Dwarf galaxies are likely to have formed, as is typical for galaxies, through infall of primordial gas onto a dark-matter halo. They therefore have their own chemical evolution, which, however, is different from that of large galaxies due to the shallower potential wells, thus leading to more efficient mixing and a stronger influence of galactic tides causing harassment and tidal disruption. In addition, outflows of enriched hot gas in galactic winds are very likely to affect these systems. Dwarf galaxies are also investigated in integrated light to derive their star-formation history and age-metallicity relations. Some globular clusters are thought to be cores of former dwarf galaxies, in particular those where multiple populations of stars have been found (such as Omega Cen and NGC 2808).

As globular clusters and dwarf galaxies form a mass sequence and as there are the above-mentioned possible connections between the two classes of stellar systems, the topic of the conference is a confrontation and comparison of cluster and dwarf galaxy chemical evolution, which should be helpful in understanding the origin of the abundances in both classes of object.

For registration and more information, please visit *http://www.mpa-garching.mpg.de/~garcon08/.* The deadline for preliminary registration and abstract submission is 15 April 2008; final registration closes on 15 May 2008.