



La Serena
Santiago

The Space Telescope European Coordinating Facility Begins its Activity

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As announced in the *Messenger* No. 31, on the 23rd of February 1983, the Directors General of the European Southern Observatory and of the European Space Agency signed the Agreement concerning the establishment of the Space Telescope European Coordinating Facility (ST-ECF). One year later, on the 1st of March 1984, the ST-ECF began its activity on the ESO premises in Garching.

It should be recalled that the prime purpose of the ST-ECF is to enhance the capabilities within Europe for the scientific use of the Space Telescope and of its data archive. Indeed the ST-ECF shall become the European focal point of ST related activities: it will coordinate the development of ST-related data analysis software in Europe and with the Space Telescope Science Institute in the U.S., develop original application software for the reduction and analysis of ST data, create an efficient means of archiving, cataloguing, retrieving and disseminating non-proprietary ST data, provide a convenient source of detailed knowledge in Europe of the modes of operation and performance of the Space Telescope and of its complement of scientific instruments. Depending on availability of resources, it will also provide European ST users with limited access to the ST-ECF computer time and software, in particular for those who do not have their own data reduction facilities.

In order to provide an efficient service, the ST-ECF should be able to communicate with the User Community in a timely manner. We are therefore planning to issue a quarterly ST-ECF Newsletter which will be distributed free to all the interested parties. For the time being, we asked the *ESO Messenger* to host this article as a precursor of the Newsletter.

A more direct and technical communication channel, via computer link, is under consideration with those European Centres and Networks which are more involved in the development of data analysis software.

At present, the ST-ECF staff on board is limited to the Head (the author), formerly IUE Observatory Controller at VILSPA, Madrid, the Deputy Head, Dr. Rudolf Albrecht, formerly of Space Telescope Science Institute, and the Secretary, Miss Britt Sjöberg. Dr. T. Courvoisier, now at the EXOSAT Observatory in Darmstadt, has been appointed as one of the Instrument Information Scientists and will take up duty in June. All the remaining vacant positions have been advertised and the recruiting activities are under way; we are aiming to complete the staffing of the ST-ECF by mid 1985. Our organization is shown in Fig. 1; it consists of two groups: one is responsible for monitoring the status and performance of ST and its instruments, and for designing specific algorithms and application tasks for the reduction of ST data. The second group is responsible for the coordination and development of data analysis software and for the archive system.

The prime interface for the activity of the ST-ECF is the ST Science Institute in Baltimore. First contacts have been already established and we are now aiming to set up an effective collaboration in the areas of development of application software, performance of scientific instruments and data archiving. It is expected that the ST-ECF staff will regularly spend part of their time at the ST Scl, in order to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the ST project.

Please be informed that ESO-Chile has a new postal address:

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