

## The Swiss Ambassador and Consul General Visit ESO



The Swiss Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Charles Müller, and the Swiss Consul General in Munich, Mr. Kurt Welte, visited the ESO Headquarters on October 14, 1986 for information about

ESO and its current projects. The picture was taken during a demonstration of the ESO MIDAS image processing system (from left to right: Preben Grosbøl, the Consul General, Klaus Banse, the Ambassador).

## ESO Pictorial Atlas is Underway

Right on time for ESO's 25th anniversary, Springer-Verlag will publish a pictorial atlas of the southern sky authored by S. Laustsen, C. Madsen and R.M. West. It would appear to be the first time that one of the leading astronomical institutions has endorsed such an astronomical picture book for the general audience. It will present 237 photographs (including 90 large-size colour and an approximately 120 cm long folding plate) in an unprecedented quality of reproduction and printing.

Part 1 of the book is devoted to photographs taken with ESO telescopes on La Silla and showing extragalactic phenomena. Numerous objects inside the Milky Way Galaxy are described in part 2, and part 3 presents pictures of minor bodies in the solar system with an emphasis on the latest pictures of Comet Halley. The fourth and last part of the book gives a portrait of ESO as an astronomical research institution. A comprehensive glossary and indexes of plate data and objects shown in the

## Wide Angle Photography of the Milky Way

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### Introduction

Since astronomers began to use photography on a scientific basis, a number of pictures of the Milky Way band, or large parts thereof, has been made. Barnard (1890, 1927) produced a series of fine Milky Way photos. Later attempts by Rodgers, Whiteoak et al. (1960), Schmidt-Kaler and Schlosser (1972), Sivan (1974) and others resulted in impressive pictures, either in the form of panoramas or extreme wide-field views, mostly in well defined (narrow)

spectral bands. The most famous depiction of the Milky Way, however, is not a photograph but a drawing made by hand. This was made by M. and T. Keskula at Lund Observatory, and it has become the standard representation of the Milky Way band in textbooks.

A new panorama has recently been produced at ESO. This panorama differs in some respects from most previous images of the Milky Way band. With no filter being used and the emulsion sensitive to visual light, the general impression of the panorama is similar to the

impression when watching the Milky Way on the night sky.

As explained below, the resolution is of the order of 1 arcminute, or about the same as that of the unaided human eye. However, 11th magnitude stars are visible on the panorama. The full panorama is currently being reproduced for use in a forthcoming book with the title "Exploring the Southern Sky". Here it will appear as a four-page spread with a total length of approximately 120 cm, and it is our hope that in general it will serve educational purposes.

book will make the volume even more useful. The work is well underway. The painstaking reproduction of the photographs has been accomplished under the close supervision of C. Madsen, the translation of the English original text into German has been completed and the texts for the English and German editions are at the typesetters. Negotiations with licence publishers are taking place in the UK, France, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark and the Soviet Union. Even the difficult question of the main title has been solved in two of the languages.

"Entdeckungen am Südhimmel" and "Exploring the Southern Sky" will be published in May 1987, a corresponding French edition will be out a few months later.

## ESO Press Releases

The following Press Releases have been published since the last issue of the *Messenger*. The distribution list now contains about 350 addresses of editors, science journalists and others, who contribute to the dissemination of news about science. Members of the press are welcome to apply for inclusion to the ESO Information and Photographic Service.

PR 08/86: The ESO Very Large Telescope: One More Step Towards Reality (4 October).

PR 09/86: First Accurate Determination of the Sizes of Pluto and its Moon (5 November).

PR 10/86: Long Lost Planet Found Again (4 December).