

European Astronomical Society Founded

The 12th European Regional Astronomy Meeting of the IAU "European Astronomers Look to the Future", organized jointly with the Astronomy and Astrophysics Division of the European Physical Society, took place from 8 to 11 October 1990 in Davos, Switzerland. Some 300 astronomers from all over Europe attended. The scientific programme included presentations on Neptune, Solar Irradiance Variations, Supernova 1987A, the Neutral Interstellar Medium in Galaxies, and Prospects in Cosmology. The status of the astrometry satellite Hipparcos, of HST, and of a number of other projects was discussed. The programme also included thesis presentations, unpublished discoveries, and more than 150 poster papers. Very successful panel discussions took place on "Cooperation in Astronomy in the New Europe", and on "Instrumentation Beyond the Year 2000".

On 10 October, the European Astronomical Society was founded in Davos. The idea of an EAS has been around for a long time, but only during the last few years have its form and aims been more specifically defined. The constitution of the EAS foresees a society of individual members who will determine its activities and elect its ten-member Council. The Society aims at fostering the progress of, and the cooperation in, astronomy in Europe, and at serving as a forum where specific issues of common interest may be discussed.



Professor L. Woltjer announces the foundation of the European Astronomical Society in Davos, Switzerland, on October 10, 1990. (Photo: B. Shustov)

The constitution foresees that existing national or language-based societies can become "affiliated societies" so as to ensure a smooth and cooperative interaction with the EAS.

By 25 October, already 681 astronomers had signed up as Founding Members of the EAS, and an additional 111 persons had announced their intent to become regular members.

For the coming several months, the EAS will be run by a small committee composed of A.A. Boyarchuk, M.C.E. Huber, J.P. Swings and L. Woltjer (Chairman). In the meantime, a nominating committee composed of present and past General Secretaries of the IAU (chaired by R. West, ESO) is preparing the nomination of the first Council of the EAS. L. WOLTJER

Report on the 12th European Regional Astronomy Meeting

Davos, Switzerland, October 8–11, 1990

When this meeting was planned in September and October 1989, nobody could foresee under which totally different conditions it would take place. But early in the planning state it was clear that 1990 is really the "Year of Europe" and no better time could be found for the long planned founding of the European Astronomical Society: Travel restrictions were abolished and many scientists from Eastern states were, after many years, or even for the first time in their life, able to travel to Western countries. Above all, younger astronomers were eager to make use of these new possibilities.

Within months the organizers of the conference were swamped with hopeful applications – and with requests for fi-

nancial help. Travelling was possible, but the economic situations of many countries was – and still is – so difficult, that there were no financial means to make use of the new possibilities. So it was clear for the Organizing Committee that its main task was to make available as much financial support as possible. This has luckily been possible to a rather large amount.

Among the 300 participants were about 170 from countries of Eastern Europe. Many were young astronomers who could for the first time take part in such a meeting, eager to present their work to the international community and to listen with interest to the plans which were developed in the panel sessions about the future of European coopera-

tion in research in astronomy. A lunch-time excursion under a cloudless sky to the mountaintop restaurant at Pischhorn and a reception celebrating the formal founding of the "European Astronomical Society" made informal contacts easy.

In addition to the two Panel Discussions on

- "Cooperation in Astronomy in the New Europe" and
 - "Instrumentation beyond the year 2000" (see page 19)
- there were reports on the newest developments:
- "Neptune" (A. Brahic, Paris),
 - "Supernova 1987A" (I. Danziger, ESO, and N. Chugai, Moscow),
 - "Prospects in Cosmology" (I. Novi-