

Of these three science committees all people asked to serve as members in my time have consented without fail. This is, I think, a mark of ESO's stature in our community.

The Member States Delegations

The science committees are from member States but the members come as scientists, do not represent member State governments. The members of the Finance Committee and of the Council do; we fly the flags when they meet officially, as they normally do twice per year. Their task and authority are set out in the ESO Convention and in the Financial Protocol. The Director General receives instructions and guidelines from Council, which also approves the budget and major decisions, including appointments of senior members of staff.

The FC advises Council and exercises several functions delegated to it by Council, most important of which perhaps is that of approving executive proposals to conclude contracts. The introduction to the Annual Report 1991 gives an interesting example of this activity in VLT practice.

This is not the place to elaborate on the Executive's relations with delegations or on the delegations' internal relations. It is clear that there is a great variety of interests, national and individual, of personalities and styles, which combine to form a complex and sometimes unpredictable whole. My profes-

sional training, as one Council member put it to me, has made me articulate but not very diplomatic. In the end the tremendous workload and my diplomatic weakness, which could perhaps have been corrected by a much greater time investment, time I did not find, resulted in increasing estrangement between several delegations and myself. Thus the confidence base, essential for successful continuation, eroded.

The delegations have, for these five years, persuaded their governments to provide ESO with all the means necessary for its mission. The limits of our work were in human resources, not in funding. Council understandably and effectively controls the expenditure growth by putting ceilings on the numbers of the several categories of staff that can be on the payroll at the same time. That actually determines the scope of ESO's work and the pace of its VLT programme. The member States' support has been very impressive and has relieved us of the constant money worries which plague so many other organizations, so that we could fully concentrate on the work itself. That is ground for appreciation and optimism.

A Personal Note

Ending this "farewell article" on a personal note, I must admit I had underestimated the cultural complexity of ESO at all levels. In governing bodies, in committees, in management teams and among personnel, there are so many

perceptions of authority, notions of hierarchy, appreciations of frankness and openness, that the learning process is a long and subtle one. In Chile this is even more difficult. This culture diversity is extremely interesting in its dynamic patterns; it is extremely difficult to handle managerially and in policy making.

Looking back, I am convinced we have collectively achieved a great deal. I worked on the premise that all-out service to the idea of ESO, to the furthering of research opportunities of the community for which it exists, was necessary and sufficient. I have no regrets of being an idealist in this respect.

As an ESO staff member and advisor to the new Director General, I hope, at some distance, to continue to serve and observe. I look forward to resuming my scholarly work, to meeting community astronomers in their own institutes and at conferences. The Council decision may well be a blessing in disguise for my personal and our family life. After two activist decades in Leiden and five exciting but exhausting years in ESO, I anticipate a welcome change of pace. I have not had a chance for full time study, research and writing since my graduate student days in Cambridge thirty years ago!

I express my gratitude to all who have made these years so fascinating, many of whom share with me the idea(l) of ESO. May it flourish on Paranal, on La Silla, in Santiago, in Garching and throughout Europe's astronomy community.

Developments in ESO/Chile

In the course of 1992 important events took place related to ESO activities in Chile. Some of them require clarification in order to avoid the circulation of unnecessary rumours related to ESO's relations with the Government of Chile, the local staff and the Paranal site.

Relations with Chile

Concerning the general relations with Chile, the ESO Council decided in its 67th Meeting on June 4 and 5, 1992, to offer Chile membership in ESO and invited a Chilean delegation to start discussing this issue with ESO in Europe. This offer was made on the background of similar discussions which had already taken place in the 1960s and taking into account the wish of the Chilean astronomical community for closer scientific cooperation with ESO, including the desire to obtain a fixed percentage of observing time.

The offer of membership was transmitted to the Chilean Government in June this year, followed by some high-level meetings with Chilean government officials in Santiago. Apart from more formal communications confirming the receipt of this offer and its appreciation, the Chilean side has not yet replied to the invitation to begin discussions aimed at ESO membership.

The ESO Council at its 68th Meeting on December 1 and 2, 1992, discussed this issue, and a new initiative by ESO is now in preparation.

Local Staff Matters

Issues raised by the ESO local staff in Chile concentrate on the recognition within ESO of a national syndicate which the Chile local staff has established on the basis of national Chilean law and also on the request to reach a salary level comparable to that of the international staff.

Like other international organizations, ESO, because of its status, cannot accept national trade union activities within the organization.

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