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**ESO, the European Southern Observatory, was created in 1962 to establish and operate an astronomical observatory in the southern hemisphere, equipped with powerful instruments, with the aim of furthering and organizing collaboration in astronomy. It is supported by eight countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.**

- The La Silla Observatory in the Atacama desert, 600 km north of Santiago de Chile, is the site where 14 optical telescopes with diameters up to 3.6 m and a 15-m submillimetre radio telescope are in operation.
- This 8.5-m New Technology Telescope (NTT) became operational in 1990, and a giant telescope (VLT = Very Large Telescope) consisting of four 8-m telescopes (equivalent aperture = 16 m) is under construction.
- It will be erected on Paranal, a 2,600 m high mountain in northern Chile, approximately 150 km south of the city of Antofagasta.
- Eight hundred scientists make proposals each year for the use of the telescopes at La Silla. The ESO Headquarters are located in Garching near Munich, Germany. It is the scientific-technical and administrative centre of ESO where technical development programmes are carried out to provide the La Silla observatory with the most advanced instruments.
- There are also extensive facilities which enable the scientists to analyze their data. In Europe ESO employs about 200 international Staff members, Fellows and Associates; at La Silla about 50 and, in addition, 150 local Staff members.

The ESO MESSENGER is published four times a year: normally in March, June, September and December. ESO also publishes Conference Proceedings, Preprints, Technical Notes and other material connected to its activities. Press Releases inform the media about particular events. For further information, contact the ESO information Service at the following address:

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