

EPS: an umbrella organisation for common voice to EU

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The European Physical Society (EPS) Council 2015 took place on March 27th and 28th at Physikzentrum Bad Honnef (PBH), Germany, hosted by the German Physical Society (DPG).

Christophe Rossel (Switzerland), the new EPS President Elect taking office during the Council, defined the four basic priorities for 2015:

- EPS as a visible organisation among policy makers and stakeholders;
- EPS as an umbrella organisation;
- EPS as a strong efficient learned society via its own Divisions, Groups and Committees;
- EPS as a financial provider on societal challenges via the creation of a new EPS foundation.

The first priority will be mainly achieved through the point-of-presence (PoP) of the EPS in Brussels, with a new part-time EPS officer. A round table on "Influencing EU Science Policy", moderated by Angela Bracco (EPS Executive Committee member, Italy) and Elisabeth Rachlew (EPS Executive Committee member, Sweden), had been organised, with the purpose to better focalise and frame the future activities of the EPS in Brussels. Distinguished representatives of different organisations having a significant experience with the EU Commission (IBM; European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences – EuCheMS; Institute of Physics – IOP; European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures – ESFRI; European Technology Platform Photonics21) participated in the round table, leading to very stimulating discussions.

The Council Agenda also included the presentation and discussion of other relevant points, such as:

- a review of the EPS statement policy to speed up the publication of EPS "Position Papers";
- a report on the increasing dissemination of Young Minds activities;
- a report on the highly successful EPS Historic Sites initiative;
- a report on the EPS Strategy Review Group activities.

A whole section was dedicated to EPS publications. Angela Bracco (e-EPS editor) presented the statistics concerning the by now very popular e-EPS newsletter. Giorgio Benedek (EPL editor in chief) the results of a new EPL policy and the introduction of an interesting "visibility index".

The Council has also been, as usual, a golden occasion to announce awards and nominations. Some outstanding members have been nominated as EPS Honorary Members or EPS Fellows, among them Alessandro Bettini (Vice-President of the Italian Physical Society – SIF).

The Gero Thomas Medal has been awarded to Stefan Hell (Director of the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Göttingen, Germany).

The EPS Edison Volta Prize has been awarded to Nazzareno Mandolesi (University of Ferrara, Italy), Jean-Loup Puget (Institut d'Astrophysique Spatiale, Université Paris Sud & CNRS, France) and to Jan Tauber (ESA, European Space Research and Technology Centre – ESTeC, Noordwijk, The Netherlands). The three laureates gave very attractive invited lectures.

Also a new "EPS Achievement Award" has been established.

Noteworthy, an innovative example of physics outreach activity was presented by Zolt Fülöp (EPS Executive Committee member, Hungary): a physics oriented computer game named MIAZMA, an adventurous investigation on secret, dangerous meteorites.

The next EPS Council will be held in Mulhouse (France) on 1st and 2nd April 2016.