

International Day of Light: let's shed light again

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Year 2015 was proclaimed by the Executive Board of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and by the General Assembly of the United Nations as the International Year to celebrate Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL2015). The initiative collected enormous consensus all over the world, with an impressive list of events by various scientific societies, institutions, groups and individuals in the awareness of the importance of light in all aspects of life and society. The Italian Physical Society (SIF) – Golden Associate of the IYL2015 – acted as "contact hub" for a number of events in Italy, whose list can be found in a dedicated page of the SIF website.

On November 14, 2017 the 39th Session of the UNESCO General Conference has proclaimed the 16th of May as the date to celebrate every year the "International Day of Light" (IDL). This date was chosen in recollection of the first laser light obtained by Theodore H. Maiman on 16 May 1960. The official inauguration ceremony is planned on 16 May 2018 and will take place at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris. As declared by the Executive Board, the purpose of an IDL is *"to provide an enduring follow-up of the achievements of the International Year of Light in raising the profile of science and technology, and its application towards stimulating education, improving the quality of life worldwide, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals"*.

The 16th of May will therefore become an annual focal point for underlying the importance of light not only for science, but also for any aspect of our life. On the occasion of the IDL the Italian Physical Society will act as "contact hub" with the aim to gather representatives of various national scientific societies and institutions, defining the major steps of the IDL2018 celebrations in Italy and the priority of a number of actions. The official celebration of the IDL from the Italian Physical Society will take place on the closing day of the "Festival della Luce", which will be held in Como from the 4th to the 16th of May.

More details and updated information will be progressively made available by the national node.