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Newsletter Articles Welcome

Thanks to all the contributors of this issue of the ELGRA Newsletter.
All ELGRA members are invited and encouraged to submit materials that they feel would be of interest to society members, including meeting announcements, reports or summaries, book announcements and reviews, brief research highlights, member news, and editorials.
Please submit all materials to ELGRA Publications Editor Prof. Dr. Antonio Viviani at antonio.viviani@unina2.it
The deadline for input to the next issue of the Newsletter is October 31, 2002

The Editor

newsletter

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN LOW GRAVITY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION



NUMBER 3, JUNE 2002

President's page

Dear ELGRA Members,

At the last General Assembly in Banyuls sur mer I have been re-elected as president and with me all the other members of the Management Committee. We will try to do our best for ELGRA and to continue our work that we have started more than 2 years ago.

At present it is not really encouraging to go on with the space related work. The International Space Station, which was planned to offer us increased research opportunity in real microgravity, has been scaled down due to budget constraints. As a consequence, the European facilities for Columbus will be operational much later than originally scheduled. Further shuttle flights for research missions are not planned (the R2 mission has been cancelled), except STS-107 for which we are still waiting. Thus, flight possibilities are not or almost not existent. But many of us have experiments accepted for flight. Furthermore, the budget for ELIPS, the European Programme for Life and Physical Sciences in Space has been cut by 50% at the Ministerial Conference in November 2001. So, I can understand that some of us are asking themselves if it is worthwhile to continue this kind of research and to write new proposals for flight experiments. Despite all these problems and constraints, ESA is willing to continue the activities in Life and Physical Sciences and is undertaking all possible efforts to find alternatives for selected experiments assigning them to other carriers as sounding rockets, taxi flights and Foton.

All these drawbacks should not discourage us and thus I ask all of you to continue and also to be active as a member of ELGRA. Only as an active association we are strong and will also be accepted as a partner representing the users by ESA. ESA has realized within the last two years that ELGRA exists and has shown it to us at the last ELGRA meeting in Banyuls sur mer, to which several persons of ESA actively participated.

Since a few months we are offering you

the possibility to express your wishes or concerns or exchange your ideas with other colleagues in a discussion forum on our ELGRA website (www.elgra.org). But only a few members used this tool so far. Therefore I invite you once more to have a look at the forum and to actively participate to the ongoing discussions.

As it is the aim of the Management Committee to render our website a useful tool for establishing a permanent link between the members allowing a lively exchange of information and ideas we not only installed the discussion forum, but we also had the idea to set up a Directory of the European scientific microgravity activity. This directory should collect mainly information about the activity of our ELGRA members and scientific institutions, agencies and companies involved in microgravity research. For this purpose we have sent out a questionnaire. So far we only got back very few questionnaires - not enough to bring them on our website. I thank all members who have taken their time to fill out the questionnaire and encourage all the others to send it in at your earliest convenience.

Presently the Management Committee is carefully evaluating the possibilities for a change of the statutes. At the last General Assembly several members expressed their concern about the different membership categories, especially on the right to vote. As only full members can vote it was noted that the members of the Management Committee are elected only by part of the ELGRA members. On the other hand the associate members pay a much lower annual fee. I hope that we are able to present you a change of our statutes at the next General Assembly.

The next ELGRA Meeting and the General Assembly will take place on April 2-4, 2003 in Munich. Please mark this date in your agenda.

Yours
Marianne Cogoli-Greuter
(President of ELGRA)

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<http://www.elgra.org>

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