

newsletter

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN LOW GRAVITY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION



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President's page

Dear ELGRA Members,

You will surely notice that this n°4 issue of ELGRA News letters appears late. The reason is mainly due to the high activity that took place last year, with the European initiative of issuing a Green Paper on space, being followed by a White Paper. I sent you letters by email to keep you informed on the development of this action. ELGRA was of course much involved in this very important process. Our major goal was to promote the recognition of the excellence and specificity of Life and Physical Sciences in Space. In the final version of the White Paper on space, Life and Physical Sciences in Space has become, together with the Sciences of the Universe and the Earth Science, one of the three poles of Space Science. We expect that concrete decisions will be taken soon, especially in the 6th or 7th framework programs.

Since the last ELGRA News letters, a major change occurred in the membership policy, thanks to the initiative of our former President, Marianne Cogoli. Voted at the last General Assembly in Munich, the members' classification is now reduced into *student*, *regular*, and *supporting* members. As most of you know, difficulties still continue for manned space missions, due to the increasing delay in using the Space Shuttles to the International Space Station (ISS). In addition to the Soyuz taxi flights to the ISS, however, ESA has scheduled an "Interim" program. This program should help us in continuing our research activities with facilities already onboard the ISS and other means as e.g. the Russian Fotons, the parabolic flights and the ESA funded MAXUS, Maser and TEXUS rockets. At ELGRA, we are particularly attached to the sounding rocket program, not only as precursor of longer duration flights, but also for its easy access and highly professional management. We also note and particularly appreciate the new ESA funding possibilities for Ground-based facilities.

An important meeting has been held in Obernai, organized by The European Space Science Committee of the European Space Foundation, at the demand of ESA, meant to portray the status of the present ELIPS program and draw its future orientation. The previous meeting of this kind, organized at Bischenberg in November 2000, has given

a decisive impulse to our ELIPS program. We expect the Obernai meeting to be equally successful.

In order to increase ELGRA visibility and makes ELGRA playing a role in the publication of a scientific journal, we are currently discussing with the well-known journal "Microgravity - Science and Technology". We want to be a part of the editorial board and to have in each issue a few pages dedicated to ELGRA. The major remaining problem is the increased cost for ELGRA.

The new General Assembly meeting will be held at the beautiful Santorini island in Greece. Vice-President Thodoris Karapantsios chairs the local committee and spends much energy to make this meeting a scientific and social success. I note that our general meetings are the only interdisciplinary meetings in space sciences where life and physical sciences communities can meet and interfere. We expect that interdisciplinary research initiatives could come out. Very important, a special student session is scheduled for the meeting where students are invited to present their microgravity related work. For this occasion, the winners of the ELGRA student contest will be offered financial aid to participate at the meeting.

In this issue of ELGRA News letter, you will also find a brief summary of the management representative activities. This is an attempt to make our internal activities more transparent and visible.

I would like to finish these words by sending a message to all of you, members, students, and supporting members. ELGRA is the only association in Europe that mixes life and physical science communities for space research. We have to convince our national decision makers that ELGRA, with its unique characteristics, is the only organization representative of the European space-microgravity users and, as such, should be associated to the preliminary works dealing with space related decisions.

With my best personal regards,

Daniel Beysens
President

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