

Short report from the 73rd meeting of the Council

Held 27 – 28 October 2009, Radisson SAS Lillehammer Hotel, Norway

Present: Dr. T. Andersson (Vice-Chairperson), Dr. H. Boos, Prof. A. Brekke, Prof. R. Fujii, Dr. B. Jacobsen, K. Kauristie (Chairperson), Dr. L. Lønnum, Dr. I. W. McCrea, Dr. H. Miyaoka, Prof. D. Murtagh, Prof. T. Nygrén, Prof. J. Röttger, Dr. K. Sulonen, Prof. J. Wu

Invited and in Attendance: Dr. M. Schultz, (NERC) and Dr. E. Turunen.

The meeting started with an introduction from Dr. Kauristie, who expressed her thanks to Dr. Jacobsen and NFR for organising the meeting. Dr. Jacobsen welcomed the attendees to Lillehammer. New attendees, Dr. K. Sulonen, Finland, who is back at Council and the representative from NERC, Dr. M. Schultz were introduced. It was noted that the SOC report will be given by Prof. J. Röttger on behalf of the SOC chair Prof. Liu. As Mr. H. Andersson was not present in Lillehammer Dr. Kauristie suggested that Drs McCrea and Turunen would together make the Minutes of this meeting.

Status Report from the Director

Dr. Turunen reported the current status of the Association. During the on-going year both EU-projects will end. The EISCAT_3D design study finished at the end of April and the TNA programme will end at the end of the year. In 2010, it is expected that EISCAT will begin to lose its frequency band at the remote sites. The Association is thus heading towards some changes in its routine operations and the challenging development work for better radars needs to be continued. Message from the user community is encouraging: The EISCAT workshop in Tromsø turned out to be a very good meeting with 85 participants, including also several guests from the USA.

UK Associate related matters

Dr. Michael Schultz from NERC gave a presentation about the activities of the UK Natural Environment Research Council and the organisational structure under which it delivered its science programme. He stressed that the recent transfer of responsibilities in the UK meant that NERC would now take over all responsibility for ground-based solar-terrestrial physics, and that it already supported closely-related research in areas such as atmospheric physics and geomagnetism.

After Dr. Schultz's presentation the Council had a closed session dedicated for the UK membership matters. Another closed session about the same topic was held on the morning of the second day of the meeting.

Resulting outcome from the closed sessions:

Council discussed how to proceed with the needed negotiations with UK and agreed on a starting point for further discussions. The ambition is to have completed the negotiations by early December and that Council reconvenes via teleconference mid-December for final assessment.

Agreement with Ukraine

Dr. Turunen introduced the agreement which had recently been made with Ukraine. He noted that this was a one-year commitment, to introduce Ukraine to the scientific activities of the association.

SOC report

SOC met at the Arecibo Observatory on September 14th and 15th. The minutes of the meeting were included in the Council paperwork, and Prof. Röttger took the Council through the minutes, highlighting issues of particular importance. The discussions in Council concentrated to the appearance of the EISCAT_3D Science plan document. Council congratulated Dr. McCrea, Prof. Kosch and SOC for their work in preparing this document and welcomed the plan of SOC to collect some graphical material to make the document more attractive also for readers outside the EISCAT community.

The EISCAT_3D Preparatory Phase application status

Dr. McCrea presented the present conception of the consortium composition, the list of work packages and the envisaged funding levels and durations. He also noted that there had been discussions with a number of other entities who were not currently included as partners, but with whom the consortium would be very likely to have useful discussions during the preparatory phase.

Chinese 3rd antenna proposal

Prof. Wu reported on the progress of the Chinese third antenna project. Discussions had taken place with the relevant ministry responsible for infrastructure in China. The ministry finds the proposal very interesting. EISCAT HQ will make preliminary investigations about the first steps in practical arrangements (e.g. about the availability of the necessary transmission licences).

Administrative and financial matters

The Director presented the Administrative and Finance Report, the 2009 Financial Development Update document and the 2010 Budget, and the current financial 5-year Plan, including the Staff Complement Plan. Council approved the 2010 Budget, and noted the other documents.

Staff Representative matters

No staff representative attended the Lillehammer Council meeting; however, the Council Chair had discussed with the EISCAT staff about the Staff Representative matter. Staff had expressed the opinion that the presence of a staff representative was actually necessary only for the cases where Council wanted to have staff opinion on some matter, or when the staff wanted to bring some matters to the Council where introduction by the staff representative was necessary. The Council respects the Staff opinion and consequently is willing to endorse the new practice. The Council Chair encourages the Staff to continue the bi-annual selection of a staff representative and to keep the Council informed about the outcome of the vote.

The EISCAT Management Committee structure

In the 72nd Council meeting EMC proposed that the committee should be reformed into an advisory group to Council. It could be called the Council Advisory Group

(CAG) and it would normally meet after the SOC meeting and some time before each Council meeting to consider and prepare matters to be brought to the Council. In the 73rd meeting the Council was ready to accept this amendment (and consequent changes in the Statutes). Among its first tasks CAG will formulate a suggestion to SOC in order to make the SOC-CAG communication and collaboration more efficient in the future.

Currently, the EMC/CAG members are Dr. T. Andersson, Prof. Brekke and the Council Chair, Dr. Kauristie. Additionally the Director and the Head of Administration participate in the EMC/CAG meetings. One more member to CAG will be selected by e-mail voting among the Council members still before the next Council meeting. Council also agreed that travel expenses relating to EMC/CAG meetings will be covered by the regular EISCAT budget.

Next meetings

The next Council meeting will be an additional Council meeting (73b) in mid-December and arranged as a teleconference. The 74th Council meeting will be held in Tokyo 3 – 4 June, 2010. The autumn 2010 Council meeting will be held in UK (tentative dates: 3 - 4 November).