

New body starts independent advisory work for EU Commission

The new European Science and Technology Assembly (ESTA) had its first General Assembly on 6-7 September in Brussels. According to Commissioner A. Ruberti, the European Union's 'Minister' for science, technology and higher education, who has been largely responsible for ESTA's creation, the tasks of the new and independent Assembly of Scientists are to give opinions and advice and to help the European Commission implement the EU research policy.

The EC's first request was for advice regarding the 4th Framework programme 1994-98 (preliminary 'expressions for interest' in view of formal calls for proposals for the 13 specific R & D programmes are being announced and the first formal calls are expected before the year's end). The Assembly indicated that it intends to review work programmes, including scientific referee procedures for proposals (these have not yet been announced although a draft for simplified proposal forms has been published this summer in order to solicit constructive criticism from potential users).

Some nine working parties are therefore being set up right away to examine groups of specific programmes as well as each of the three remaining 4th Framework activities, which - for the first time - includes all R & D activities of the European Union (international cooperation, dissemination of information and the Human Capital

and Mobility follow-on).

J. Borgman, formerly Professor of Astronomy at the University of Groningen and currently President of the Dutch national research council (The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research: NWO in Dutch) was elected as the President of the Assembly. ESTA has some 100 members nominated ad personam, including the entire CODEST (Committee for the European Development of Science and Technology) committee of some 27 scientists that has among other activities been responsible for the scientific peer-reviewing of proposals to the 3rd Framework's Human Capital and Mobility Programme and, with ESTA now in place, will cease its activities at the end of the year.

Also included are the three advisors to A. Ruberti: the molecular biologist F. Gros, chemist I. Prigogine and former CERN Director General Carlo Rubbia. On proposal by the CERN management the Commission also nominated CERN's former Technical Director Hans F. Hoffmann. ESTA elected half of the members of a 20-person bureau chaired by Professor Borgman with the ESTA Vice-Presidents D. Donnelly from University College, Dublin and H. Danielmeyer, a Senior Vice-President at Siemens and President of the German Physical Society.

The bureau's 10 remaining members are ex officio nominated by the Commission from among members proposed by major European organizations in the field of R & D and include: Ansaldo's Vice-President for research, S. Barabaschi, European Science Foundation President D. Rees, the President of the European Rectors Conference, H. Seidel, and the Vice-Chairman of the European Council of Applied Sciences and Engineering, R. Bryssinck. The ESTA

General Assembly will meet next in December.

CERN's 40 anniversary

CERN's 40th anniversary was celebrated in style with a site-wide gala on Saturday 17 September. The accent was on interest and fun for staff and their families. Some 15,000 turned up to enjoy a full programme of entertainment, demonstrations and exhibitions. Photo coverage and speech extracts will feature in our November issue.