

strengthened international co-operation. The presentation materials are available on the Global Science Forum internet site: www.oecd.org/sti/gsf.

The talks were excellent and, following each presentation and during a longer discussion period at the end of the workshop, participants debated a wide range of issues. A consensus emerged on the broad scientific perspectives and generic issues of relevance to governments. Delegates very much regretted that the major space agencies, in particular ESA and NASA, were unable to present their perspectives, although the Workshop was very clear in stating the com-

plementarities of ground and space and the value of co-operation and consultation between the agencies.

- 1) The general subject areas enumerated below will now be discussed further at the second and final workshop that will be held on April 5 and 6, 2004 in Washington, DC.
- 2) A Global Strategic Vision for Astronomy and Astrophysics.
- 3) Key Areas for Investment (including education and training).
- 4) Generic policy issues for large collaborative projects.
- 5) Management and sharing of astronomical

data.

- 6) Evaluation and protection of sites for present and future large facilities.

Small working groups are now preparing draft material for Washington in each of these areas (ESO people are involved in several of them) so that there can be a more focussed discussion which leads to consensus agreement on the framework and contents of the report. This will be written after Washington and presented to the Global Science Forum at their meeting in late June. It will be a public document, available on the OECD GSF web site and widely distributed to governments and agencies.

FINLAND TO JOIN ESO

Finland will become the eleventh member state of the European Southern Observatory. In a ceremony at the ESO Headquarters in Garching on 9 February 2004, an Agreement to this effect was signed by the Finnish Minister of Education and Science, Ms. Tuula Haatainen and the ESO Director General, Dr. Catherine Cesarsky, in the presence of other high officials from Finland and the ESO member states.

Following subsequent ratification by the Finnish Parliament of the ESO Convention and the associated protocols, it is foreseen that Finland will formally join ESO on July 1, 2004.

The Finnish Minister of Education and Science, Ms. Tuula Haatainen, began her speech with these words: "On behalf of Finland, I am happy and proud that we are now joining the European Southern Observatory, one of the most successful megaprojects of European science. ESO is an excellent example of the potential of European cooperation in science, and along with the ALMA project, more and more of global cooperation as well."

She also mentioned that besides science ESO offers many technological challenges and opportunities. And she added: "In Finland we will try to promote also technological and industrial cooperation with ESO, and we hope that the ESO side will help us to create good working relations. I am confident that Finland's membership in ESO will be beneficial to both sides."

Dr. Catherine Cesarsky, ESO Director General, warmly welcomed the Finnish intention to join ESO. "With the accession of their country to ESO, Finnish astronomers, renowned for their expertise in many front-line areas, will have new, exciting opportuni-



Signing of the Finland-ESO Agreement on February 9, 2004, at ESO Headquarters in Garching. At the table, the ESO Director General, Dr. Catherine Cesarsky (left), and the Finnish Minister of Education and Science, Ms. Tuula Haatainen (right).

ties for working on research programmes at the frontiers of modern astrophysics."

"This is indeed the right time to join ESO", she added. "The four 8.2-m VLT Unit Telescopes with their many first-class instruments are working with unsurpassed efficiency at Paranal, probing the near and distant Universe and providing European astronomers with a goldmine of unique astronomical data. The implementation of the VLT Interferometer is progressing well and last year we entered into the construction phase of the intercontinental millimetre- and submillimetre-band Atacama Large Millimeter Array. And the continued design studies for gigantic optical/infrared telescopes like OWL are progressing fast. Wonderful horizons are indeed opening for the coming generations of European

astronomers!"

She was seconded by the President of the ESO Council, Professor Piet van der Kruit, "This is a most important step in the continuing evolution of ESO. By having Finland become a member of ESO, we welcome a country that has put in place a highly efficient and competitive innovation system with one of the fastest growths of research investment in the EU area. I have no doubt that the Finnish astronomers will not only make the best scientific use of ESO facilities but that they will also greatly contribute through their high quality R&D to technological developments which will benefit the whole ESO community. "

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