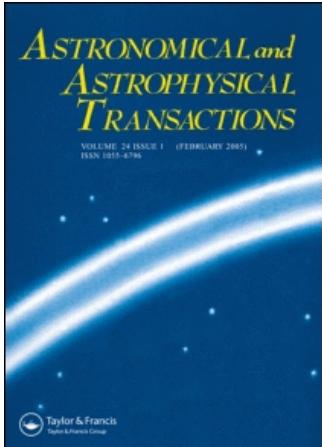


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THE SIXth EAS MEETING IN THESSALONIKI

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The sixth Meeting of the European Astronomical Society (EAS) on *New Trends in Astronomy and Astrophysics* was held in Thessaloniki (Greece) jointly with the third Hellenic Astronomical Society Conference, on 2–5 July 1997 (for the sake of brevity the official acronym JENAM-97 will be used hereafter). About 350 astronomers from 34 states assembled in the *Athos Palace* and *Pallini Beach* hotels in the picturesque resort village of Kallithea Chalkidiki only 50 km away from the place where Aristotle was born.

The JENAM-97 meeting was sponsored by the Greek Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace, the University of Thessaloniki, the Hellenic Physics Society, the National Committee of Astronomy, the Physics Department of the University of Athens and many other organizations and institutions. Their financial support made it possible to subsidize many participants from Eastern European countries. The scientific organizing committee of JENAM-97 (headed by the President of the Hellenic Astronomical Society, Prof. G. Contopoulos) made a lot of effort to ensure very good living and working conditions for the attendees.

A volume of abstracts containing summaries of all the scientific contributions submitted to JENAM-97 was issued by the hosts and distributed among the participants. For the first time in the history of the EAS Meetings the Hellenic Astronomical Society published a very thorough account of the Thessaloniki EAS Meeting: *Highlights of Joint European and National Astronomical Meeting for 1997; New Trends in Astronomy and Astrophysics* (editors J. D. Hadjidemetrioy and J. H. Seiradakis) summarizing all the main topics of discussion during JENAM-97. It is a very timely initiative of the Hellenic Astronomical Society and one can only recommend that it be perpetuated to become a routine procedure for future EAS general meetings.

The agenda of the Thessaloniki meeting consisted of both plenary and the following parallel topical sessions: *Dynamical Astronomy, Solar Physics, Space and Planetary Physics and Astronomy, Stellar and Interstellar Astrophysics, Galaxies, Observational Astronomy – Instrumentation, High Energy Astrophysics, Cosmology and Relativity, and History of Astronomy*. The latter figured in the list of topical

sessions for the first time. The highlights of the JENAM-97 were the report on the flyby of the asteroid Mathilde by the *NEAR* (near earth asteroid rendezvous) satellite (by S. Krimigis) and general discourses on the subsequent topics: new developments in cosmology (by M. Rowan-Robinson), stellar clusters in the galactic nucleus and the problem of hidden mass (by R. Genzel), high-energy astrophysics (by R. Trümper), molecular gas in the Galaxy and X-ray astronomy (by R. Sunyaev), *SOHO* (by A. Gabriel), and neutron stars (by J. van Paradijs). A total of 363 papers were presented during the four working days of the Thessaloniki EAS meeting.

Another novelty in the history of EAS meetings was the *Round Table Discussion*, an open forum for all attendees organized by Dr. P. Murdin (PPARC, England). The full list of speakers in this panel is attached below in the *Appendix*. All those interested in the future of European astronomy, the relations between space and ground-based astronomy, as well as versatile organizational aspects of astronomical research are strongly advised to make first-hand acquaintance with the relevant materials published in the aforementioned edition of the Highlights of JENAM-97.

A number of important decisions was adopted during the business meeting of the newly elected Council of the EAS. In accordance with the bye-laws of the EAS the president of the EAS, Dr. P. Murdin, has resigned and a new President, Jean-Paul Zahn from the Meudon observatory (France), was elected for the next term. The treasurer of the EAS, Dr. B. Nordström (Denmark), proposed transforming the EAS *Emergency Fund* into a *Development Fund* but retaining its basic principle of allocating small grants (less than a thousand US each). The members of the EAS Council unanimously decided in favour of fixing the EAS membership fees at their present level. A number of other issues, including the introduction of special awards for young astronomers, relations of the EAS with the European Physical Society, subscription to the journal, *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, the electronic version of this journal, etc., were under discussion.

Future EAS meetings was one of the dominating points on the agenda of the business meeting. It has been decided that the next (VIIth) EAS General Meeting JENAM-98 entitled *Prospects of Astronomy and Astrophysics for the new millennium* will be convened on 9–12 September 1998 in Prague jointly with the annual conference of the Czech Astronomical Society (the head of the SOC of JENAM-98 is Dr. J. Grygar). The VIIIth EAS Meeting will be organized and convened jointly by France and Germany and should take place in Strasbourg in 1999 but the final decision as to its exact terms is postponed in view of the total solar eclipse to be visible in Central Europe in August of 1999 (with the band of totality passing over the territories of Roumania and Hungary). Moscow remains the most probable candidate for the IXth EAS General Meeting scheduled for the year 2000.

Appendix

Round table discussion: the panel
 Woltjer L.: European space astronomy
 Trümper J.: High-energy astrophysics

- Giacconi R.: Towards a European policy for astronomy
Fosbury R.: The synergy between space and ground-based astronomy
Swings J.-P.: The Next Generation Space Telescope (NGST) project
Sanchez F.: Large telescopes and the European northern Observatory
Davies R.: The Gemini project and its lessons for European astronomy
Shaver P., Lequeux J.: A next generation millimetre telescope (LSA)
Denefeld M.: Instrumentation in European telescopes
Shustov B.: Specialization in observatory sites; the Russian Space Agency's space programme.
Murdin P.: The future of European astronomy – the need for a strategic plan.