

**Minutes of the meeting held in Bern on Monday September 23, 2013**

**Swiss Commission for Astronomy**  
**(SCFA)**

**0) Call to Order**

The chair, G. Meylan, calls the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Attendance at the meeting :

Present : W. Benz, P. Jetzer, M. Meyer, G. Meylan (chair), W. Schmutz, M. Steinacher (guest from SERI), and F.-K. Thielemann.

Excused : A. Jäggi, G. Lake, G. Meynet, D. Pfenniger, T. Schildknecht, and S. Udry.

**1) The New Astronomy Portal by ScNat**

In order to enhance its visibility on the world wide web, the Swiss Academy of Sciences (ScNat) has decided, about a year ago, to open a new web portal. The chair of the SCFA received a letter from ScNat offering the astronomers in Switzerland to participate in this process. The chair of the SCFA has answered positively to the ScNat suggestion, which offer a unique opportunity to open a portal called "Astronomy and Astrophysics in Switzerland". As already briefly mentioned during one of the recent SCFA teleconferences, all Swiss astronomical institutes are invited to join this project. They are :

- Astronomisches Institut der Universität Basel
- Astronomisches Institut der Universität Bern
- Département d'astronomie de l'Université de Genève
- Département de physique théorique de l'Université de Genève
- Institut für Astronomie der ETHZ
- Institut für Theoretische Physics, Universität Zürich
- International Space Science Institute, Bern
- Istituto Ricerche Solari Locarno Monti
- Laboratoire d'astrophysique de l'EPFL
- Laboratoire de physique des particules et de cosmologie de l'EPFL
- Physikalisches Institut der Universität Bern
- Physikalisch-Meteorologisches Observatorium Davos, PMOD/WRC

The aim of this portal is to improve the world access to the information related to the research performed, in Switzerland, in the various domains of astronomy and astrophysics. It will contain the above list of institutions in Switzerland, along with their web links. This ScNat portal will only be an interface between the already existing web pages of each of these astronomy related institutions in Switzerland and the outside world.

All software activities linked to this joint effort from ScNat and the SCFA are coordinated by Yves Revaz from EPFL LASTRO. In order to help us with the construction of this portal, we would like you to ask you to provide us with the following information :

- the name of your institution, as you would like it to appear on these pages,
- a web link towards your already existing main web site,
- a short summary of your scientific activities in less than 10 lines

In order to stay synchronized with the ScNat calendar, we ask you to send the requested information by October 28, 2013 directly to [yves.revaz@epfl.ch](mailto:yves.revaz@epfl.ch). It will be possible to send updated information at any time in the future.

## **2) Status of the Process of the Update to the Roadmap**

Willy Benz gives a brief status of the writing process of the update to the Roadmap for Astronomy in Switzerland, 2007 - 2016. Each subsection of the text to be written has been assigned to one of the members of the editorial committee, with a deadline for first input fixed on Oct. 18, 2013. One other deadline is planned for the production of the final document, after some iterations between the editorial committee, and with subsequent iterations with all CHAPS members in order to converge to the final version of the document.

## **3) Extension of the term of the ESO UC Delegate for Switzerland**

The extension by one year, as suggested by ESO, of the term of H.M. Schmid as delegate for Switzerland to the ESO UC has been accepted by the members of the SCFA following a electronic procedure which took place before this meeting. The chair has been in touch with H.M. Schmid who agrees with such an extension. A letter has been sent to the ESO DG Tim de Zeeuw formalizing this fact.

## **4) Nominations for a new ESO STC Delegate for Switzerland**

Since the present ESO STC delegate for Switzerland, namely Didier Queloz, has now a professorship at the University of Cambridge UK for 75% of his time, while maintaining his previous position at the University of Geneva at the level of 25%, the SCFA decides that Switzerland should look for a new STC delegate, from Jan. 1, 2014 on. As usual, the SCFA has to propose two names to ESO and decides to nominate (i) Michael Meyer (ETHZ) and (ii) Francesco Pepe (UniGE). A letter will be sent to the ESO DG Tim de Zeeuw formalizing this fact.

## **5) Extension of the term of the ESO Council Scientific Delegate for Switzerland**

In relation to the slow pace of the Brazil accession process to ESO, the current scientific delegate for Switzerland to the ESO Council, Georges Meylan, asks for an additional and final year. This request is done with the support of Martin Steinacher from SERI, head of the Council delegation of Switzerland. After a brief discussion chaired by F.-K. Thielemann, in the absence of G. Meylan, the SCFA accepts this extension, namely, G. Meylan will be the scientific delegate for Switzerland to the ESO Council till the end of 2014. A process will be initiated in the first semester of 2014, in order to identify the next scientific delegate for Switzerland to the ESO Council.

## **6) Small Travel Grants available from the SCFA**

The chair mentions the fact that all proposals for travel grants submitted this year to the SCFA come from UniGE. It is reminded to all members of the SCFA that proposals for small travel grants (typically of the order of 1,000 CHF) can be submitted, from any of the astronomy related institutes in Switzerland, directly to the secretary of the SCFA, Claire Schatzmann [claire.schatzmann@epfl.ch](mailto:claire.schatzmann@epfl.ch).

## **7) Coordination between Astronomical Institutes in Switzerland involved in the LSST**

The chair mentions the possible usefulness of a potential coordination, at the level of Switzerland, between all Swiss institutes participating or interested in the LSST project. Everybody agrees. Michael Meyer volunteers to investigate at ETHZ in order to induce such a coordination between the other institutes involved.

## **8) Exchange of Representative between CHIPP and CHAPS**

Some of the people simultaneously members of CHAPS and CHIPP think that an exchange of observers between this two boards would be beneficial to both parties. Earlier this year, some emails have been exchanges between the chairs of CHIPP and CHAPS. During our last CHAPS meeting, it has been decided that we would agree with the suggestion from CHIPP to have an exchange of observers between CHIPP and CHAPS. See the minutes of the last CHAPS meeting. The chair asks if anybody from the SCFA would volunteer for becoming the first CHAPS observer in CHIPP ? Michael Meyer nominates Alexandre Réfregier, who has already expressed interests in such an activity. The chair will get in touch with him.

## **9) Miscellaneous**

The chair mentions the only existing biography of Fritz Zwicky, translated from the German edition and recently published by Cambridge Scientific Publishers under his initiative. Since he receives no royalties from this publisher and since the reading of this biography is of interest for any astrophysicist, maybe especially for those working in Switzerland, he suggests to distribute by email a leaflet and a order form to all members of the SCFA who will be free (and welcome) to distribute this information further. This suggestion is accepted.

**7) The meeting is adjourned at 11:40 am.**