

EUROPEAN BIOPHYSICS

By Igor Vodyanoy

THE FOLLOWING is an excerpt from the European Science Foundation newsletter. The foundation is an organization that brings European scientists together to work on topics of common concern, to coordinate the use of expensive facilities, and to discover and define new endeavors that will benefit from cooperative approach.

Background

The European Science Foundation (ESF) was established in 1974. Its Member Organizations are the major European academies, research councils, and other institutions supporting scientific research nationally. Although these are funded mainly by governments, the ESF itself is a nongovernmental organization. It maintains close relations with other international bodies that have interests in scientific research particularly the Commission of the European Communities and the Academia Europaea.

The European Science Foundation is an association of 55 research councils, academies, and institutions devoted to basic scientific research in 20 countries. The ESF assists its member organizations in two main ways: by bringing scientists together in its scientific programs, networks and European research conferences, to work on topics of common concern; and through the joint study of issues of strategic importance in European science policy.

The scientific work sponsored by ESF includes basic research in the natural and technical sciences, the medical and biosciences, and the humanities and social sciences.

The ESF maintains close relations with other scientific institutions within

and outside Europe. By its activities, ESF adds value by cooperation and coordination across national frontiers and endeavors, offers expert scientific advice on strategic issues, and provides the European forum for fundamental science.

How ESF Works

The ESF pays for its activities through the contributions of its member organizations. Contributions are made both to the ESF basic budgets, to which member organizations contribute on a scale that is calculated on the basis of national incomes, and to specific programs and projects in which certain member organizations may have particular interest.

The modes of ESF scientific work vary with the expressed needs and may change in character over the years. Broadly, ESF scientific programs almost always contain teams of scientists who carry out research. ESF scientific networks discuss, plan, innovate, analyze, or coordinate research, but seldom carry out large amounts of substantive research. Programs are often long term and are funded (except in the developmental phase) by participating member organizations. Networks are usually of shorter term (3 years); they are funded from the network account within the ESF basic budget.

In early 1994 there were 25 ESF scientific networks and 32 ESF scientific programs in operation, with others being prepared. ESF also organizes, along with the Commission of the European Communities, a program of European Research Conferences.

Additional material on the European Science Foundation is available at your request:

- ESF budget
- Basic aims of ESF
- Criteria for choice of ESF programs and networks
- ESF structure

- ESF standing committees
- Other ESF committees
- ESF scientific programs
- ESF scientific networks
- ESF member organizations

The Office of Naval Research, Europe is dedicated to providing current information on science and technology development in European countries. In order to better meet your needs, our associate directors and scientists are very interested in knowing what your specific science and technology interests are. Please let me know.

Furthermore, if you know of others who have interest in these newsletters, please pass their e-mail address to me and I will add their names to the distribution list.

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