



EAI
EUROPEAN
ASTROBIOLOGY
INSTITUTE

**Telecon EAI Monday 29 June 2020 13:00
CEST (11:00 UTC)**

Participants

ESF

Emmanouil Detsis, ESF

Justen Russell, ESF

Mariette Vandermersch, ESF

EAI

Wolf Geppert, Chair of EAI, Stockholm University, Sweden

Muriel Gargaud, Vice Chair of EAI, University of Bordeaux, France

Akos Kereszturi, Konkoly Observatory, Hungary

Carlos Briones, CAB, Spain

Caterina Boccato, INAF, Italy

David Dunér, Lund University, Sweden

Dennis Höning, VU, Netherland

Emmanuelle Javaux, University of Liège, Belgium

Ewa Szuskiewicz, University of Szczeccon, Poland

Frances Westall, CNRS, France

Ina Catalina Plesa, DLR, Germany

Jean-Pierre de Vera, DLR, Germany

Jose Antonio Rodriguez-Manfredi, CAB, Spain

Julie Novaková, Charles University, Czech Republic

Kalle Kirsimäe, University of Tartu, Estonia

Nigel Mason, University of Kent, United Kingdom

Riho Mõtlep, University of Tartu, Estonia

Ruth-Sophie Taubner, University of Vienna, Austria

Tilman Spohn, DLR, Germany

Yiannis Tsamis, Open University, United Kingdom

Agenda

1. General Assembly Review
2. Future meetings of the EAI
3. Development of Working Groups and Project teams
4. European Astrobiology Campus; New developments
5. Organizing our Approach to Funding: Discussions at GA and further plans.
6. Science Fiction Project Team: Anthology and plans for the future.
7. Industry Liaison:
8. Website
9. Any other business

Opening remarks

INAF indicated that they are planning to answer to a Europlanet call, regarding the astrobiology board game. Wolf indicated that he supports the activity, but the discussion will continue with email.

General Assembly Review

The General Assembly was very productive and a very good Management Committee was elected. Please contact the minutes of the General Assembly for details.

Future meetings of the EAI

Reservations have been made for the venue in La Palma from 12-16 April 2021. If the situation with regards to restrictions on travel does not improve, the Plan B is:

- Hold 2021 General Assembly to hold it as a virtual meeting and move the meeting in la Palma to 2022 (same venue).

Summer schools for 2021 probably will go ahead as it can be expected that the situation will probably be more relaxed next summer. This plan is of course subject to change according to unforeseen developments.

Development of Working Groups and Project teams

Scientific Working Groups:

Working Group "Formation and Evolution of Planetary Systems and Detection of Habitable Worlds"

Ewa Szuszkiewicz informed the board that the focus is now on the white paper and engaging members. The aim is to have the white paper containing a working group plan ready by Autumn. It is expected that the work will be completed in the summer. Wolf highlighted the importance of having the plan ready in Sept. Working Groups are the backbone of EAI, and summer is ideal opportunity for plan activities to be launched in autumn. Additionally, Wolf Geppert encouraged he WG on plan splinter meetings for upcoming EPSC Conference.

WG "Planetary Environments and Habitability"

Ina Catalina Plesa reported that they are organizing an internal WG meeting for brainstorming and idea generation. Also she supported the idea for splinter meetings at EPSC. Wolf stressed that splinter meetings are a good idea for EPSC, as they work very well for kicking off working group activities and discussions.

Working Group "Evolution and Traces of Early Life and Life under Extreme Conditions"

Emmanuelle Javaux: First Online intergroup meeting expected in September. Topic of internal EAI seminar to be discussed and proposed. First step will be introductions. Group is large encompassing many different interests. Necessary to know who is involved and where interests lie to develop scope of working group.

Working Group "Biosignatures and the Detection of Life beyond Earth"

Jean Pierre de Vera: Working group is getting organized, preparation on a white paper for Icy Moons and plans for a white paper for Mars sample return.

WG “Historical, Philosophical, Societal and Ethical Issues in Astrobiology”

David Dunér informed about plans holding a conference and a summer school in 2022, since the last ones during the COST Action were very successful. Wolf indicated that good dates would be late spring-summer 2022 as it would be a good time for the community to be active again (the last summer school was in 2015). Another idea would be to use BEACON 2021 session as a meeting for first discussions.

WG: “The Pathway to Complexity: From Simple Molecules to First Life”

Carlos Briones: reminded about the transition from chemistry to biology. They will initiate a group of people to launch first plans in September and for an initial setup of the working group.. Carlos has to set up the final list of the participants. Discussions will be first started with Thomas Henning. Carlos invited EAI participants to email him or Thomas if they are interested in participating to the group.

Activity Working Groups:*WG “Policy and Funding”*

Nigel Mason reported that they will start to circulate the funding newsletter/list Nigel Mason proposed an electronic meeting at the end of the summer. Tilman Spohn will support Nigel in getting a list of participants together. Nigel Mason reminded that Europlanet is now doing webinar training. First webinar will be probably on fellowships, for young scientists.

WG “Field work and Field site Management”

Akos Kereszturi reported that the WG is preparing to select the research topics. There has been an enquiry set out what are the current plans of EAI members for the use of field sites and what further use may be possible if increased funding were made available. The working group would like to interview people who will do a field visit.

Wolf Geppert mentioned the idea of having official field sites for EAI. One of the main issues to field site preservation is careless or reckless exploitation (particularly in Iceland) is the touristic activities near those sites. Official field sites of the EAI will provide information about red tape, infrastructure, lab support, conservation, and protection issues for sites.

WG “Education”

Riho Mötlep reported that there will be a training event for school teachers with focus on micro- and nanosatellites in education.

Caterina Boccato asked Riho if the two working groups on education and outreach should meet before the end of July. She mentioned that many subjects are common between the 2 working groups and a collaboration could be very interesting.

Working group on “Dissemination and Intellectual Output”

Muriel Gargaud on the new encyclopedia that is being prepared: There are 7 main fields, with one editor per field. Each field included 5-10 subfields. ~45 people are in charge of the encyclopedia. The first edition was issued in 2011, second in 2015, 3rd expected in 2022 with 3000 entries received thus far. Currently authors are working for free.

Some issues remain with the publisher, Springer, especially concerning open access. For now, entries are being considered as a paper/archive. Discussions ongoing to make the encyclopedia open access.

Springer position: 11K euro to make the encyclopedia open access to all EAI institutions. But that is for the second edition (and not the living edition), not the current one that is prepared (3rd edition).

Springer also states that there will be no more funding for meetings for editors (an initial 10k support was budgeted for editors). MG asked if EAI should accept the proposal of Springer. It was noted that the encyclopedia is offered by Springer together with other packages to universities. Therefore it might not be necessary to accept the offer. The offer also needs to be approved electronically from the GA.

Wolf proposed that:

- 1) To send an enquiry to EAI institutions regarding whether or not they have free access to the encyclopedia through other packages from Springer
- 2) If they don't have access, one asks if they would agree for EAI to pay the 11K for access?

In addition, one should use the summer for thinking about an alternative medium that might be run under the EAI and alternative solutions for the encyclopedia. Tilman Spohn suggests that perhaps a reduction in the scope of the encyclopedia might be a good idea to alleviate the scope of the work and the (free) work required by editors.

European Astrobiology Campus; New developments

Kalle Kirsimäe reported on the telecon happening on 29/06 morning:

- 1) Organize on-line mini-courses to target young students and scientists in 2021. There will be weekly seminars meeting. Themes for those courses are being discussed at the moment.
- 2) The Summer courses planned for Torun in 2020n had to be postponed to 2021. The courses planned on Azores and Tartu are already starting organised for 2021.
- 3) A steering committee has been established a steering committee (Wolf suggests having an AbGRadCon member on this committee)

Science Fiction Project Team: Anthology and plans for the future.

Julie Novaková stated that the "Strangest of all" Anthology of science fiction was the first project of the team. It is currently freely available online. As a follow up project there is a grant currently available for brain theme. Would be ideal if writers and experts were able to collaborate to ensure all fiction is as scientifically accurate as possible.

Another project is to compile list of astrobiologically interesting fiction—including literature, theatre, film, television etc. Muriel Gargaud and Nathalie Vas-Deyres are preparing an online course that is centered around science fiction. This course should be added to the list of upcoming activities. Julie Novakova would like to co-ordinate a conference call for the working group in late July.

Wolf Geppert has been contacted by the community of Fuencaliente to develop an exhibition in a lighthouse on La Palma. EAI has been invited to design the Astrobiology exhibition room. Carlos Briones is interested to help on it. Emmanuelle Javaux mentioned an existing work "River of time" that could be updated and reused.

Industry Liaison:

Yiannis Tsamis will send a questionnaire to all the members to enquire about their strategies in cooperation with industries. The plan is to have a clean start after the summer.

Website

Wordpress has been identified as the new platform. The hard deadline for the creation of the website is the next GA but it is expected to be up and running by the end of this year.

Any other business

Wolf Geppert plan to organize another telecon in the middle of August, he will get back to the committee with propositions of the dates later.