



EAI
EUROPEAN
ASTROBIOLOGY
INSTITUTE

Telecon EAI Monday 19th October 2020
13:00 CEST

Participants

EAI

Wolf Geppert, Chair of EAI, Stockholm University, Sweden

Dennis Höning, VU, the Netherlands

Emmanuelle Javaux, University of Liège, Belgium

Ewa Szuszkiewicz, University of Szczecin, Poland

Ina Catalina Plesa, DLR, Germany

Jean Pierre de Vera, DLR, Germany

John Brucato, Vice Chair of EAI, INAF-Astrophysical Observatory of Arcetri, Italy

Julie Novaková, Charles University, Czech Republic

Muriel Gargaud, University of Bordeaux, France

Ruth-Sophie Taubner, University of Vienna, Austria

Yiannis Tsamis, Open University, United Kingdom

ESF

Emmanouil Detsis, ESF

Mariette Vandermersch, ESF

Agenda

1. BEACON 2021
2. Other events next year
3. How should the EAI deal with "big news" in astrobiology?
4. Progress of Working Groups and Project Teams. Focus: Planetary Environments and Habitability, Evolution and Traces of Early Life and Life under Extreme Conditions, Physics and Chemistry of Protoplanetary Disks.
5. Website and social media
6. Any other business

The Agenda has been reordered by the MC. The meeting started with point 5) website and social media, 3) How should EAI deal with big news and then followed the planned Agenda.

1. Website and social media

There will be a meeting of the website team planned on Friday 23 October to discuss the next steps for the website. ESF had a contact with a server holder and will present the offer during the meeting. The website will be constructed with Wordpress. Once the new website will be ready the switch will be done and it will be quick. The new website will have the same address : <https://europeanastrobiology.eu/>. The website will be presented to the MC and all comments will be welcome. ESF hopes to have the new website ready by the end of the year.

As widely known, EAI already present on other social medias (Facebook, etc). We have now more than 2500 followers on Facebook and around 1000 on Twitter.

2. How should the EAI deal with "big news" in astrobiology?

Wolf Geppert suggested to:

1. Update people about big news and, especially EAI institution involvement in ground-breaking new research on Facebook
2. Organize discussions with the scientific community and create debates, especially using the online seminars as an avenue
3. Have a database of experts and journalists to obtain their qualified opinion on the news.

Julie Novakova proposed that each WG should compile a list of experts. Wolf Geppert indicated that Emmanuelle Javaux and her WG are already preparing a similar list. Emmanuelle Javaux mentions the risk that sometimes the members of the EAI will not agree with the statements of the experts in this list. Wolf Geppert took the view that the opinion of the experts expressed on such matters cannot be automatically regarded as an official EAI opinion.

A debate started if the EAI should issue statement of the content of results and ongoing research. Muriel Gargaud opined that EAI needs to find a way to express opinion avoiding bad interpretations.

Wolf Geppert stated that EAI should try to facilitate discussions on controversial news by EAI's social media and that EAI also need to make very clear that any individual expression of an EAI member or the statement of any of the experts that will be part of the list cannot represent EAI opinion. He also took the view that the EAI should issue statements on ongoing research controversies only in exceptional cases only by the chair or another person named by the MC and after thorough discussion by the MC and the WG(s) involved.

3. BEACON 2021

Wolf Geppert suggested postponing BEACON to May 2022. This would bring about the following advantages:

- More time to plan and invite people
- Prepare the exhibition in Fuencaliente in order to present it during BEACON

- Hopefully better situation concerning the pandemic

However, some people have vouchers for the flights to BEACON 2020. Wolf will write an email to the participants to ask who has a voucher that will expire in 2021. Muriel suggests asking Iberia to postpone the expiring date in 2022. People who have hotel vouchers should also contact the hotel to know if the voucher can be valid for 2022 also.

The Committee approved the decision to postpone BEACON to May 2022.

Regarding other external events Wolf will contact NASA Astrobiology institute to ask them what they plan to do for the upcoming AbSciCon. Emmanuelle Javaux, who is an AbSciCon SOC member said that AbSciCon should be taking place in 2021. Wolf Geppert will contact Barbara Cavalazzi about the status of the EANA meeting in autumn 2021 in Portugal. Muriel Gargaud informed that the ISSOL Meeting is planned to happen 2021 in Quito, but nothing has been decided yet about it.

4. Other events next year

Wolf Geppert shortly reported about the other events planned next year:

- Red21 Summer school in LeTeich, June 2021
- Summer School in Torun, Poland in July 2021
- Micro-and Nano Satellites workshop and teachers' training event in Tartu, Estonia, August 2021
- Meeting on astrobiology and space missions on Mars Sample Return (MSR) in June/July, Höör, Sweden

5. Progress of Working Groups and Project Teams. Focus: Planetary Environments and Habitability, Evolution and Traces of Early Life and Life under Extreme Conditions, Physics and Chemistry of Protoplanetary Disks.

Planetary Environments and Habitability

Ana Catalina (Ina) Plesa and Dennis Höning reported that the WG met on October 5th with 11 participants (in total 83 members in the WG). They had discussions on the objectives of the WG as well as long term projects. They are preparing a list of focus subjects to be shared with all the working group members in the next meeting. A list of the WG members including keywords that describe the members' interests is being compiled (so far 32 members have provided entries). The next on-line meeting is planned in November (scheduled on 9th at 10am CET).

Evolution and Traces of Early Life and Life under Extreme Conditions:

Emmanuel Javaux reported that the WG had a 3h on-line meeting in October with 23 presentations, about 30 participants (85 members). Discussions focused on the question "What is the objective of EAI and the working group?" Main points were to build capacity and offer a coherent and collaborative approach to Astrobiology research. Important is to develop a rigorous scientific fact-based approach and philosophy to astrobiology-defend a strong European Astrobiology (with our non-european

partner institutions), to train the next generation of scientists to high quality science, to form one strong voice to get support for Astrobiology at the European level, an opportunity to have 'round table discussions' (for example at BEACON meetings), where we can discuss ideas to increase the credibility of the research, to practise to analyse data critically (focused on ECRs) and to educate the public.

Because of the broad diversity of topics and expertise, a decision has been taken to create 2 sub-groups: Extreme Life – Early Life, but keep the connection and not aim for splitting the group into 2 WG because of common resources (field areas, cell cultures, instruments) and to preserve interdisciplinarity. WG members also raised the necessity to involve more early career scientists in organisation of activities. The next meeting of the WG will be in December.

Wolf Geppert added that a lot of non-European scientists were participating in the meeting and there could be an opportunity to have joint events, e. g. meetings and summer schools in Australia and South Africa. Contacts have been already established with leading scientists in South Africa and Australia.

PT on Protoplanetary Disks:

The coordinators have recruited around 32 experts on all the sub-fields maintaining also a good gender and nationality balance. Online meetings and in-person meetings on the subject are planned over the next years.

Formation and Evolution of Planetary system and Detection of Habitable Worlds

Ewa Szuszkiewicz and Antonello Provenzale are preparing a white paper outlining the WG aims and projects, and they are currently receiving comments from the members. The WG count more than 100 interested people.

6. Any other business

Wolf Geppert announced that the next meeting will be organised in the end of November.