

EUROPEAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY EXPANDS ACTIVITIES, WITH JACOB AS PRESIDENT

Maurice Jacob, a member and former head of CERN's theory division, and a former president of the French Physical Society, is the newly elected president of the European Physical Society. He succeeds R. A. Ricci of the National Institute for Nuclear Physics in Legnaro, Italy, who served for three years as EPS president. The vice president of EPS is Norbert Kroo of Budapest's Solid-State Physics Institute, who is expected to assume the presidency in 1993.

On a visit with PHYSICS TODAY staff in New York, Jacob filled us in on some of EPS's more important recent initiatives. One concerns finances and a proposed reorganization of the society to make it more strictly a union of European physical societies. EPS currently has about 4500 individual members, but if it were reorganized as a union, as the council of Britain's Institute of Physics recommended in March, its membership would jump to around 50 000. A broader base could provide dues for expanded activities, including publication of journals, organization of conferences, a more important role in advising funding agencies, and joint projects with physicists and physics societies in East Europe.

Jacob emphasized that EPS has a dual structure: It is both an association of national societies and a set of specialized divisions cutting across national boundaries. The aim is to make most members of national societies EPS members as well, and in May the EPS council asked the new executive committee to propose a restructuring that would encourage wider membership.

Jacob reminded us that *Europhysics Letters* has been a success, and he told us that *Europhysics News*, the monthly bulletin of the European Physical Society, now has a full-time editor, Peter G. Boswell. The plan is to expand news coverage in *Europhysics News*, making use of a network of stringers on the model of the *CERN Courier*.

Jacob also told us that EPS has been discussing with the European Science Foundation in Strasbourg and the council of the European Community in Brussels the establishment of European conferences modeled on the Gordon Conferences that have been so successful and influential in the US. Like the Gordon Conferences, the European versions would be devoted to specialized topics, would last about five days each and would *not* publish proceedings. The idea is to provide a relaxed and informal environment in which participants can talk very freely, without fear of being quoted in the press or held to positions they might later regret. (Two such European conferences were organized in 1990, and six in 1991; eight are planned for 1992.)

The hope is that the EC will provide substantial support for quite an elaborate set of Gordon-like conferences, in several other fields as well as physics. In addition, Jacob said, EPS is trying to set itself up to act as an effective adviser to the EC's DG-XII, the division of the secretariat that is responsi-

ble for funding technology research (except for information technology, which is run by DG-XIII).

Regarding affiliations with physical societies to the East, Jacob said that there now are four physics societies vying for leadership in the USSR, and that EPS is waiting for the dust to settle. Since Jacob's visit, physical societies in two Baltic states have applied for membership.

EPS has established a supplementary secretariat in Budapest, and EPS Executive Secretary G. Thomas is now based there. In a report to members last spring, retiring EPS President Ricci said that the move is "aimed at providing the basis for fully integrating our colleagues in Eastern Europe into all aspects of the physics community's activities." EPS has secured foundation funding to send complimentary subscriptions of *Europhysics Letters* to Eastern Europe, and an agreement with IBM provides for setting up several academic computer centers in Eastern Europe, each equipped with an IBM 3090 machine.

—WILLIAM SWEET

LATIN AMERICAN PHYSICS FEDERATION CONSOLIDATES

At a recent Latin American symposium on physics, which took place in São Paulo in July, the Latin American Federation of Physical Societies held several meetings and decided to expand its activities on a number of fronts. FELASOFI (Federacion Latino Americana de Sociedades de Fisica) originated in the mid-1980s and currently has as members the physical societies of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Honduras and Venezuela.

At four meetings held during the Second Latin American Symposium on Physics, motions were approved to:

- ▷ publish a Latin American journal of physics

- ▷ resume publication of a FELASOFI bulletin

- ▷ publish a directory of Latin American physicists

- ▷ have each Latin American physics society do a national survey

- ▷ organize a Fifth Latin American Symposium on Experimental Physics.

During the Fourth Latin American Symposium on Experimental Physics, which was held in Bariloche, Argentina, two years ago, a series of Pan-American conferences in experimental physics took place, with organizational assistance from Leon Lederman and Roy Rubinstein of Fermilab. Small grants obtained by Lederman and Rubinstein also have provided some organizational seed