Annual Report 2016

Name of Division/Group/Committee

European Solar Physics Division

Name of Reporter *

Manolis K. Georgoulis

Development of the Division/Group in 2016 (1*)(2*) *

In 2016 the European Solar Physics Division and its committees continued to work in line with the Board’s guidance. The following describes the Division’s main activities over this year. The consensus within the Board was that 2016 marked another productive year for the Division.

Board Meetings *

The Board staged three (3) teleconferences, namely in April, October and December. The main discussion topics were the implementation of Division Awards and the organization of the next Division meeting, as described below. In addition, individual Board members and Division committees engaged in regular e-mail and skype discussion.

Conference and their statistics *

2016 was not a European Solar Physics Meeting (ESPM) year. Nonetheless, ESPD Board members organized and attended the Basic Space and Astrophysical Plasma (BSAP) session of the 2016 Plasma Physics Division (PPD) meeting in KU Leuven, Belgium. In addition, ESPD Board members attended and contributed to the organization of numerous scientific meetings. Implemented events included a special session in the European Geosciences Union (EGU) General Assembly (April), a discussion about the future of ESA’s Space Situational Awareness (ESA) Programme (May), a Symposium during the European Week of Astronomy and Space Science (EWASS) of the European Astronomical Society (EAS) (July) and two (2) workshops at the International Space Science Institute (ISSI) in Bern, Switzerland. These workshops addressed topics of solar flare prediction and magnetic helicity in solar magnetic structures, respectively.

The second half of 2016 dealt in part with the organization of the 15th European Solar Physics Meeting (ESPM-15), to take place in Budapest, Hungary, on 4 – 8 September, 2017 (web site: http://astro.elte.hu/ESPM-15/ ). Detailed statistics of gender and geographical distribution will be kept and made available after the meeting.

Prizes *

Following external suggestions, tentative discussions initiated in 2015 were cultivated and nearly finalized during 2016: the Board decided to implement three (3) Division prizes, namely a Senior Prize for distinguished, world-renowned solar physicists, a Young Scientist / Postdoc Prize for a very promising young scientist in one’s early stages after PhD completion, and a PhD Student Prize for PhD recipients of the previous calendar year. These awards reflect the Division’s statutes and bylaws but were not implemented so far, except from a best Student-Paper Award that was presented over the past two ESPMs, in Dublin (2014) and Rhodes (2011). The Division’s Prize Committee worked hard to draft the terms and requirements and propose them to the Board. Following a prolific discussion, these terms were practically finalized by the end of 2016. The evaluation of nominations will take place in the first half of 2017 and the awardees will be formally cited in a special ceremony during the ESPM-15 Division business meeting. The distinction diplomas will be accompanied by symbolic monetary or in-kind awards that will be funded by the Division’s envisioned income generated by the meeting.

Cooperation with other EPS Divisions/Groups *

In an initiative started by the ESPD, discussions were launched in 2015 between the Solar Physics and the Plasma Physics Divisions for collaboration in the Basic Space and Astrophysical Plasmas (BSAP) session, a standard session organized in each annual PPD meeting. The two Divisions worked in tandem with each other: in 2016, the BSAP session was practically co-organized by the PPD and the ESPD as a co-opted ESPD Board member was in the Scientific Organizing Committee and the Local Organizing Committee Chair of the PPD meeting in KU Leuven. As in 2015, the PPD accepted at least one ESPD suggestion for BSAP invited speakers. With the ESPM-15 underway, the PPD Board will be asked to suggest invited speakers for the planned ESPM-15 Fundamental Solar Plasma session.
Cooperation with Divisions/Groups of national physical societies*

Multiple ESPD Board members are also members of national physical and/or astronomical societies, informing the ESPD about current plans and participating/organizing sessions of solar-physics interest in national meetings.

Gender Policy*

The ESPD Board consists of 9 male and 7 female colleagues (56.3% vs. 44.7%, respectively).

Number of woman board members*

7

Co-operations with China, Japan, Korea, South-America (any other)*

China: Following the 2015 establishment of contact between the Board and the organizers of the first bilateral China-Europe (or Europe-China) solar physics meeting, the Division has pledged continual support to this and future meetings of the series. These meetings will be taking place every two years, alternatively at Chinese and European locations. Following discussion and collaboration in 2016, the first China-Europe Meeting was arranged for May 15 – 19 2017 in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China (http://cespm2017.csp.escience.cn/dct/page/1). Division Board members are (and will continue to be in the future) participating in this meeting’s Scientific Organizing Committee. The next meeting of the series will take place tentatively in Hvar Island, Croatia, in 2019.

Japan: There is mutual interest for collaboration in the space weather forecasting front: while Board members are involved in European-Commission and ESA projects devoted to space weather forecasting, the Japanese solar and space physics community launches the Project for Solar-Terrestrial Environment Prediction (PSTEP - http://www.pstep.jp/?lang=en). In 2016 Japanese colleagues already asked for enhanced communication, interaction and exchange of expertise in this, with Division Board members responding positively.

USA: Again in the area of space weather forecasting, NASA’s Community Coordinated Modeling Center (CCMC) has also called for collaboration in the forecasting of solar eruptions. Focused discussions took place during ESWW13 in November 2016, in view of the International CCMC-LWS Workshop to be organized in Cape Canaveral, Florida, USA, in April 2017 (http://ccmc.gsfc.nasa.gov/CCMC-LWS_Meeting/). Multiple Board members are involved in the organization and will co-lead multiple focus teams in the meeting.

Special activities in 2016

The Division is intensely and consistently extrovert, with many Board members involved in seven (7) European Commission FP7 and Horizon 2020 projects in 2016. Late in 2016, a Board member was awarded an ERC Consolidator grant. The total budget of these grants is ~18.5 MEUR, with a 2.3 MEUR mean budget per grant.

ESPD Board members representing the Division in the 2016 EPS Council Meeting pushed for an enhancement of the EPS visibility utilizing the newly established EPS Office in Brussels. Concrete arguments were made and heard by the EPS Executive Committee. The Division fully endorses this ambitious initiative and the newly appointed Policy Officer, Dr. Walter van Doninck, and remains at the Society’s disposal for contribution and involvement.

The Division participated enthusiastically in the Meeting between the Society and D/G leaders in May 2016 in Brussels. In this gathering, the Division gave a brief presentation of its activities and pursuits.

For the first time since its establishment, the Division actively aims to form and maintain a small operating budget for the participation of a delegate to annual Society Council meetings and for supporting its Prizes. The decision was taken in 2016 in accordance to the Division’s statutes and bylaws and will be accomplished over the forthcoming ESPM-15 with a small addendum applied to participant registration fees.

The Division succeeded in attracting funding in 2016 for the organization of the ESPM-15. Division benefactors are, so far, the European Solar Telescope (EST), European Space Agency (ESA), the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Budapest's Eotvos University. Further support activities will be pursued in 2017.
ESPD Board members gave several public outreach talks in 2016, enhancing public awareness on solar activity and its formal European study group, the ESPD.

Suggestions and recommendations

Distinguished members of the European solar physics community, followed by Chinese counterparts, contacted the ESPD, asking it to support the China-Europe solar physics meeting initiative. The Division immediately responded positively.

Specific suggestions were made to the Division by co-opted members, aiming to help facilitating a better ESPM-15 organizations and organizing the Division’s finances. The Board is working on the evaluation of these suggestions.

As discussed above, the communication between the ESPD Board and the EPS Executive Committee on ideas to enhance the EPS visibility will continue.

Any special communication

Work with the Prizes and Awards committee on the first implementation of the three (3) Division Prizes (Senior, Young Researcher, PhD). Most prominently, the assignment of a Senior Prize Committee consisting of only one Board member and four (4) external and world-renowned experts that are already been nominated by the Board.

Participation in the EPS Council Meeting and further shaping the Society’s opinion and supporting its Brussels initiative. In addition, the Division will continue to support the Society in terms of nominations, expert opinions, etc.

Organization and attendance of the first China-Europe Solar Physics Meeting and other meetings of solar physics interest, at the same time promoting the interaction between the Society and international solar physics organizations and consortia.

Organization and implementation of the ESPM-15, asking for the contribution of the PPD in the Fundamental Plasma Session.

Organization of Board elections during ESPM-15, with the Division President elected directly by the meeting attendees. Facilitation of the smooth transition from the current Board to the next.

A possible Division position paper on the importance of space weather understanding and forecasting. This will be aiming to raise awareness both within the Division and the public, enrich the context for the Society’s Brussels representation and boost participation of mainly young solar physicists in EC and ESA projects in this theme.

Info

(1) membership, chairpersons, co-option, sections, constitutional matters (2) Submit the list of Board members as annex