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FEATURE STORY



ASEPS participants gather on the steps of the EPOCHAL Center in Tsukuba. Image: Physical Society of Japan

A report from ASEPS

[Global Science]

Even though the international collaboration in physics research has a long history, Europe-Asia cooperation has remained quite weak, compared to the collaboration between Europe and Americas or Asia and Americas, until the first Asia-Europe Physics Summit, or ASEPS held in Tsukuba, Japan from 24 to 26 March 2010.

Towards a true equilibrium between Americas, Europe, and Asia

This summit was supported by CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) in France and by JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) in Japan with KEK as the administrative organization. The EPS (European Physical Society) and the AAPPS (Association of Asia Pacific Physical Societies) were participating, and both presidents were jointly calling for physicists to attend the summit.

"A balanced cooperation between Europe, Asia, and the Americas is crucial for large scale physics research projects to succeed. ASEPS was held in a hope that this meeting reinforces the Asia-Europe cooperation as a first step towards a true equilibrium between the three main regions, and I believe we made quite a successful step" said Prof. Mitsuaki Nozaki from KEK and co-chair of the summit with Dr. Denis Perret-Gallix from CNRS, France.

With over 200 enthusiastic participants the summit brought together ministry and funding agency representatives, research institutes leaders and researchers in charge of large projects from 31 countries and regions, including the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Another goal for ASEPS was to get the developing countries more involved in basic research in the hope to help bridging the knowledge or digital gap. "We made a big leap to this matter, too. There were so many participants from Asian developing countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Thai and Nepal. They did show a strong appeal to pursuing the ASEPS initiative whose main goal is forging a stronger Asia-Europe cooperation in Physics", said Nozaki. ASEPS also welcomed representative from African Physical Society beyond the Europe-Asia connections.

Perfect field for global science research

ASEPS covered all areas of physics research, from nanotechnology and energy to medical research and accelerator development. It went even further than that: it looked at the history of collaboration between Asia and Europe and combines lessons learnt from the past with plans for future projects.

"Physics research is the perfect field for initiating the building of a global scientific research governance, because physics is covering a wide scope of research activities. In addition, the physics community has a long experience in international collaboration. We have to



The keynote lecture given by Dr. Makoto Kobayashi, Honorary Professor Emeritus of KEK, and 2008 Nobel prize laureate in Physics. Image: Physical Society of Japan

formed under AAPPS and EPS will initiate this effort by laying down the foundation of a dedicated framework that would boost the level of the Euro-Asia collaborations in physics.

"ASEPS in Tsukuba has started a new movement in research, a movement for a better communication between research, industry, funding agencies and the society at large, a

identify the obstacles hampering Europe-Asia cooperation and to develop and share a common vision for the future," said Perret-Gallix.

The summit agenda included reports on projects each participating countries and regions were working on, including the keynote lecture given by Dr. Makoto Kobayashi, Honorary Professor Emeritus of KEK, and 2008 Nobel prize laureate in Physics, who explained KEK's scientific activities and international collaboration efforts.

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ASEPS Tsukuba Declaration

The main outcome was the "ASEPS Tsukuba Declaration" signed by Jie Zhang, President of the AAPPS and Maciej Kolwas, President of the EPS which acknowledges the importance of strengthening the existing cooperation and implementing new programs in physics research between Asia and Europe to reach a balanced cooperation at the world level. But the Declaration mainly endorses the formation of a task force to examine the roadblocks to Physics research cooperation and actions to overcome them. Another charge for the task force is to propose an appropriate structure to develop and coordinate the Asia-Europe cooperation. "The formation of a task force will give a more formal organization to ASEPS" said Nozaki.

It is a well-known fact to the physics community that any future large-scale project will be a global undertaking, and all regions have to work together to make science projects a reality. The task force to be

movement to boost the cooperation between European and Asian countries on the road to a more efficient and balanced global cooperation that physics nowadays requires. This movement will find its full expression in a well structured multi-lateral organization." said Perret-Gallix.

Next meeting will be held in 18 months in the fall of 2011 in Wroclaw, Poland that will bear, at this time, the Presidency of Europe.



Jie Zhang, President of the Association of Asia Pacific Physical Societies and Maciej Kolwas, President of the European Physical Society signed a Statement on the first day of the summit. Image: Physical Society of Japan

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