

ASSOCIATION FRANCAISE POUR L'AVANCEMENT DES SCIENCES

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Le Président

Professor
Jean-Patrick Connerade
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Dear Jean-Patrick,

Thank you for communicating to us the plan for the Euroscience Open Forum 2004. This is a very ambitious project, a first for European science communication and I would like to pledge the full support of AFAS to that enterprise.

Needless to say, we will advertise the event to our members and try to get them to participate and go to Stockholm. More importantly, at this early stage, we have begun to reflect on the contribution we could bring to the contents, by organising or co-organising one of the workshops.

There are two topics that seem to stand out and on which I would like to have your reactions:

As you will remember , we organised a meeting in Marseille in April 2002 on the general theme of sharing the Knowledge across the Mediterranean, between European countries and North Africa . This event "World Med 2002" attracted a lot of interest (we had 850 attendees out of which 160 from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia). As a follow-up, we are in the process of setting-up a permanent network "EuroMed-NET" for the purpose of exchanging ideas (and finding synergies) about common research projects coming from institutes, enterprises, associations on both sides of the Mediterranean. The initial response to our proposal has been enthusiastic and we hope to have a formal start by Spring of 2003. The main purpose of EuroMed-NET would be to hold periodic meetings so that it can play its role as a

“clearinghouse” of new ideas. The initial topic that we have retained as our priorities are: “Broadband communications between European institutes and Moroccan universities, Water desalination, Energies for the future, and SESAME, a synchrotron radiation UNESCO backed project as a prototype of a regional research Centre located in MENA region. A plenary meeting of EuroMed-NET in Stockholm in the framework of ESOFs 2004 would, in my mind, make a lot of sense.

The second theme is along the line of a topical workshop that we organised in Archamps (close to Geneva) in September 2002, already as a joint venture between AFAS and the Leman section of Euroscience. This was about the massive transportation of goods by road, which has extremely damaging environmental consequences in the Alpine valleys. This is will only grow with the accession of new countries to EU and the subsequent growth in intra-European commerce. The problem is not confined to Alpine valleys and as you know, the issue of Sustainable Transportation is a priority agenda within the Commission. It is not generally known that technology can and should play a role in possible solutions to that societal problem.

These are preliminary ideas and we still have to look into the ways and means of implementing these projects, but I would very much appreciate to have your reaction to the above.

Robert Klapisch