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Dear Jean-Patrick

The BA (British Association for the Advancement of Science) is delighted to support the proposed EuroScience Open Forum in 2004, following discussions with EuroScience on potential partnership.

The BA is probably best known for the annual conferences, now termed the annual Festival of Science, which it has organised since 1831 in different cities in the UK (and occasionally abroad). The most recent Festival, held at Leicester University in September 2002 brought together over 400 scientists and social scientists with around 4000 visiting public ranging from older school students to the UK Government Minister for Science and the UK Government Chief Scientific Advisor. Our parallel programme of innovative hands-on science activities attracted another 4500 younger school children (ages 8 - 13). The Festival regularly commands unprecedented press coverage for science and the social implications arising from the latest developments and this year around 150 science journalists attended and reported the proceedings.

We would be keen to explore involvement in the EuroScience Open Forum programme for 2004 and believe we have particular expertise and experience which would be of use. Possibilities for our involvement include:

* Running a daily event similar to the BA 'x-change' event at our Festival: an informal discussion format bringing together the best of scientific speakers with interested members of the public in a relaxed environment. This event is designed to maximise the potential for dialogue between scientists and others and we are keen to adapt the format for other events.

* Leading a parallel conference of European organisations like the BA, concerned with engaging the public with science and scientists, to explore the role of such organisations across Europe.

* Leading a session or sessions to share experience on some of the BA's own programmes, for example 'sciBars' (public discussions held in bars and cafes), interactive and mass participation scientific experiments and dialogue activities involving teenagers (all of which we have recent experience with to share). We might also work through EUSCEA (the recently formed European networking group for organisers of science festivals) to organise a meeting to bring expertise in from across Europe to share common concerns and interests.

We also note that the BA Festival of Science in 2005 will be in Dublin, and could be a useful opportunity for an ESOF presence between biennial events.

With best wishes

Dr Roland Jackson
Chief Executive

the British Association
for the advancement of science

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