

Manifesto: European Synchrotron User Organisation (ESUO)

The availability of synchrotron radiation has a strong impact on the developments of many scientific disciplines. Multidisciplinary research activities in structural biology, material sciences or earth and environmental sciences, for example, are strongly dependent on its use. Due to continuous growth in user demand for synchrotron radiation, the number of large facilities in Europe is increasing significantly. Besides the world-leading facility ESRF, national sources like SOLEIL and DIAMOND have been finished recently and further sources, like PETRA III, ALBA, MAX IV and Polish national source are under construction or in the planning phase. Altogether they will give the European users the opportunity to find the most suitable facility and optimal beamline for their research.

However, access to these facilities does strongly depend on funding issues. With the exception of ESRF, access for non-national users to the nationally financed sources has been usually supported by European funds through the so-called Integrated Infrastructure Initiative (I3) provided via FP6 and FP7 programme calls. Unfortunately, the actual budget provided by the EU for these activities has been reduced. Moreover, there is discussion of further reductions and the transfer of funding responsibility completely to national programmes.

Distribution of the EU money provided by I3 and discussion on new activities to raise the EU funding is guided by the ELISA – European Light Source Activities- steered by a council representing the majority of the European synchrotron radiation facilities. In order to respond better to user needs the ELISA management is going to expand the council by facility-independent user representatives. This process has already been initiated by inviting some user representatives as observers to their council meeting in Munich in June 8, 2009.

These first ELISA user representatives have agreed to form an *ad-hoc* committee for the establishment of a European Synchrotron User Organization (ESUO), *i.e.* a council of users working with synchrotron radiation. This initiative is guided by the conviction that access to European Synchrotron Radiation Facilities must be a genuine European mission. It cannot only depend on national interest but also must promote trans-national activities to stimulate science in Europe. EU funding for European projects must also support access to these large facilities by European users.

For several countries these access programmes are the only way to perform synchrotron radiation experiments.

At present we propose to form the European Synchrotron User Organization (ESUO) based on "One Country – One Vote" principle as is common in many European organizations. This body is planned to comprise representatives of each User Organization associated with the various European synchrotron radiation facilities. The aim of the ESUO is to coordinate the synchrotron radiation user activities and to facilitate access to the most appropriate beamline within Europe. The members of the *ad-hoc* committee are convinced that trans-European access to large facilities is a genuine mission for the European Union. Therefore ESUO will prepare documents supporting a new future European Access programme. As an umbrella organization ESUO can support the activities and formation of national and facility-related user organizations and stimulate discussions on unified beamline and beamtime application standards. The ESUO has great potential to be a beneficial influence for all synchrotron radiation users at all facilities in Europe. Therefore we ask each European country to propose one delegate to ESUO who can either be appointed by the respective national user organization or if such an organization does not exist, by a group of synchrotron users of the country.

Considering the time table of European Commission for new calls, the first meeting of ESUO is planned for the end of November 2009 in order to discuss a first draft of a memorandum of understanding and a letter of intent to European Commission. The names of the national delegates should be sent to the coordinator of the initiative, Ullrich Pietsch, as soon as possible.

Ad-doc committee for formation of European User Organization:

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