

## **The Future of European Transnational Access for Synchrotrons and FELs**

Dear colleague:

We believe that you will be as concerned as we are about the future of the European Commission support of transnational access. It is our duty to inform you about recent events that, unfortunately, enhance our concerns.

For many years, first with bilateral contracts with facilities and then with the Integrated Infrastructure Initiative IA-SFS, European Commission funding made it possible for thousands of scientists to access synchrotrons and FELs based on merit, eliminating both national barriers and practical financial problems. This transformed the network of European facilities into a formidable, world-leading integrated system. The impact is particularly positive for colleagues based in countries with no synchrotrons and FELs: they can, in practice as well as in principle, use top-level instruments without being forced to permanent emigration.

It is important to note that the IA-SFS has been selected as one of the 40 “success stories” of the 6th Framework Programme to be included in a publication, edited by the European Commission, that will be distributed to the general public, National and Regional authorities, European Parliament, Delegations and Representations of the European Union all over the world.

Unfortunately, recent events are threatening the very future of this successful strategy. ELISA, the proposal that continues IA-SFS, is likely to be funded at a sharply reduced level with real cuts exceeding 60%. Similar problems affect other types of facilities: so there is increasing concern that European transnational access itself will be in jeopardy in the near future.

We believe that this is a strategic mistake that will undermine decades of efforts towards the integration of large facilities in Europe and penalize tens of thousands of European scientists. The concerned users should be made aware of the situation and make an informed decision on how to react.

Concerted actions in that sense have already started but a broader grass-root approach might be needed. We would be personally grateful if you could visit the Web page <http://www.elettra.eu/ELISA/questionnaire/> and use it to communicate with us in that sense. Whereas no immediate action is planned, we would like to know that you are indeed concerned about this issue and its impact on European science.

With many thanks for your attention and our best regards

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*President of the IA-SFS Council*

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*User representatives in the IA-SFS Council*