

Accelerator conferences go global

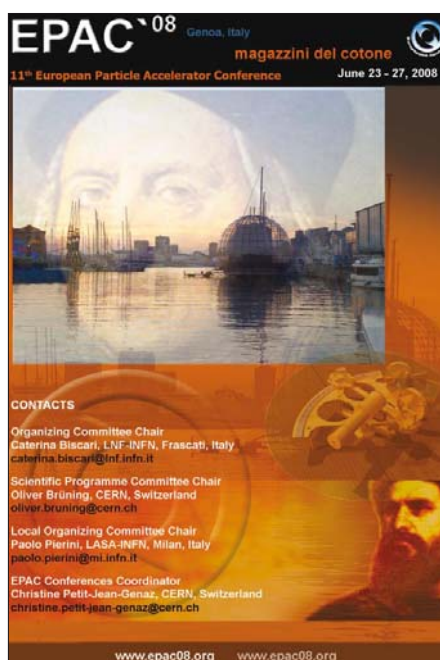
Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz, co-ordinator of the EPAC conferences, looks to the future of accelerator conferences in an increasingly global era.

The European Particle Accelerator Conference (EPAC) appeared on the accelerator conference scene in 1988 as a biennial conference. The aim was to alternate in even years with the North American Particle Accelerator Conference (PAC), which in odd years since the mid-1960s stood as the only conference catering to the needs of the world's accelerator scientists.

The inaugural EPAC took place in Rome and immediately became a victim of its own success, attracting double the number of anticipated participants. Some described the event as "controlled chaos", others labelled it "charmingly Latin". Many anecdotes marked the early and subsequent events, but the series has gone from strength to strength, attracting in excess of a thousand full-time participants at such exciting venues as Nice, Berlin, London, Barcelona, Stockholm, Vienna, Paris, Lucerne and Edinburgh. Each successive event vied to outshine the previous venues in organizational efficiency, interesting scientific programmes and the many cultural and scientific events taking place on the fringes of the conferences themselves.

In 1998, 10 years after EPAC began, the first Asian Particle Accelerator Conference (APAC) took place in Tsukuba, Japan, on a three-year cycle. While the conferences themselves resembled the European and North American versions, their style was inevitably cramped by the competition from EPAC and PAC. Travel budgets do not increase, and if there was a choice of conference, APAC often suffered.

While a move to a three-year cycle for PAC and EPAC was mooted in 1998, the



EPAC '08 in Genoa will mark the end of 20 years of European PAC conferences.

topic remained somewhat on hold until 2005 when arguments for an international conference became more insistent. These included: reducing the ever-increasing number of conferences; streamlining events to make better use of resources; and giving Asia better visibility in accordance with its extensive and exciting accelerator activities.

While EPAC's organizing committee, the European Physical Society Accelerator Group (EPS-AG), embraced the idea, a fair amount of soul-searching continued in North America until early this year. It was then that the American Physical Society

Division of Physics of Beams (APS-DPB), an essential partner in the PAC organization, supported PAC's move to join EPAC and APAC in a three-year cycle, intermeshed with a smaller North American PAC in odd years. The PAC '07 organizing committee discussed the question at its meeting in Albuquerque two months later (see p29) and voted unanimously along the same lines.

While many issues must be discussed, understood and agreed upon between the future organizers of the international series, the first conferences are already scheduled for Kyoto, Japan, in 2010, followed by Valencia, Spain, in 2011 and a venue to be decided in North America in 2012.

The last conference in the EPAC series will take place in 2008 in Genoa, Italy – fittingly, the country of its birth. The conference poster is filled with significance – no prizes for recognizing Christopher Columbus and Marco Polo. EPAC has thus come full circle in its 20 years. During this period, the world has grown smaller, international travel has become cheaper, and accelerator projects have become increasingly diversified and global, with collaborators from around the world meeting more frequently.

The time is ripe for the three regional accelerator conferences to merge into one event. Exciting times undoubtedly lie ahead in facing the challenge of making the future conferences as successful as the former regional events. We wish our Asian colleagues much success in the organization of the first in the new series.

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