

A Presidency Perspective

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This editorial will be the last that I write for EPN after two years as EPS President. Building on the exceptional platform that I inherited from Luisa Cifarelli and the many presidents before me, I have had the great honour to serve EPS and to see it develop further in a number of important directions.

From a personal perspective, it was extremely rewarding to see at first-hand the tremendous strength of European physics, but it was also very eye-opening to learn of the major challenges that many of EPS's members face in promoting the importance of physics in general, and maintaining a critical mass of membership. EPS's community of 42 national societies extends well beyond the boundaries of the European Union, and includes many countries that have been facing great difficulties in funding science and education for decades. But it has been truly inspiring for me to see the personal commitment and dedication shown by physicists to continue to promote the discipline and to work hard to encourage students and young researchers into the field. I am sure that I am not the first EPS president to discover that EPS is a far more complex society than it may seem at first sight! Supporting physicists across such a broad geographical area with very different levels of resources is already challenging, but then of course one has to factor in the (sometimes very large) differences in day-to-day concerns and working practices between the diverse thematic areas of the subject. Determining how best to serve the European physics community and how best to respond to the many specific questions that arise (seemingly on a daily basis!) is not easy.

But I think that when one reviews the many accomplishments of EPS since its foundation back in 1968, it is safe to say that we are at our most effective when we play to our particular strength to bringing different parties together towards a common objective, and when we initiate actions that leverage our unique "European" mandate. I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that the EPS community has tremendous influence and real power to improve our world when we set goals and work together. I now pass the baton to Christophe Rossel, who will serve as President during the International Year of Light, and as EPS continues its many ongoing actions in education, outreach, and in promoting physics on the European level. I wish him all the very best for the next two years. It remains for me to simply express my appreciation once again to all EPS members for having entrusted me with this responsibility, and my sincere thanks to the EPS Executive Committee, the Secretary General and all the Secretariat staff for their help and support over the last two years.