

THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SESSION “ASTROMETRY WITH SMALL TELESCOPES” Bucharest, Romania, 22–23 October 2004

The European Astronomical Society (EAS) was founded in 1990. It was the first step towards a unified Europe as regards astronomy.

The South-Eastern countries became immediately EAS members, bringing along an important scientific potential but also the large consequences of a long isolation, and of a poor financial support. Soon they realized that all of this has to be erased only by working together. In 2003 they discovered and were discovered by the UNESCO Office in Venice, Italy – the Regional Bureau for Science in Europe (ROSTE). The Sub-Regional European Astronomical Committee (SREAC) was established within the framework of the project “Enhancing Astronomical Research and Observation in South-East Europe and Ukraine” of the UNESCO-ROSTE. Its main objectives, established during its second meeting held in Bucharest on 23–24 October are to elaborate and implement a sub-regional strategy for the development of astronomy in South-East Europe and Ukraine and to strengthen astronomical co-operation in the sub-region, as well as between the region and the countries outside.

To this end, SREAC organized research workshops on given themes. The first one was devoted to astrometry.

“The Future Development of Ground-Based Astrometry” (FDGBA) was founded in 2000, during the XXIVth General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union and was approved for the next three years during the XXVth IAU GA, as a working group of the Division 1.

As Newsletter No. 1 of the IAU Commission 8 announced, “The post-Hipparcos era has brought an element of uncertainty as to the goals and future programs for all of ground-based astrometry”. The WG had as main objectives to identify such programs and make assessments of the whole situation including available instrumentation. As its statutes specifies, it has “to identify scientifically important programs that can be realized using ground-based astrometric or related observations, and to study what kind of modifications, upgrades or additions to the existing instruments should be performed in order to provide useful astronomical information with necessary accuracy, keeping in mind what the future astrometric satellites will contribute.”

A final objective that we see for this working group is the identification of programs that could be made on instruments that are either insufficiently used or are working on projects that have no significant value for present day astrometry. A major reason for this is that these instruments can be used as they are or with not too

expensive modifications to teach students in astronomy how to use telescopes and at the same time to contribute in a significant way to astronomy.

The WG organized three international meetings (Munich 2001, Bucharest 2002, Sydney 2003), the fourth one (Bucharest, 22–23 October 2004) being sponsored by UNESCO-ROSTE.

The main problems discussed during the last meeting were the following:

- Techniques and software on narrow-field CCD astrometry using ground-based telescopes;
- Observations and data processing of radio-stars, asteroids, mutual phenomena of Solar system bodies, KBO's;
- Theoretical and observational aspects concerning the dynamics of the Solar system;
- Contribution of ground-based astrometry to the improvement of celestial and local reference systems.

The communications (invited, oral or poster) are presented in this volume, published with the same moral and financial support of UNESCO-ROSTE, as a supplement of the Romanian Astronomical Journal.

The consistent support of Professors Howard Moore and Alec Boksenberg, as well as of Ms Iulia Nechifor, in the organization of this meeting is duly acknowledged.

THE EDITORS