

Bill Gates' EuroScience initiative surprised president of EuroScience

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At the Government Leaders Forum in Prague Wednesday 2 February, Bill Gates announced a new Microsoft Initiative called EuroScience (full story [here](#)) in his keynote speech to over 500 government leaders and public officials. The 40 million dollar Microsoft version of EuroScience is a partnership scheme between the software company and European research institutions offering PhD and Post-Doc grants for students under strict licence conditions.

The already existing Euroscience Association was created in 1997 and has more than 2100 individual and 31 institutional members. In August 2004 it organised the first pan-european scientific meeting in Stockholm, EuroScience Open Forum 2004, with more than 1800 participants. A number of very prominent European scientists and people interested in science are member of Euroscience. Among others is the former European Commissioner for Research, Philippe Busquin a number of Nobel laureates and former research ministers.

Euroscience president Jean Patrick Connerade says:

"Mr Gates does not approve of software piracy, so I am sure he does not intend to steal our name. Euroscience is a registered Association of scientists who give up time voluntarily in support of European Science. We have members in forty European countries and, with the help of sponsors, we organise ESOF, a pan-European Forum on all the sciences, to which thousands of people come.

"Three hundred and fifty journalists attended the last ESOF in Stockholm. It was widely featured in the international press, even making the front page of the Financial Times. Officers of the American Association for the Advancement of Science were invited, so American scientists also know about us. The President of Euroscience works in support of the Marie Curie Programme of the European Union, and there are registered websites with full reports of our numerous activities (see www.euroscience.org).

"Euroscience is also present in a number of European advisory and science policy bodies and we make statements on European research and research policy on a regular basis. With the new name confusion it will be difficult to see if it is the European research community or Microsoft who comments on the Lisbon declaration etc. as Mr Gates did this week.

"If Mr Gates wants to help us by injecting millions of dollars into Euroscience, then that is wonderful, but I am surprised: as the elected President of Euroscience, I was not consulted before Mr Gates made his speech to the Government Leaders' Forum in Prague. I would like to understand better what his plans really are. I am sure Microsoft would never steal the name of an European Association of scientists to further its activities, so I can only assume at this point that he really does intend to support us. More cash is of course exactly what the Euroscience Association needs".

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