

European particle physics sets course for the future

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"Particle physics has an exciting future" : this was the key message emerging from the Open Symposium on particle physics strategy in Europe, which concluded at Orsay, France, today.

Organised by the CERN Council Strategy Group, this Symposium is the first of a series of events that will conclude in Lisbon on 14 July 2006, when the Group will present its long-term vision for particle physics in Europe to the 20 European states of the CERN Council.

The aim of the Symposium was to allow the Strategy Group to hear the opinions of the European particle physics community before distilling them into a strategy coordinated at the European level. Participation was high, with close to 400 scientists from all over Europe, as well as representatives from North America and Asia. More than 70 scientists participated remotely through an interactive webcast. Discussion was lively, with many enthusiastic contributions from participants about exciting new physics opportunities.

The process that began in Orsay this week is an important step for particle physics in Europe, recognising the need for full coordination across the continent in an increasingly globalised field. "The high level of participation in the workshop," said Professor Enzo Iarocci, President of CERN Council, "is a clear sign of a vibrant research community, one that endorses the process of defining strategy at the European level, and one that is eager to couple world-class research with good stewardship of public resources."

When CERN was founded in 1954, its governing body, the Council, was charged with the vision of promoting coordination and activity in fundamental physics research in Europe. With the growing globalisation of particle physics, witnessed by the 85 nationalities represented at Large Hadron Collider project (LHC) currently under construction at CERN, the Council decided to take a further step towards realising the vision of CERN's founding convention.

The Strategy Group is co-chaired by Professor Ken Peach (Chair of the CERN Scientific Policy Committee) and Professor Torsten Åkesson (Chair of the European Committee for Future Accelerators). The Orsay symposium will be followed by a one-week workshop held at the DESY Zeuthen Laboratory near Berlin, Germany, in May, at which the Strategy Group will develop its long-term vision. The resulting Strategy Document will be presented to the CERN Council at a special meeting to be held in Lisbon on 14 July 2006.

Professor Åkesson said “this has been a very important event in the Strategy Group process, with very clear presentations of the issues by some brilliant young researchers in the field, and vigorous debate about the future directions and opportunities. This has provided us with the essential input that we need for the Zeuthen workshop.”

Professor Peach said “on behalf of the Strategy Group, we would like to thank our colleagues from LAL for the organisation of this Symposium, which contributed enormously to its success. It is important that the strategy that emerges from this process reflects the views of the particle physics community.”

Source: CERN

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