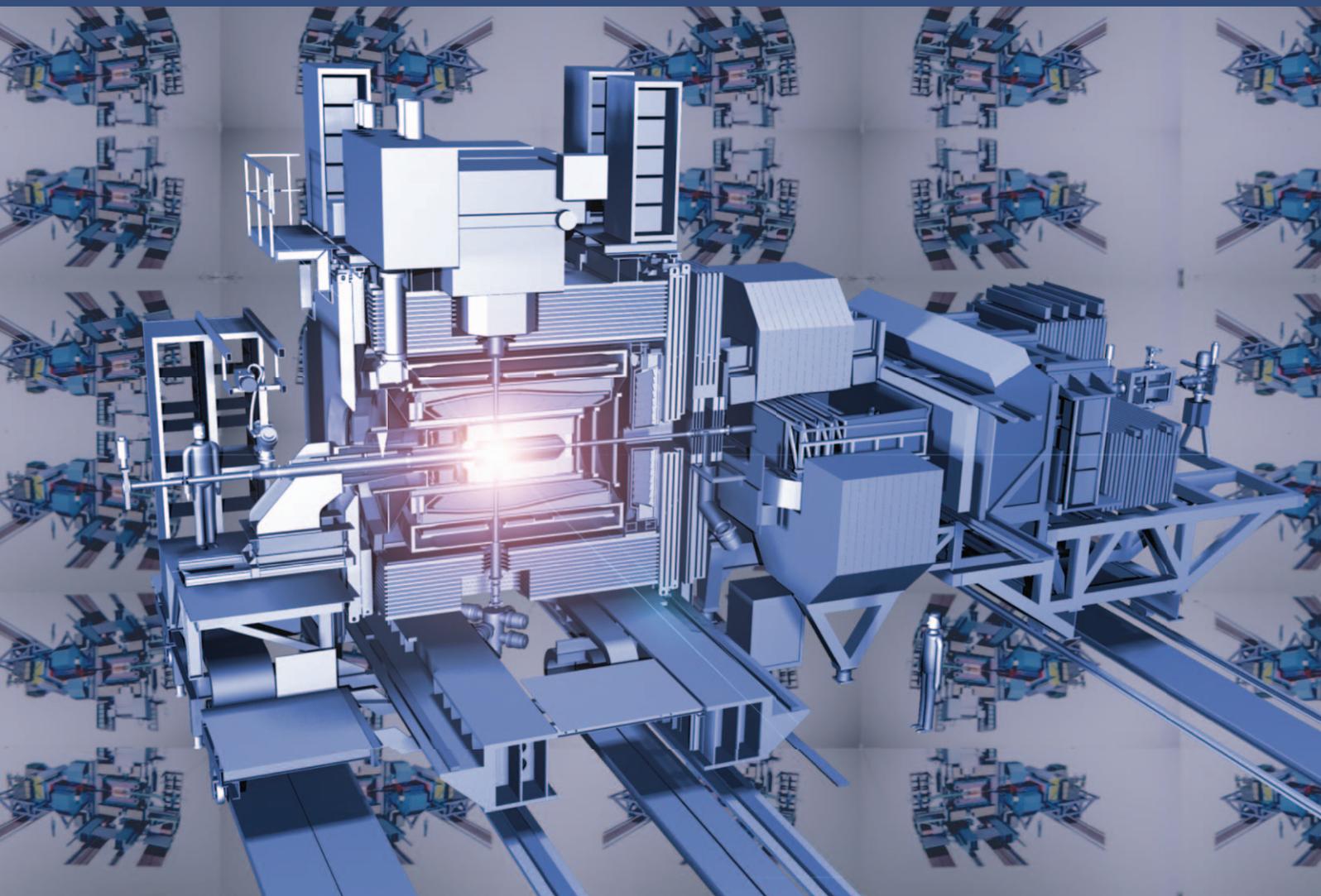


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ESF After ESF: The Launch of Science Connect



Figure 1. The ESF-Science Connect launch event in Strasbourg City Hall on 3 April 2017 was attended by senior figures from the worlds of research, academia, political actors, and public life.

When the European Science Foundation (ESF) was created in 1974, the case was made for an organization that would bring together the continent's leading scientists and funding agencies to advance European science. ESF was set up as a coordinating body for Europe's research funding and research performing organizations. Over the four decades that followed, our organization took on the tasks of supporting cross-border collaborative research and on setting strategic science agendas for Europe, and it has achieved an enormous and lasting impact on the science community within Europe and at the international level.

ESF has supported over 2,000 programs and networks, gathering more than 300,000 scientists from 186 coun-

tries through funding from 80 Member Organizations in 30 countries. It has also enabled the creation or nurtured the development of six Expert Boards and Committees in various thematic areas, including the Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee (NuPECC). Most of the scientists who have thus become involved with ESF over the years continue to put their trust in our organization. ESF has contributed to some of the most important policy and scientific developments that have taken place over that period of intense European evolution.

Another period has started since 2010. Although our traditional mission of funding programs and networks has unfortunately stopped, ESF was able to adapt in order to survive. Not sur-

prisingly, it is through our expertise in evaluating, funding, and managing research programs and networks, and through the overall heritage of ESF, that we are now able to offer new services to the community at large. Our team of experts has an excellent understanding of the needs of the European Research Area and we also have longstanding connections throughout the international research community.

On 3 April 2017 I was delighted to mark the establishment of Science Connect (Figures 1 and 2), the ESF's scientific services division and the core of our future mission. After 43 years of success in stimulating European research through our networking, funding, and co-ordination activities, the ESF will continue to contribute



Figure 2. The President and Chief Executive with Dr Gabriele-Elisabeth Körner, NuPECC Executive Scientific Secretary, and colleagues and staff from the former MatSEEC expert committee.

strongly to the development of the European Research Area.

We will do this by enabling and supporting the science community and science stakeholders with unique strengths, insights, and technical capabilities—partnering with customers in leading successful projects and facilitating informed decision making through evidence-based science and through a wide range of support services. In brief, our functions cover five key areas:

- Peer review—where we identify the best research and optimize the use of our partners' internal resources.
- Evaluation—where we work to maximize the impact of policies and programs to facilitate the achievement of research excellence.
- Career tracking—where we generate high quality, reliable information on supply and demand for doctorate holders and their overall availability and mobility in the European Research Area.
- Programme and Project Management and Administration—this alleviates the administrative burden on research infrastructures and contributes to research success.
- Host for several internationally recognized Expert Boards and

Virtual Institutes—where we provide effective secretariats, hosting platforms, organizational structures, and strategic advice.

Today these Expert Boards include NuPECC, and also the European Space Sciences Committee (ESSC) and the Committee on Radio Astronomy Frequencies (CRAF). We continue to lead joint projects with the European Marine Board based in Ostend and are looking forward to a renewed remit for the MatSEEC committee on materials science. In addition, we hope that recent discussions will soon lead to new entities being set up by ESF, and to existing ones being hosted at the ESF Headquarters in Strasbourg.

Overall, we have a highly qualified international and interdisciplinary team with a deep understanding of science matters and research infrastructures across Europe. Through Science Connect, we are providing that experience, along with forward thinking and planning, to all our members, partners, and customers, both public and private. We are currently engaged in over a dozen key projects including participation as Partner or Coordinator in the highly visible European Commission's Graphene Flagship or in the inventory and web portal of European research infrastructures MERIL.

We are also expanding our resource network of research expertise and tal-

ent by establishing the ESF Community of Experts. Our Community of Experts reactivate the ESF network of international academics, science policy experts, key decision-makers, and stakeholders across the European and global research landscape. We already have over 2,200 new members on board, including our College of Review Panel members and our College of Research Associates. Find more at: <http://www.esf.org/community-of-experts/>.

We are now looking forward with confidence, energy, and enthusiasm to our continuous further contribution to science and science-related activities over Europe.

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