The European Association for Astronomy Education *(Abstract)*

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Abstract The still very young EAAE (officially founded in November 1995) is an association grouping astronomy minded "educators" (teachers, professional and amateur astronomers, etc.) whose main goal is the development of the place and role of astronomy teaching at various educational levels. An executive council of nine persons is in charge of the large-scale cohesion of the association, while two standing committees (financial support, communication network) and seven working groups (astronomical concepts, didactic materials, training of teachers, student projects, planetarium links, research on teaching materials, and public education) form the structure through which each member can contribute to the association's actions. Each one of these groups is "multi-national" (members come from over twenty countries in Europe and elsewhere), and thus the adopted structure favors the emergence of an international network of teachers, one of the EAAE's primary concerns. Different projects have been achieved or are on the way of achievement (such as the AOL "astronomy on line," the creation of a summer school for teachers, simultaneous observations of solar and lunar eclipses by students all over Europe, development and testing of didactic material, etc.) partially showing the great educational potential of the EAAE.

New Practical Astronomy Activities in French Education *(Abstract)*

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Abstract A new curriculum in physics is being introduced gradually in French schools (Collège and Lycée, i.e., Junior High and High School, respectively). The main topics concern gravity and light. Astronomy fits quite well the general view that the teaching of experimental sciences must involve more experiments and/or observations. In this context, the French Astronomers-Teachers Joint Committee (CLEA: Comité de Liaison Enseignants-Astronomes) is in the forefront of developing and publishing examples of practical activities. Its Research Group for the Teaching of Astronomy has developed, tested, and then published various materials, including Activity Files, sets of slides, and overhead transparencies. Several of these items are now available in English, with two of them also translated into Spanish and one into Polish. Some activities will be presented—for example, the study of the movement of sunspots observed and mapped over several days in order to deduce the Sun's

rotational period; the study of the spectrum of a star illustrating how to derive the chemical composition of stars from spectral analysis; the retrograde motion of Mars investigated from a set of slides; phases of the Moon for 12–13-year-old pupils; the orbit of the Moon and its characteristics from photos taken throughout a lunar cycle; the equivalent descriptions by Ptolemy and Copernicus of the movements of celestial objects. Some software will be presented as well.

The "Astronomy On-Line" Project *(Abstract)*

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Abstract A major web-based educational program, known as "Astronomy On-Line," has just taken place in close collaboration among the European Association for Astronomy Education (EAAE), the European Southern Observatory (ESO), and the European Union.

During a period of two months, from early October to late November 1996, a comprehensive network of astronomy-oriented educational web pages was built up at various European sites, including the ESO headquarters in Garching. Throughout this period, astronomy-interested groups of mostly young people from all over Europe registered with "Astronomy On-Line"; in the end, 720 groups with approximately 5,000 participants from 39 countries took part.

The "Astronomy On-Line" web site at ESO received up to 100,000 hits per day. All pages were mirrored one per day or more frequently to about twenty-five mirror sites in other European countries. No accurate statistics are available for the number of entries at these sites, but there is little doubt that "Astronomy On-Line" quickly developed into what the organizers early claimed: the world's biggest astronomy event on the world-wide web.