

# Helmholtz International

On this special page, we report news from the Helmholtz offices in Brussels, Moscow and Beijing several times a year. Specific focus is on cooperation and partnership ventures of the Helmholtz Association in Russia, China and the EU as well as on selected international research policy news.

## News from the Brussels Office:

### "This is about more than money"

Interview with Dr Susan Kentner, Manager and Founding Member of the Brussels Office

#### What characterises the office's work?

**Susan Kentner:** We are characterised by proximity to science and politics. We need to render European research policy comprehensible for scientists, yet equally have to promote our research topics in the world of politics. This is also about conveying the social benefits of research.

#### Why does an on-site presence make sense?

**SK:** This is a good question in the Internet Age. One should be on site to build bridges and seek a dialogue. One part of our work is to bring forward Helmholtz interests and to render these comprehensible in the first place. This can be done by position papers, yet discussion proves a better way.

#### What would be an example of the office's successes?

**SK:** The DESCA project is a very good example for how we were able to reduce the centres' workload. As early as during the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme, in a project coordinated jointly with Fraunhofer, we had started to develop a fair and easily comprehensible model for negotiating consortium agreements. Today, this model is accepted and used by the scientific community throughout Europe.

#### You have been part of it from the beginning. Which changes have you noticed?

**SK:** European research funding is increasingly political and stra-

tegic. With the coming framework programme "Horizon 2020", we are facing a paradigm change.

#### What can Helmholtz expect as regards research funding?

**SK:** The tendency is towards larger funding instruments and this, in turn, requires applicants to undergo a very conscious decision-making process: Which instruments are worth being involved with? Which resources will this require? It is altogether a new game, requiring repositioning.

#### What can the office here do for the centres?

**SK:** The office can act as a pilot. The question is: Why should a centre "go to Europe"? Ultimately, because of the money, yes, that too, but money is only a symbol, signifying the freedom to act. Much more important is, with what kind of goal one sources it: Is this about networking? About access to infrastructures? Or is it about creating and further developing European leadership in a given topic? Of course, for this one needs funding, but money is not the most important factor here.

#### ... and as regards personal co-operation?

**SK:** For me, it is important to generate tangible benefits for the scientists in the Helmholtz centres. At the same time, this is our quality control. As long as we are able to provide this, our office has a very practical right of existence.

*The interview was conducted by Kristine August*

## Anniversary in Brussels: A Milestone Celebration

Builder of bridges, advisor, translator: for ten years now, in all matters relating to Europe, the Brussels Office has fulfilled all these roles for the Helmholtz Association. On 4 December, the office celebrated its anniversary with a reception at the Federal State of Saxony liaison office. Foundation office manager Wilfried Kraus and the current office manager, Dr Susan Kentner, commemorated the beginnings, a time, when the employees still had to go to the internet café to answer emails. By now, the office is well established with a broad network. The best indicator for this were some 100 well-wishers during the reception, including the German Ambassador to Belgium, Dr Eckart Cuntz. During the speeches by "host" Dr Torsten Brand and Dr Anneli Pauli (European Commission Directorate General for Research and Innovation), it became apparent: not only is the office a well-liked guest and host, but it fulfils an important role in discussing the European research landscape. Helmholtz Managing Director Dr Rolf Zetl spoke about the complexity of EU topics and pointed to the "jungle of European research funding". Accordingly, the office was thanked for

its reliable translation work as well as for its great commitment in representing the Helmholtz Association in Europe.



No anniversary without a cake: Rolf Zetl and Susan Kentner cutting the anniversary cake. Photo: Helmholtz/Eric Berghen

## News from the Moscow Office:



From left to right: Prof. Dr Victor Matveev, Prof. Dr Helmut Dosch, Dr Mikhail Rychev, Prof. Dr Jürgen Mlynek, Prof. Dr Sergey Mazurenko, Prof. Dr Wolfgang Sandner, Prof. Dr Vladislav Panchenko. Photo: Helmholtz Association

### Helmholtz Science Talk in Moscow: Jürgen Mlynek discusses with Russian colleagues the perspectives for co-operation in large-scale facility research

On 4 December 2012 in Moscow, the Helmholtz Science Talk "Russian Megascience Projects: Prospects and Potentials for the German-Russian Research Cooperation" took place, organised by the Helmholtz Association and the National Research Centre "Kurchatov Institute" under the roof of the Moscow-based German Center for Research and Innovation (DWIH). The event attracted more than 100 high-ranking Russian and international experts from the world of science and research policy. The event opened with speeches by the German Ambassador to Russia, Ulrich Brandenburg, by Dr Andrey Fursenko, previously Russian research minister and today advisor to the Russian president, and by the head of the DWIH Moscow, Dr Gregor Berghorn. The Science Talk was attended by Prof. Dr Helmut Dosch (Chairman of the DESY Board of Directors), Prof. Dr Wolfgang Sandner (Director of the Max Born Institute in Berlin), Prof. Dr Victor Matveev (Director of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna), Prof. Dr Sergey Mazurenko (Russian Deputy Minister of Education and Science), Dr Mikhail Rychev (Kurchatov Institute) and Prof. Dr Vladislav Panchenko (Chairman of the Scientific Board of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research). Prof. Dr

Jürgen Mlynek, President of the Helmholtz Association, chaired the discussion panel. The event's aim was exchange of opinions regarding the status and perspectives of bilateral co-operation in large-scale facility research in Germany and Russia, in particular in the field of "Structure of Matter". Alongside progress in materials research and the life sciences, large-scale projects always provide venues allowing hundreds of researchers to find career perspectives and international exchange opportunities. Currently, the Russian partners are involved in two international large-scale project originating at Helmholtz centres: the European XFEL X-ray free electron laser (DESY) and the FAIR accelerator complex (GSI). Conversely, in Russia, three, prospectively six international large-scale projects are being funded, such as the PIK research reactor in Gatchina south of St Petersburg, the Tokamak fusion experiment IGNITOR in Troitsk and the Nuclotron-based Ion Collider Facility NICA in Dubna near Moscow. These large-scale projects provide co-operation starting points for Helmholtz centres and German university partners as well as for extramural research institutions.

### Six New German-Russian Research Groups Selected in Moscow

On 22 November 2012, in the fifth call for application of the bilateral "Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups" programme, six new research groups were selected. Together with the "Russian Foundation for Basic Research", the Helmholtz Association has been maintaining this programme since 2006. Since that time, four calls for application selected 26 joint projects for funding. In the fifth call for application, focusing on the topic of "Research with Photons, Ions and Neutrons", a total of twelve top-class applications were submitted. Based on the existing international appraisal, the joint selection committee, chaired by Effrosyni

Chelioti, Director International Affairs at the Helmholtz Association, and Prof. Dr Vladimir Kvardakov, Deputy Chairman of the Scientific Board of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, selected six new German-Russian research groups, which will take up their work in January 2013. Funding amounts to up to 150,000 Euro per year and group over a maximum funding period of three years. The funding programme constitutes an attractive career perspective in particular for young scientists from Germany and Russia; it strengthens the bilateral research cooperation and focuses on research issues of strategic relevance.