



52nd ESLAB SYMPOSIUM: Comparative Aeronomy and Plasma Environment of Terrestrial planets

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Need to go back to the start of ESA:

- ESA was founded on 30 May 1975 from ESRO (the European Space Research Organisation) and ELDO (European Launcher Development Organisation).
- ESRO was established in 1964 and when its role was being debated it was unclear whether ESRO should have its own scientific group.

Origin of ESLAB



Indeed, some delegations felt that it was a bad idea to have scientists in the organisation:

- There would be a brain-drain from national scientific activities to the central scientific laboratory
- The ESRO scientific groups would rapidly become privileged groups with the best staff, best facilities and the best experience
- If there were no such research groups within ESRO, the scientific activity would be more readily distributed among the participating countries
- Concern that the in-house scientific staff would have privileged access to satellites.



The Formation of ESLAB



However, this view was not universal, and there was support (particularly amongst some smaller Member States) for an alternative view:

"If scientific research were only to be conducted in national institutions, there was a risk that some of the smaller countries which did not possess the necessary resources would feel themselves badly served."

Eventually a compromise was reached and:

"ESRO, besides providing technical facilities, would also provide opportunities for original research beyond those which exist in individual countries".



The Formation of ESLAB



A small research group was envisaged whose main functions were to:

“Undertake theoretical studies and fundamental theoretical research of importance to space science [and] to provide experimental facilities to enable individuals and small institutions to undertake research in space science”.

The Research Group should have its own building and a small permanent staff (a director and 2 assistants, with technical, administrative and secretarial staff) and facilities for some 50 research workers and technicians including Research Fellows. It was called the **European Space Research Laboratory (ESLAB)**



It was agreed that scientists at ESLAB should be able to do their own research for as much as 50% of their time in three basic areas:

Particle physics

Ionospheric physics

Surface physics



- ESLAB started life in temporary “barracks” at ESTEC.
- When these burned down, ESLAB moved temporarily to this building in Noordwijkerhout before returning to ESTEC.

- On 1 September 1968 ESLAB became the 4th Department at ESTEC and was renamed the Space Science Department (SSD).
- After nearly 40 years, in May 2007, SSD was renamed to be the Research and Scientific Support Department (RSSD).
- In September 2013, the department was again renamed to today's Scientific Support Office (SSO) becoming the Science Support Office in 2016.

The main interface between ESA and its scientific community:

- There are still around 50 members and we are the home of the Study and Project Scientists as well as 15 Research Fellows
- Provide “cradle to grave” support to missions to help ensure that the scientific goals are maintained within applicable constraints
- Provide a scientific environment enabling staff and Research Fellows to perform their own research.
- The ESLAB name survives in the annual symposia which we have organised since 1966 to help foster scientific cooperation.

47	2013	The Universe as seen by Planck	2 - 5 April 2013
48	2014	New insights into volcanism across the Solar System	17 - 20 June 2014
49	2015	Exploring the Universe with JWST	12 - 16 October 2015
50	2016	From Giotto to Rosetta	14-18 March 2016
51	2017	Extreme Habitable Worlds	4-8 December 2017
52	2018	Comparitive Aeronomy of Terrestrial Planets	14-18 May 2018
53	2019	The Gaia Universe	8-12 April 2019
54	2020	20 years of science with XMM-Newton	15-19 June 2020

