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Humans in Outer Space – Interdisciplinary Odysseys
Vienna • 11-12 October 2007
Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)
European Space Sciences Committee (ESSC)
The space-faring nations are heading for the human exploration of the Moon and eventually of Mars. They might be soon prepared with regard to technology development. But they need to benefit also from the humanities (history, philosophy, anthropology), the arts as well as the social sciences (political science, economics, law).

The ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) has taken a strong interest in the study of the implications of space exploration by humans. This interest has led SCH to lead an interdisciplinary initiative on this topic with the European Space Sciences Committee (ESSC) and the ESF Standing Committee for Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences (LESC), and organise a workshop in Genoa, Italy, in March of this year. At that workshop scholars who usually have few reasons to meet in scientific forums exchanged views in a non-traditional fashion.

Non-traditional because, beyond the technical aspects linked to human presence in space that have been studied by space scientists and engineers for the last five decades, humans in space pose challenges that go much further than their ability to survive, and questions that can only start to be addressed in the light of modern understanding of historical events such as the Columbian encounter of 1492.

Following Genoa, a major conference will take place in Vienna in October 2007 to further debate and conclude this activity. The publication of corresponding policy by ESF is foreseen.

This conference, co-organised by the European Science Foundation (ESF), the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI), will be the first comprehensive trans-disciplinary dialogue on humans in outer space. It goes further than regarding humans only as tools for exploration or the better robots. It investigates in the human quest for odysseys beyond the atmosphere and reflects on the possibilities to find extraterrestrial life.

It shall open up new perspectives in assessing humankind’s present and future outside the Earth and document this in a “Vienna Vision on Humans in Outer Space”.

Registration fee for the conference is € 130 (except keynote speakers), which includes participation to the conference, coffee breaks, lunches on both days and dinner on Thursday evening 11 October.

You can register on-line at: http://www.esf.org/research-areas/space/activities/inif-activities.html, or by sending an e-mail to the conference contact point: HiOS-Conf@espi.or.at.