

# Invitation

## Forum Physics and Society

19-22 April 2006 Graz, Austria



The World Year of Physics 2005 has had a tremendous impact. Thousands of events in more than 80 countries have brought physics to the public, with widespread media coverage. However, many of the activities during WYP2005 were targeted at young people and the “person in the street” not overly familiar with the sciences. And in many countries the focus was more on Einstein than about physics. When physics was the main topic, historical overviews were presented rather than pointing out the importance of current research in physics in our modern society. Since, therefore, there is some danger that the year of physics may not be of long-lasting sustainability, the European Physical Society and the WYP International Steering Committee have decided to think about necessary actions to carry on the momentum.

One action is to bring together physicists and decision makers from policy and economics for an information exchange and in-depth debate to reach an agreement on the role of physics in modern society and on the necessary social and political conditions to allow physicists to fulfil this role in the most productive way.

The first “**Forum Physics and Society**” which will be held in Graz, Austria, from April 19 to 22 should serve to discuss the commitment of physics to a better society and to learn what politics, economy and the physics community can expect from each other. The forum should also provide an opportunity to improve the relations between physicists and decision makers and to communicate to the latter the lessons learned from the intensive dialogue with the public during the World Year of Physics 2005. The meeting addresses top-level representatives of national physical societies and the international physics community. The outcome of the Forum should be a resolution, conveying to decision makers what is needed in order to enable the physics community to provide excellence for a better society.

**The Forum is an officially approved event of the Austrian *Presidency of the Council of the European Union* and will proceed in parallel to an *Informal Competitiveness Council* (see [http://www.eu2006.at/en/Meetings\\_Calendar/Dates/April/2104inf\\_Wettbewerb.html](http://www.eu2006.at/en/Meetings_Calendar/Dates/April/2104inf_Wettbewerb.html)) bringing together Ministers of all 25 EU member states in Graz. The event will benefit from the media presence at this meeting, and provision is made for presenting a declaration with the results of the Forum to the Ministers. The Forum has, however, no exclusive orientation to EU topics, but is intended to work out statements pertaining to physics worldwide.**



All members of the international physics community are invited to contribute to the content of the Forum. So far the following topics have been suggested, and further proposals will be appreciated:

1. The role of physics in the context of society, culture, and the sciences
2. The importance of physics for competitiveness in a technology-based world economy
3. Needs in research policy and funding
4. Standards and quality control in physics education and comparability in international physics curricula, at all levels of education
5. Ethical issues in physics

International and national physics societies, universities, research institutions, and companies related to physics are cordially invited to delegate representatives to this conference. To provide maximum significance for the Forum and ensure highest media attention it would be desirable that top-level physicists attend the conference and introduce their thoughts and opinions into the discussion: representatives of physical societies and national and international research organisations from all over the world, important and prestigious physicists, also persons educated in physics but now working in other fields (politicians, managers), all people who have done important work for WYP2005, and representatives of international bodies supporting WYP2005, especially UNO and UNESCO. In any case attendees should have an endorsement from a respected and well-known institution that is also willing to provide the necessary information to fulfil the safety criteria connected with the ministers' meeting.

The Forum Physics and Society will be held under the auspices of the European Physical Society and the Austrian Physical Society. Detailed information will be provided shortly on the website [www.wyp2005.at](http://www.wyp2005.at). Local organization of the Forum will be done by *Prof. Max E. Lippitsch, Institute of Physics, Karl-Franzens-Universität, Universitätsplatz 5, A-8010 Graz Austria, email: [max.lippitsch@uni-graz.at](mailto:max.lippitsch@uni-graz.at)*, member of the International Steering Committee and Director of the Austrian Physical Society.

Looking forward to receiving a strong resonance to this invitation,

Martial Ducloy

Chairman, International Steering Committee WYP2005

Ove Poulsen

President, European Physical Society

