



EUROPÄISCHE KOMMISSION

DER LEITER
DER VERTRETUNG IN DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND

Berlin, 16 October 2009

Science on Stage: promoting the European exchange between science teachers

Dear Sir,
Dear Madam,

"Science on Stage" (SoS) and its predecessor "Physics on Stage" were multi-annual activities, established in the year 2000. These activities aimed at stimulating innovative approaches to science teaching in Europe's schools through the active participation of science educators and by

- fostering exchange of "best practice" between teachers and curriculum developers;
- dialogue between teachers and education policy makers, and
- enabling the exploitation of modern scientific knowledge in the teaching in Europe's primary and secondary schools by bringing together active scientists, notably at Europe's leading research facilities, and teachers.

The ultimate goal of strengthening the quality and attractiveness of science teaching is to enable students to achieve success in scientific and technological endeavours for the future.

"Science on Stage" and its predecessor "Physics on Stage" comprised national activities in 27 countries and a Pan-European Science Teaching Festival, held at intervals of roughly two years. SoS constitutes a unique undertaking and the first large-scale attempt ever in the field of science teaching at European level. In that sense, it offers a valuable contribution towards the attainment of the Lisbon goals of developing a knowledge-based economy.

The funding for the European Science Teaching Festival was provided jointly by the European Commission and the EIROforum organisations¹, which furthermore provided a financial contribution to the national activities in each of the participating countries. The support was given within the 6th and 7th Framework Programme (European Science Initiative – ESTI: Science on Stage-Festivals², the magazine Science in Schools³ and VOLVOX⁴).

In Germany the National Committee was transferred into a non profit-organization – Science on Stage Deutschland e.V. (SonSD)⁵. In this function it organizes teachers' training workshops, the development of teaching material (Teaching Science in Europe 1, 2⁶) and – for the first time in October 2008 – carried out a SoS-festival in Berlin: 230 teachers from 21

¹ **EIROforum:** Since the early 1950s, a number of intergovernmental research organizations have been established to fulfill the needs of Europe's scientists. They bring together expertise and funding from across the continent and have been remarkably successful in developing and operating. <http://www.eiroforum.org/index.php>

² **Science on Stage-Festivals:** Berlin - 23-26 /10/2008. http://www.science-on-stage.de/?p=2_6

³ **Science in School:** the European journal to promote inspiring science teaching by encouraging communication between teachers, scientists and everyone else involved in European science education. <http://www.scienceinschool.org>

⁴ **VOLVOX:** a network of biology teachers and experts from 11 countries of the European Union. <http://www.volvox-de.de/>

⁵ **SonSD:** <http://www.science-on-stage.de>

⁶ **Teaching Science in Europe:** http://www.science-on-stage.de/?p=2_3

European countries presented innovative teaching experiments, discussed new methods and exchanged good-practice examples. This festival was supported by the National Ministry of Education and Research, the industry and foundations. The Representation of the European Commission in Germany took over the patronage and Commissioner Janez Potočnik contributed a greeting.

After the European Framework Programmes expired in 2008, the national Steering Committee (NSC) of SoS met in March 2009 in Berlin at the Representation of the European Commission to discuss the future of SoS. It is obvious that there is still a deep interest in the countries to continue the European exchange about teaching methods and to organize follow-up national activities to spread the results. The participants signed the Berlin Declaration⁷ which contains the further steps towards a European network between science teachers.

The Representation of the Commission in Berlin strongly recommends to support the SoS-activities in your country⁸. With your aid the other national Committee could also continue their work in helping teachers to improve science lessons and to reassure the Europe-wide dialogue and exchange of good-practice.

In advance we thank you for your support!

With best regards from Berlin

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthias Petschke', written in a cursive style.

Matthias Petschke

⁷ Berlin Declaration: http://www.science-on-stage.de/media/nsc_meeting_09/Berlin_Declaration_27_march_09.pdf

⁸ Science on Stage Europe: <http://www.science-on-stage.eu/>