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Menelaos Sotiriou
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Clean white socks and sharpened pencils

This time of the year always reminds me of schooldays when my mother would say “right, holidays are over, let’s buy new white socks and new pencils for the new term”. I was always full of good intentions to work hard when I returned to the classroom but somehow they soon disappeared.



Well holidays are over and the hard work has arrived. The new term started with accompanying Menelaos to a meeting he had been invited to with Begoña Arano, Head of the Unit Internal and External Communications representing Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General, Research and Innovation at the EU Commission. She and her colleagues were impressed with the working document we presented, particularly for its transparency and the way in which we had laid out the system of including all delegate's opinions for any proposals we will ultimately offer.

“We are seriously concerned for the future of science journalism and wanted to see these concerns addressed in the Horizon 2020 programme”

This document was similar to the one Menelaos submitted for the approval of delegates at the GA in Prague this year. A report of the meeting and information on the next stage, which needs all delegates' input, will be sent out to

them after our board meeting in Gastein.

The EU team is working on preparing submissions, strategies and policies to be included in the Horizon 2020 working programme. They are not allocating funds and we made it clear we were not attending with a begging bowl but were seriously concerned for the future of science journalism and wanted to see these concerns addressed in the Horizon 2020 programme.

As I have stated earlier in my mid-term report I posted at the beginning of August, on the EUSJA website, the board has worked tremendously hard throughout the summer and the fruits of our labours are paying off. Our bank balance has been boosted by 70,000 euro thanks to Menelaos's work on various projects. Wolfgang has not only pulled together our sessions at the World Conference but has also publicised them widely. Priit has been busy rationalising our banking whilst Viola is still busy organising some exciting study trips, as always.

I am aware that the job situation is still precarious and many of you are having to diversify and take on science communication roles to survive.

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► Letter from Barbie Drillsma, EUSJA president

Clean white socks and sharpened pencils

continued from first page

We will soon (just after our Board Meeting) be sending around job specifications for at least six paid positions for all members to consider and we shall also improve our website to have a dedicated section on freelance work across Europe.

I know there are articles in this issue on our WFSJ and Finnish colleagues' excellent conference in Helsinki. It was good to see our three sponsored EUSJA fellows networking and reporting and I know we will be able to continue offering scholarships to attend ESOF in Copenhagen and to support more generously study trips. We are not raising money to satisfy our bankers.

We have obtained these finances in order to ensure the future of EUSJA, and for the benefit of all members. I have also posted on the website details of a conference I attended in Greece. It was here that the importance of

networking really struck home. For instance whilst swimming in the sea I met Dr Mick Storr from CERN who has promised to help organise an EUSJA study trip to CERN.

I also met a fascinating man – Oded Ben-Horin, an Israeli opera singer and composer with a real passion for science.

He lives in Norway and has helped Norwegian schoolchildren compose an opera called 'Aurora' exploring space. I wrote a short note from EUSJA for their programme congratulating them on their initiative.

This programme has been sent to Oded's very extensive network and to all his contacts. Let's hope it galvanises our Norwegian colleagues to do as they promised and join EUSJA.

And how about this? I was in a French supermarket car park and returned to find a guy peering through the window looking at an old EUSJA leporello on the back window stand. He was an environmental and health writer from Scotland and was wondering what EUSJA was. I told him and suggested he joins the ABSW. Maybe we should get some car stickers made!

The board is co-ordinating proposals for sessions at ESOF next summer. Wolfgang and Menelaos, continuing to raise our profile internationally and not just across Europe, have sent a proposal for the PCST conference – Public Communication, Science and Technology – being held in Salvador, Brazil.

Our working party on EU projects, Menelaos Sotiriou, Jesper Odde Madsen and Jan-Oliver Loeffen, are continuing the work started two years ago in Dublin, to strengthen science journalism across Europe.

They and indeed EUSJA are supporting our Finnish colleagues, Vesa Niinikangas and Satu Lipponen, and Jens Degett from Denmark, who are working on a dedicated science journalism conference embedded in both the ESOF and World Federation conferences, which take place in alternating years.

They have also prepared a draft document – Science Journalists' Network, another initiative the board supports and looks forward to hearing more of.

As you read this, the board is joining a study trip in Gastein, Austria. We went last year and made such an impact we have been asked to meet high-level officials from the world of European health policy makers and health experts to have a discussion on how they and journalists can better communicate.

Best wishes to all, have a positive and fruitful autumn and please let the board know if we can be of direct assistance in the coming months.

BARBIE DRILLSMA, EUSJA PRESIDENT

EUSJA scores another success

When we suggested that it would be a good idea to gather science journalists, health experts and policy makers for a "chat" at the annual European Health Forum we had no idea it could become a fixture in the programme.

At the event in Gastein, earlier this month, so successful was our session that the EHFG boss, Professor Helmut Brand promised to seek funding to have a similar workshop next year. He even promised to see if Chief Scientific Adviser to the European Commission President, Anne Glover, could chair the panel.

EUSJA representatives including president Barbie Drillsma; Greek television journalist, Vasiliki Michopoulou; UK former managing editor of Nature, Pete Wrobel; and board members Wolfgang Goede and Viola Egikova gave realistic accounts of the state of science journalism and the way in which financial restraints are affecting the profession. In turn the health professionals said they now understood how they could facilitate journalists to better gain background information and quotes.

Excellent chaired by Tessa Richards from the BMJ, the cosy chat turned out to be lively two hour discussion attended by 35 people and EUSJA was warmly praised for its initiative.

Environmental reportage



Researchers have installed an automatic climatic station along the Baltoro glacier. Each year they have to download data, change, and repair sensors. This procedure is complicated by unexpected failures of sensors and delays in the convoy of tens of porters (sometimes 40 to 50) that carry the equipment from down-valley to the foot of K2.

Notes from the field

I am often asked about my impressions on belonging to a threatened species: the environmental field reporter. This sort of reporting has been correctly included in the red list of journalism, because it is facing extinction.

BY JACOPO PASOTTI,
SWIM

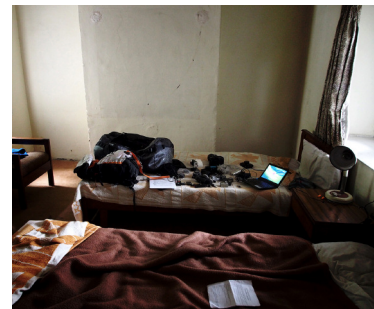
There are various reasons for this phenomenon: environmental reporting is slow to be developed, it is costly if performed in the field, it (apparently) adds little to desk reporting illustrated by stock photos that magazines and news media can assemble in a half-day's work and at a low cost. Most of such reporting, nowadays, is left in the hands of photographers or photojournalists. Unfortunately, they rarely have the knowledge, and probably the will, to investigate the story in depth before going to the field and starting their shooting.

Yet to those who still find their way in a fast-developing media world, where time and study are left to minor niches in journalism, this activity may be extremely rewarding. One must, however, learn techniques for surviving as a journalist while in the field. As an example, I want to share with you three images illustrating how I have learnt to adjust to uncomfortable travelling situations.

Reporting on Karakorum glaciers in Pa-

kistan this year, I had to migrate my daily office to a (rather) dull hotel room. Power was unstable (the whole hotel suffered from sudden power shortages), and internet availability was erratic.

I could, however, enjoy a second office, this time a portable one – my tent along the trek that brought me on the Baltoro glacier. Indeed, developing environmental reportage means finding a compromise between a journalist's needs of writing and photo/video handling, and flexibility and portability of equipment. As a field reporter you may find yourself having a 1 square metre office sitting on a glacier for days, your only source of power being a generator to be shared with a dozen nervous researchers and tens of porters wishing to charge their cellphones (they listen to music while carrying packs and stuff from one camp to the following one). However, being part of a endangered species taught me few strategies of adaptation that I am using to keep running in this profession. They could be condensed into what I call the Wallaby approach: be light, ready to jump, and carry your beloved belongings always with you.



My travelling office 1. Pakistan, 2013. When doing environmental reportage a (quite too often) dull hotel room turns into a ephemeral office for days.



My travelling office 2. Pakistan, 2013. As a reporter you may find yourself having a 1 square metre office sitting on a glaciers for days, your only source of power being a generator shared with several researchers and porters wanting to charge their cell-phones.

► 2013 Helsinki World Conference of Science Journalists

Science journalism go!



At the Horizon 2020 session, from left – Menelaos Sotiriou, Barbie Drillsma, Begoña Arano, Martin Schneider

“Let’s strengthen science journalism, on all levels.” Under this motto EUSJA engaged in a wide scope of sessions that dealt with the past, present and future of the profession. ‘Totalitarianism’s new clothes’ picked up on the conference’s slogan ‘freedom of expression’. The panellists, in their majority EUSJA’s East European delegates, compared science journalism under the communist regime with its current state of the art.

BY WOLFGANG C. GOEDE,
EUSJA HONORARY SECRETARY

Marina Huzvarova, Czech Republic, summarised a common observation: “Under the censorship in totalitarian Czechoslovakia, nature studies, science and technology were allowed a bit more freedom and provided work for science journalists due to the fact that censors did not

understand the issues (...) Our current democracy is highly controlled by economic interests. Journalists have to follow media owners’ rules focusing on financial aspects only (...) It seems that science journalists are becoming eligible to be listed in the book of endangered species. Compared to governmental proclamations about the importance of science, there is no proper space for it even in the public media. Science pages and science topics are cut smaller

and smaller; science journalists lose their jobs and change into PR [people].”

Jim Cornell, president of the International Science Writers Association ISWA, contributed some blatant

cases about how the United States manipulated the media, in a range of issues from the atomic bomb to global warming. His conclusion, valid for the entire so-called Western World, found a broad media echo:

“For better or worse, America is in so many ways the model for other countries – from rap music to fast food to the ways of controlling information. Thus, in many democracies, the once heavy-handed Soviet-style censor has been replaced by an American-style velvet-gloved but iron-fisted bureaucrat.”

During the discussion the audience expressed the opinion that limitations of expression and information will remain one of the key issues in science journalism. The profession might need to become more political to counter the threats, some in the audience said. There was a general agreement to put this issue back on the stage again during the next world conference in Seoul, with the participation of Asian science journalists.

Many conference sessions expressed concern about public relations and science communication doing away with science journalism. This is defined by its competence to question research results, identify second and third opinions, and provide science and technology with the societal view and perspective. These journalistic skills will be required when the European Commission rolls out its major research offensive Horizon 2020. It will be kicked off in a few months with a budget of 70 billion euro. After enor-

At the world conference in Helsinki, EUSJA sent out a strong message in all directions: let’s strengthen science journalism, on all levels.

**Priit Ennet on
debate-driven
journalism**



Online Conference Reports:

■ <http://www.eusja.org/mid-summer-ethics-by-wolfgang-c-goede/>

■ <http://www.eusja.org/eusjas-workshop-at-the-2013-helsinki-world-conference-of-science-journalists-on-blood-infusion/>

■ <http://www.eusja.org/totalitarianisms-new-clothes/>

■ <http://www.eusja.org/e-e-estonia-the-new-baltic-tiger/>

mous difficulties and months of delay, EUSJA had succeeded in inviting a high-ranking EU official to Helsinki. Begoña Arano, Head of Communications, represented Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General for Research & Innovation at the European Commission in Brussels. At this public session President Barbie Drillsma introduced the official EUSJA Working Party on Horizon 2020, headed by Menelaos Sotiriou, associate board member. He suggested, as a means of promoting the exchange of knowledge between science and society, a mixed package of workshops, dialogue sessions, journalistic training sessions and study trips. Science debates with a targeted audience could help “to achieve a two-way communication as much as educate researchers about the audience”.

Martin Schneider, EUSJA delegate of the German WPK, had joined the podium and reported on a round of meetings of a group of science journalists with Smits. They discussed summer schools including training for journalists, a European conference of science journalists parallel to ESOF 2014 Copenhagen, and a fund for investigative science journalism, a project that EUSJA has been working on since 2012. In her summary of the session Barbie Drillsma emphasised that “science journalist are not cheerleaders for science, but provide an enabling contribution to the society as a whole”.

A taste of how this two-pronged approach could be implemented was demonstrated in subsequent workshops. ‘Blood infusion for staggering science journalism’ delivered a blueprint for coming training. It identified three key qualities of science journalism: investigation, storytelling, and understanding statistics. This world conference session was focused on interactive, participating and empowering elements and tried to avoid top down “firehose” pedagogics.

In the session ‘Debate-driven journalism’ EUSJA tre-

asurer Priit Ennet pleaded, based on experience in his home country Estonia, for permanent science debates: “transparent, inclusive, decentralised”. His science journalism association facilitated to a post-conference study trip to Estonia. Some twenty people from all over the world were in for a big surprise. The small nation with only 1.3 million inhabitants, tucked in between Finland and Russia, has turned into a flourishing Baltic Silicon Valley.

In light of the NSA spying scandal, the liberal data policy of Estonia sparked a lively controversy, which led to plenty of press coverage. Federico Kukso from Argentina, for instance, summarised his impressions in *Revista Ñ* under the title ‘Dreams and nightmares of a techno-utopia’ – an outstanding example why we need impartial science journalism, study trips, science debates and, above all, regular training to encourage independent thinking [and] investigation, in other words: thoughtful journalistic stories, which shed a new light on our complex reality.



The EUSJA board would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the Finnish and WFSJ conference organisers for having provided the opportunity for these important sessions to take place, as well to its delegates for their spirited and strong participation.

► 2013 Helsinki World Conference of Science Journalists

Fresh eyes on the WCSJ

Three freelance science journalists were selected by EUSJA to be the eyes and ears for those who could not be at the World Conference of Science Journalists, and were given scholarships to attend. In the following pages, Anthony, Klaartje and Michele share their impressions of the Helsinki conference.

What and how to report

BY ANTHONY KING,
IRISH ASSOCIATION

The Helsinki conference opened with traditional Finnish dancing, but went straight to pandemics and viruses at the first parallel session next morning. Martin Enserink, contributing editor at the journal *Science*, spoke about what makes emerging disease stories like SARS or CJD different. They start small but hold the potential to become really big.

It was a report by Enserink back in November 2011 that first put freelance science writer Volker Stollorz from Germany onto the potential for man-made pathogens with pandemic potential. He called his editor to say this was a critical public health issue – scientists should not be deciding themselves whether to publish experiments that show how to generate

more lethal viruses. When Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung ran the story, nobody else reported it. “There was no response by any other German newspaper, it was a non-issue,” Stollorz recalled. The newspaper stuck with the story, until eventually it was recognised as important. He predicts that this story of emerging disease will run and run and some scientists could make a career out of generating new man-made viruses.

Stollorz, pointing to the cloud of unknowns drifting about the MERS outbreak in Saudi Arabia, argued that science journalists should create a working space for sharing crucial information globally. We need to dig deeper into these issues by co-operating because any single journalist cannot dig as deeply in international issues.

Next was a ‘how-to’ guide on digging given by Helen Branswell, an

experienced medical reporter from Canada.

When SARS hit Toronto in March 2003, she didn’t have a budget for travel, but she had a phone. She showed a photo of her desk, from where she generated lots of great news stories and she advised listeners that it really doesn’t matter where you are, find the best experts and get on the phone to them and read the studies. She illustrated what one determined deskbound journalist can achieve. When H1N1 turned up two years later, Branswell was well prepared for asking the right questions. She too talked about the emerging MERS case and the difficulty of getting information from certain countries, even for the World Health Organisation. She cautioned, though, that it’s important to avoid alarmist reports every time a new virus emerged. “SARS killed 900, infected





A happy group enjoying the WCSJ study trip to Estonia. Jaak Aaviksoo, the Estonian Minister of Education and Research, is centre back, in a blue jacket.

10,000, but it wasn't malaria, HIV or smallpox."

Stollorz was upbeat about expanding news coverage in Germany for science stories. Commentators say certain German newspapers have begun to increase coverage, and this had a positive effect on others, so today there is a bright outlook for science news reporting there. For me the overall tenor of the Helsinki conference was far more positive than the 2009 conference in London. There were not so many 'the end is nigh for science journalism' sessions. Instead there was a great deal of focus on ethics in journalism; the influence of public relations on and by science journalists; and the need for more investigative reporting, and also how that should or could be paid for. That issue was the focus of an EUSJA session which spoke to a European Commission representative

about whether it would help with funding out of its science budget during Horizon 2020; certainly the Commission seems to have plenty of funds for project websites that aim to educate the public, unwanted and unnoticed technical propaganda for most citizens, better spent on critical reportage.

Chemistry blogger and professor of journalism Deborah Blum lightened the mood during her talk on chemophobia, when she showed some rather deficient warning signs in public places, such as the stern warning about water containing hydrogen. The conference moved onto issues about reporting nuclear energy to the neglect of tropical disease, and to advice on feature writing and climate change. A session on mass gun violence looked at how events such as the Newtown school shooting often pose ques-

tions about the shooter's state of mind and what drove the person to do such a thing. Curtis Brainard, US science editor at The Observatory, recalled how autism attracted such coverage after the Newtown shooting – as if that would explain matters. But when Brainard tried chasing up the point, attributed to a cop, he couldn't find it.

The re-report is a problem with such stories, he said. He decried the tendency for shootings to be covered almost as entertainment coverage, rather than as a public health problem. Social media is too often an echo chamber where people amplify their own views, he added. How many people follow others who disagree with them? "Social media has an illusion of being open, but it's an open echo chamber," he said, with each side to a debate believing they are the whole world.



The main building of the University of Helsinki, where WCSJ2013 was held

► *Fresh eyes on the WCSJ*

Defining the need for international science debates

BY KLAARTJE JASPERS,
DUTCH ASSOCIATION

Why would you want to debate something as 'objective' as science? "Science is never partisan, but it is always political", American science advocate and author/filmmaker, Shawn L. Otto claims. Not only is science in essence anti-authoritarian, it also confirms or challenges voters' beliefs. To quote former scientist and president Thomas Jefferson: "Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government." In Otto's view, science journalists are needed to save democracy.

Near zero budget

Perhaps that's why science debates often precede elections in the United States, but also in Estonia, where radio science journalist Priit Ennet moderated the science debate in 2011. Despite a near zero budget, the Estonian Association of Science Journalists managed to facilitate a two hour long debate with four candidates, 60 listeners and a web stream that was followed by a few hundred people. It was a modest beginning, but it made a change.

Deliberative democracy

To Ennet, science debate needs to take place in a form of deliberative democracy. To form such a network well, he says, it needs to be:

- well argued
- continuous, interdependent
- transparent, open
- decentralised, non-hierarchical
- diverse, variable, flexible
- friendly, non-hostile, and
- voluntary.

International network

Clearly, such a network can run into two contrasting objections: one can claim it's already there, or one can claim it's futuristic utopian sci-fi thinking. "Though contrasting, both are valid", Ennet says. "So there must be something right about the idea of a deliberative network".

His suggestion: create an international deliberative network of science debate advocates. It's a call that seems to go down well with the participants of the 8th World Conference of Science Journalists in Helsinki. Packed together like herrings in a tiny tin, people are queueing up to join in, opening windows to get some air in the overcrowded little room. Oxygen is depleting quickly, as shirts get wet and faces turn red. It seems the organisers of 'Debate-driven journalism: science debates as a tool and opportunity for science journalists' have underestimated their own attraction.

Bridging the disciplines

"Oh, it was just an idea, like the data mining, I thought it might be interesting", moderator Hanns-J. Neubert modestly says, "you know, I'm also a freelancer, I have to sell stories to make a living. Sometimes it's easier when you start with the audience, and see how you can address their questions, as opposed to explaining what the scientists say. Perhaps to those coming from the social sciences such a way of working is normal, but it seems to be quite new to many other science journalists, as the majority of them were originally trained as a physicist."

Bridging gaps between science and society, science journalists might also get to bridge some gaps between themselves.

Want to join in the debate?
There are upcoming debates in Estonia (priit.ennet@err.ee), the Netherlands (www.scienceunlimited.nl), Klaartje@scienceunlimited.nl and Germany, www.wissenschaftsdebatte.de

► *Fresh eyes on the WCSJ*

Measuring PR in science journalism

BY MICHELE CATANZARO,
CATALAN ASSOCIATION

A worldwide survey carried out before, and discussed at, the WCSJ2013 in Helsinki has shown that 60% of the 403 surveyed science journalists combine both journalism and PR in their job, and half of them (49%) have witnessed potential conflicts of interest arising out of this situation. “[Results] clearly show that present-day media economics, with a shrinking market for independent, well researched, specialised science journalism, it taking a toll on many”, write the authors of the survey, consultant and former reporter Peter Vermij and freelancer Hans van Maanen.

Evidence that lines are definitely blurring are abundant: for example, 18% of the self-identified journalists did not earn income from media, but from a combination of sources such as companies, research organisations or NGOs; and 19% presented themselves (e.g. on websites, web profiles, business cards etc.) as both journalists and PR practitioners.

The main practical situation in which traditional journalistic ethics is being breached is free travel, the survey and the debate showed. How should a journalist report on a trip paid by a company or a research institution?

Only 13% of the respondents said a journalist should not report at all on such a trip. Half said they would at least inform their readers. “This contrasts with the fact that one rarely comes across such frank disclosures”, the authors of the survey point out.



In fact, comments in the blank spaces of the questionnaire confirm that informing reader about paid trips is not common at all. “It is part of the

Some useful links

■ **Survey and results:**
<http://www.blurringlines.org/>

■ **WCSJ2013 session:**
<http://wcsj2013.org/wearing-hats-preserve-independence/>

■ **Peter Vermij:**
<http://www.birdseyecommunications.com/>

■ **Hans van Maanen:**
<http://www.vanmaanen.org/hans/>

■ **Nature, on independence in science journalism:**
<http://www.nature.com/news/headline-message-1.13348>



local media culture in many countries to accept at least partial voyage costs for media representatives”, writes a French freelancer. Journalists in Argentina, Spain, and Germany made similar comments.

Other critical situations include combining being employed at an independent news outlet and freelancing for research organisations (accepted by 47% of the respondents), accepting presents such as concert tickets from sources (accepted by 65%).

Other practices, like writing sponsored reports that can be checked by sources before publishing are mostly rejected, but still 35% of the respondents say they would do something like this.

Freelancers are especially vulnerable. “[Refusing a job] ‘out of principle’ becomes more challenging as [...] mortgage payments are due”, a freelance from Australia points out. A comment written by a journalist from Germany struck a crucial point of the issue: “Beside the ethical aspects you should also discuss that a lot of independent media - especially newspapers - do not do their job anymore, because they don’t pay research, travel costs and all this things, that are necessary to do high-quality science reporting”, he or she wrote.

Probably, tackling the structural causes of this situation – including the financial crisis, the lack of a consistent business model for the internet, but also the unequal distributions of salaries within media and their involvement with risky financial activities – may be very useful to bring journalism back to more ethical paths.

► 2013 Helsinki World Conference of Science Journalists

The phenomenon of Meteor

This autumn (2013), half a century has elapsed since for the first time this jingle came on the air: http://www.rozhlas.cz/informace/znelky/_zprava/cesky-rozhlas-2-praha--796223. This was the signature tune of a weekly programme on science, nature and technology for young listeners.

This article is based on a talk given by Marina at the WCSJ. Here we see her giving her speech.



BY MARINA HUZVAROVA,
PRESIDENT CZECH REPUBLIC ASSOCIATION

As the years went by the Meteor jingle became a weekend wake-up call for many generations, boys and girls. Whole families waited for it impatiently every Saturday morning. No wonder that among the youngsters were many future scientists.

It had been broadcast from the early 60s up to the Velvet evolution in 1989, and listeners are still kept enthralled by Meteor broadcasting without any gap.

Science broadcasting on the former Czechoslovak radio station

In the past, communism proclaimed itself as the most supportive and progressive regime. That was why communist governments paid major attention to science and technology and supported news from this area. There was a huge competition between the Soviet and American space programmes, and people were fasci-

nated by the exploration of the universe. The ideological pressure was enormous, but physical science wasn't so easy to manipulate. Political and ideological censors were not able to interfere in specialised topics too much.

Despite this, Meteor broadcasting was under censorship like the other media. One of its editors, Oldrich Unger, was sacked in the early 1970s in the time of so called 'normalisation' after the Soviet invasion in 1968. He signed Charta77 document later and finally emigrated to the USA, http://www.rozhlas.cz/meteor/historie/_zprava/-1145695

The other radio editor, Ivo Budil, who was sacked at the same time, was able to come back only when the regime fell. In 2002 one small planet was named after him, 29738 Ivobudil. See <http://www.rozhlas.cz/meteor/hi->

[storie/_zprava/--1145695](http://www.rozhlas.cz/meteor/storie/_zprava/--1145695)

There were separate sections in the former Czechoslovak Radio, and the Meteor programme belonged to the department focused on nature, science and technology for young people.

Since the very beginning of its broadcasting there was a tradition of scientists being great popularisers of nature studies and science. They rapidly started to be more or less permanent co-editors, actively involved in more or less structured programmes made not only in the studio, but also in the field of action. It should be noted that in the early 1960s radio played a dominant role in the media sphere generally, not only in former Czechoslovakia and surrounding countries. Reports from the field gave listeners a great emotional experience of involvement in very recent scientific discoveries. The newly established programme was based on the inspiration and ethos of scientific work and authenticity, but also on cultivated language and voices.

Meteor Broadcasting is still alive

Nowadays Meteor is a popular-science broadcast magazine for those who are in a thoughtful relationship with nature, the universe and human missions. The programme is for the young in age and spirit, those who love to pass into a fantasy world in order to learn more. It keeps its wonderful tradition of scientists who are great popularisers of nature studies and science. Many of them are permanent co-editors.

Although television and more recently other new media are spreading, Meteor broadcasting still keeps a wide audience. It inevitably has its own web page that attracts wide attention as well. The current number of listeners is nearly the same as that for the mainstream broadcasting in the Czech radio called Radiojournal, see <http://www.rozhlas.cz/meteor/stopa>

► *A farewell*



David Dickson, 1947-2013

Science journalists mourn loss of David Dickson

Science journalism worldwide lost a pioneer and champion on 31 July with the sudden and unexpected death of David Dickson.

Many journalists, scientists and policy makers throughout the developing world knew him best for his dedicated and innovative work in the setting up of SciDev.net in 2001, and directing it for over ten years. Others knew him from his previous career, when he held various journalistic and editorial posts in *Nature*, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, *Science* and the *New Scientist*. He officially retired in 2012, but continued to write a column for the site and to mentor.

Among the many tributes on the www.scidev.net website, there are references to his work monitoring interns and young science journalists, and his determination that everyone should have access to science. Entering the search string 'David Dickson obituary' gives access to these tributes, the original announcement, and examples of his work, as well as to the obituary itself.

"He was a great friend to EUSJA, and was always supportive," commented Barbie Drillsma.

► *2013 Helsinki WCSJ*

Changes at the WFSJ

During the World Conference of Science Journalists in June in Helsinki, Seoul was chosen as the winning bidder to hold the 2015 WCSJ. Under the existing rules, this also meant that Dr Chul Joong Kim of the Korean Science Journalists Association became the new president of the WFSJ.

A qualified medical doctor with a master's degree in journalism, Dr Kim worked ten years in medicine before becoming a fulltime science journalist in 1999. He succeeded Vesa Niinikangas of the Finnish association, who remains on the WFSJ board as the immediate past president. Vesa is well known in EUSJA, having been its treasurer for several years.

This is the last time that the selection of the president will be tied to the location of the WCSJ. At the organisation's general assembly on 26 June in Helsinki, where our president Barbara Drillsma represented EUSJA, a rule change was passed that from 2015 onwards the president will be elected in the same way as the other board members, i.e. by voting by all the member associations.

The WFSJ board and directorate will also take far more responsibility for the organisation and funding of future WCSJs.

This means that associations that have, until now, been reluctant to bid for the conference to held in their own country, because of the huge commitments involved, may now feel they can.

Jean-Marc Fleury, who has given great service to the WFSJ as its executive director, formally announced his retirement at the general assembly, with the name of his successor to be announced later. In August, Damien Chalaud took up the office. There are more details on www.wfsj.org. The headquarters of the WFSJ are to move from Quebec to Montreal at the end of November.

The World Federation of Science Journalists has a new president and a new director general



Damien Chalaud

ANNA NOLAN

► *Some lessons in science journalism*

The summer of our discontent

Last summer was unusually hot in Russia. I do not mean a huge heat happened to fall on us, but non-stop meetings that were organised in science institutes during the last months. These meetings became a main topic in social networks for scientists and science journalists. I have never watched such a big consolidation from individuals of different age, position, scientific ideas, ethical principles or political points of view. I think this time we have to thank our government: its slap in our faces was so hard that we felt a shock awoke us.

BY VIOLA EGIKOVA,
VICE PRESIDENT EUSJA AND PRESIDENT INTELLECT

I can't call it anything other than a slap because we realised that the ministry of education and science had prepared a bill in secrecy and sent it to parliament during the last week before its summer holiday. The bill was never discussed with scientists and experts, never presented to journalists and the public, and

nobody knew about the unacceptable rules that a small group of officials decided to work out for the country. They call these rules 'progressive reforms', but actually they are a destruction of science.

In fact, this new bill proposed to wind up the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), which had

been created about 300 years ago. A group of officials, not scientists, had to decide everything, according to the document: which institute will continue to exist and which one must be abolished; what kind of research could be done and which field of science is 'needless'; who will work as a researcher and who does not deserve to, and

so on. The bill was accepted by the Russian parliament immediately in two readings in a couple of days, despite huge protests from scientists. The parliamentarians were ready for the very last (third) reading the same week, but the protests became so loud, and even international, that the officials decided to calm the situation: the third reading was postponed until September or October. Now, if the parliamentarians would listen to remarks from scientists, the bill could be back for the second reading. There is another proposal supported by many scientists: to recall the bill. That, however, would be a difficult task since the government has its will. For the moment our hot summer has turned into a difficult autumn. The meetings and the protests are still there. There was some publicity about the situation, also on the EUSJA web page.

Hard lesson

No matter what the fate of the bill this situation provides a hard lesson for science journalists. We must be honest enough to agree that this unthinkable bill was possible not least because of the position of some journalists.

I touched upon that point in my talk at a WCSJ session on 'totalitarian new clothes' in Helsinki. Even if censorship is prohibited in a country, the media can be controlled in a different way. Divide and conquer! This demand is well known from centuries of history. The border between journalists went to the ambitious: to whoever was more progressive, innovative, technological and modern. Some journalists decided that 'to be progres-



“Some journalists decided that ‘to be progressive’ means to criticise everything done by earlier generations, ‘to be technological’ is to bless everything that strong organisations say and ‘to be modern’ is just a definition of age.”



Demonstrators against the bill

sive' means to criticise everything done by earlier generations, 'to be technological' is to bless everything that strong organisations say and 'to be modern' is just a definition of age.

When the journalistic community is split by some false ideas, it is easy to manipulate the media. That is why for many years we were reading articles about 'useless scientists', 'archaic academy', 'good-for-nothing scientific institutes' and so on. The image of science and scientists was distorted by that kind of article flooding the media. And what is more, the articles with different ways of investigating the situation in Russian science or educational reforms were called 'conservative'. They were rated as having out-of-date views.

Last spring there was unprecedented statements in some media insisting that 'a young and progressive' ministry of education and science was 'under the pressure of retrograde persons' from science and science journalism. Now it is clear that these articles have been preparing for the onset of the

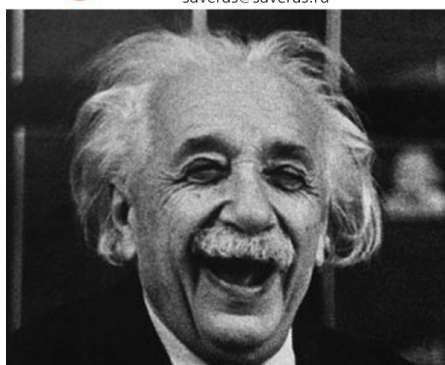
new bill. It was a tough-minded public relations decision to let the officials start their 'reforms' without discussion with scientists and without a mandate from society.

Today many of our colleagues have realised that they were the instruments for manipulation. We had a big meeting in the building of Russian Academy of Sciences on 29-30 August.

Many scientists and science journalists from the different regions of the country attended: we stood together these days even if we had been on different sides of the manufactured border in the past. This consolidation of scientists and science journalists in the face of a danger is very important. But this is in the same time a lesson for science journalists: never betray yourself! We shall see later if we learn this lesson ...



24 августа в 12.00
Суворовская площадь*
<http://saveras.ru>
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Всем, кто молод душой

**МИТИНГ МОЛОДЫХ
УЧЕНЫХ В ПОДДЕРЖКУ
АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЙ НАУКИ**

Announcing a protest meeting

P. S.
In the days immediately before publication of this issue of EUSJA News, the bill about RAS was accepted by the Russian parliament and the president.

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