ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF CERN USERS

Minutes of the 15th meeting held on 9th March 1992


Present part-time: J-F.Barthelemy, G.Bossen, M.Fleischmann, W.Middelkoop

Excused: C.Rubbia, G.Theodosiou, G.Walzel

INTRODUCTION
The Chairman opened the meeting welcoming the new members of ACCU, W.Blum (Germany), V.Karimaki (Finland) and L.Sándor the first representative of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. Y.Sacquin replaced A.Roussarie. The subjects of a Creche at CERN, phone bills, national newspapers available at the kiosk and the Academic Training Board were added to the agenda under AOB.

NEWS FROM THE CERN MANAGEMENT
P.Darriulat speaking on behalf of the Director General discussed five main topics: LHC, Eurolep arbitration, changes in the Directorate, LAA and Insurance for Users.

At its December Meeting, Council agreed that LHC is the right direction for CERN to proceed. Council requested the Director General to present a detailed costing of the project by the end of 1993, together with details of funding sources and the proposed experimental programme, in preparation for the final approval. In reply to a question from J.Hernández, P.Darriulat said that Council had passed a resolution in favour of LHC, but no date has been fixed for making the final decision. The SPC will discuss the formation of an LHC Committee.

The results of the Eurolep arbitration are now known. The DG will seek an important contribution outside the normal budget from the Member States, and will consider ways of finding the remaining 92 MSF at the next meetings of CERN Committees. Early settlement of this debt will avoid incurring further interest. It is agreed that reducing or stopping the exploitation of LEP, or delaying LEP200, now foreseen to start in early 1994, is not the correct way of finding the money. A special programme will be proposed to the next round of Council meetings, but it is too premature to make any forecasts.

A new Head of Administration (H.Weber) and two Associate Directors (R.Billinge for informatics, and C.Roche for forecast and planning) have been appointed to the Directorate. Following the end of the mandate of J.J.Thresher at the end of June, there will be only two Research Directors. P.Darriulat will take over the LEP tasks, and W.Hoogland those concerned with computing.

Council has approved the extension of the LAA project until the end of April 1994. DRDC will monitor LAA projects.
A draft recommendation concerning Insurance cover for death and disability for users working at CERN was introduced. Further details were presented later.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
The Chairman announced that UAC, the British equivalent of ACCU, sent congratulations to the improved Housing Service. The four members representing ACCU on the Housing Fund Committee are G. Bossen, C. Bricman, E. Lillestol and B. Pattison. Outside normal working hours, keys to the hostel rooms are held at Gate B.

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING FOR VISITING TEAMS
A. Naudi, Finance Division Leader, said that the CERN Review Committee had requested that better information on budgets and planning be made available. Phase 1 was introduced in January 1990. Further improvements for budgetting and accounting (including accrual accounting) were recommended by the External Auditors. Subsequently a new system for purchasing was introduced on 1 January 1992. The Budget Holders Toolkit will enable Team Leaders to follow closely the state of their budgets. It is hoped that the inevitable teething problems will be solved by early summer.

In view of the Eurolep arbitration CERN would greatly appreciate Institutes and Member States paying their bills upon receipt. Bills are sent every month, and any acceleration in payment will be most welcome.

The Chairman emphasized that a variety of financial services are used by visiting teams, and it is very important that these services do not reduce as the number of users increases. ACCU and the user community is grateful that CERN is willing to handle large blocks of purchases. A. Naudi agreed that Finance Division will continue to provide such services despite staff reductions. He thought it too early to consider direct computer links to speed up billing. W. Blum asked if an institute administrator had access to the BHT? The reply is yes, and it is via the new ADP computer using ORACLE. S. L. Wu stated that the services given at CERN are far superior to those she had experienced elsewhere.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
In his final report as Chairman, P. Norton, described ACCU and its modus operandi. Delegates to ACCU represent their Member State communities rather than act as individuals. Two way communication is vital between ACCU delegates and Member State Committees to foster respect.

ACCU had set various priorities during his term of office. There has been progress, albeit slow, concerning office space; the Housing Service has been reorganised; Insurance is still a worrying problem; overcrowding in the Restaurants, particularly No. 1, gives rise to concern for the future. ACCU delegates must discuss issues with their colleagues as well as their Delegates to CERN Committees.

Finally, in calling for nominations for his successor, the Chairman thanked ACCU and the CERN Management for their support and wished his successor every good fortune.

P. Darriulat supported the views given by the Chairman, and expressed the appreciation of the CERN Management to P. Norton for his role as Chairman.
OVERVIEW OF COMPUTING AT CERN

J.J. Thresher introduced this item by briefly reviewing the computing situation within High Energy Physics as a whole, pointing to major changes which were taking place within the computer industry and in the way computers are being used by experiments. The challenge of experiments at the new hadron colliders was considerable and would require new approaches to solving the problems they posed. He stressed the growing importance of UNIX and the need to evaluate the role that medium-to-massively parallel computer systems might play in the future.

In the Computing Centre the IBM 3090-600 E computer had been replaced by a new IBM ES 9000 Model 900 giving an increase of a factor of three in computer capacity. The VAX systems had also been or were soon to be upgraded to meet growing demand. The present contract for the CRAY XMP/48 which ends in October 1992 would be extended for about one year but at greatly reduced cost. The introduction of workstation farms to provide a service for batch processing, for example SHIFT, and for simulation work was proving to be successful and would probably be developed further.

Networking had high priority within the Laboratory and considerable effort was devoted to ensuring easy access to the CERN network from outside institutes. Many institutes now had high speed connections to CERN but progress was severely inhibited by the high tariffs charged by most PTT’s for such links. Much progress had recently been made in establishing computer links to CERN from institutes in central and east European countries.

An LHC Computing Committee will shortly be set up to help assess the needs and coordinate the implementation of computing for LHC experiments.

USERS’ OFFICE NEWS

E.Lillestol reminded the meeting that insurance (health, sickness, death and disability) has been an ACCU discussion point for more than two years. Short term health and sickness insurance is adequately covered by the insurance offered by Austria since autumn 1990. J-F.Barthelemy described the note recently issued by CERN stating that CERN has no commitment to cover Unpaid Scientific Associates, including those receiving subsistence, for accidents leading to death or disability. This is the responsibility of the individual and/or the home institute. ACCU delegates must bring this note to the knowledge of their user community and their authorities and collect their comments. He acknowledged that CERN would be satisfied if individuals, whilst working at CERN, were insured by their home institutes to the same level as when working in their own institutes. In future, checks will be made at registration time and extension of contracts when users would be requested to sign a statement that they understand that they are not covered by CERN for death and disability etc. whilst working at CERN. The authorities of the Member States will be informed through Council.

The major problems refer to students or others who might not be ‘employed’ by anyone at all, and to people who might well be insured on their first visit to CERN but not for subsequent visits. It should be noted that summer students are covered through CERN. G.Bossen said that CERN would be more strict in future in problem cases, and might refuse to register some individuals in cases of severe doubt unless a copy of the contract is produced. P.Darriulat said that CERN could not check all cases, the onus being with the individual who signs the form.
W. Middelkoop likened it to fire insurance: Hope not to have to use it, but wouldn’t like to be without it. A special insurance scheme will soon be available which can be taken up by Unpaid Scientific Associates if they so wish. W. Blum welcomed the approach made by CERN, stressing the role of Team Leaders. Nobody should arrive at CERN without their knowledge and approval.

Cards allowing access to the CERN sites will be mandatory from 1 July 1992, and their validity will be linked to the expiry date of Swiss Cards. Extensions will only be made after the person’s data held on the personnel database has been checked. The introduction of the card has the full backing of the Directorate, and an improved knowledge on the number of active CERN users is expected. It should be noted that cards already issued will not be replaced unless necessary. Changes to privileges accorded will be recorded in the database and not displayed on new cards.

The successful Post-graduate Courses are being repeated this year. Disappointment was expressed at a recent Academic Training Programme Committee meeting that there has been little feedback. Some university authorities had a positive approach to the courses, although it is not clear whether they wish to send students specifically for the courses. They are certainly good for long term stays of students at CERN. Tutorials were poorly attended. Following the presentation in December of the two models of the proposed new physicists’ building, the Users have given a clear preference for their choice, and discussions are ongoing for the final details. A users group will be set up to finalize details of the building. ACCU may wish to be represented. A request to go ahead will be presented at the March Finance Committee meeting. The building will provide some 5000m$^2$ whereas some 8000m$^2$ is required. The plans for a new hostel will be presented to the June Finance Committee meeting. Only authorisation for a loan needs to be requested, as the Housing Service is self-financing.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Illegal parking is becoming a serious hazard, preventing in some cases, emergency vehicles from approaching buildings. It was noted that the Staff Association had issued a questionnaire about the needs for a Crèche. Results will be presented at the next meeting. With the introduction of the new telephone system and PIN codes for direct dialling/billing, ACCU requested that groups should not have to pay more than before. Direct charging is inevitable, it is more cost effective, but there is no preconceived notion that users should pay more. The CERN telephone bill is 2MSF per annum, and up to now groups have only been billed if a call exceeded 15 minutes or 30 SF.

ACCU was informed that there have been occasions when taxis have not been allowed on site outside normal working hours, and asked that this be remedied. ACCU noted that there are accelerator engineers ‘on call’ outside normal working hours, but not technicians, and asked that the experimental programme be adequately covered in this respect.
ELECTION OF THE NEW ACCU CHAIRMAN
Only one nomination had been received, that of D. Toet representing The Netherlands. Elected by acclaim, he said that he would have a difficult task in replacing his predecessor, but would do his best.

DATE AND AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING
The date for the September ACCU meeting was changed to 7 September. The next meeting will be on 25 MAY 1992 starting at 10 a.m. in the Main Auditorium, and will continue in the afternoon. Items for discussion would include: Information from the Evian LHC meeting, Charges for non-Member States, Insurance, Academic Training, Telephones and Crèche.

Bryan Pattison

ACCU MEETING

Agenda for the meeting to be held on Monday, 25 May 1992

At 10 a.m. in the Main Auditorium

1. Chairman's introduction
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. News from the CERN Management
4. Minutes of the previous meeting
5. Matters arising
6. News & follow up from the Evian LHC Meeting
7. Insurance
8. Telephone billing
9. Academic Training Committee
10. Results of the Crèche survey
11. Users' Office News
12. Report from the Restaurant Committee
13. Any other business
14. Agenda for the next meeting