

EURO-VO Science Advisory Committee – Terms of reference

Introduction.

The European Virtual Observatory (EURO-VO) Project builds on the research and development experience gained within the Astrophysical Virtual Observatory Project (AVO), in coordination with the European astronomical infrastructure networks OPTICON and RADIONET, to make the Virtual Observatory a European reality. Through membership and support of the International Virtual Observatory Alliance (IVOA), EURO-VO will seek to obtain the following objectives:

EURO-VO-Objective 1: Technology take-up and full VO-compliant data and resource provision by astronomical data centres in Europe.

EURO-VO-Objective 2: Support to the scientific community to utilize the new VO infrastructure through dissemination, workshops, project support, and VO facility-wide resources and services.

EURO-VO-Objective 3: Build an operational VO infrastructure in response to new scientific challenges via development and refinement of VO components, assessment of new technologies, design of new components and their implementation.

EURO-VO is open to all European astronomical data centres. Initial partners include ESO, the European Space Agency, and six national funding agencies, with their respective VO nodes: Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF, Italy), Institut National des Sciences de l'Univers (INSU, France), Instituto Nacional de Técnica Aeroespacial (INTA, Spain), Nederlandse Onderzoekschool voor Astronomie (NOVA, Netherlands), Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC, UK), and Rates Deutscher Sternwarten (RDS, Germany). The EURO-VO is co-financed by the European Commission. More details about the Project can be found at <http://www.euro-vo.org/>.

EURO-VO will seek to obtain its objectives by establishing three new interlinked structures: 1. the EURO-VO Data Centre Alliance (DCA), an alliance of European data centres who will populate the EURO-VO with data, provide the physical storage and computational fabric and who will publish data, metadata and services to the EURO-VO using VO technologies; 2. The EURO-VO Facility Centre (VOFC), an organisation that provides the EURO-VO with a centralised registry for resources, standards and certification mechanisms as well as community support for VO technology take-up and dissemination and scientific program support using VO technologies and resources; 3. the EURO-VO Technology Centre (VOTC), a distributed organisation that coordinates a set of research and development projects on the advancement of VO technology, systems and tools in response to scientific and community requirements.

EURO-VO Science activities are to be supported by a Science Advisory Committee (SAC) representing the European (and international) astronomical community.

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1 The EURO-VO SAC is composed of leading European researchers outside mainstream VO projects. It also includes at least one representative from a non-European VO project. The selection of the EURO-VO SAC is done by the EURO-VO Executive

Board based on input from the EURO-VO FC, DCA, TC, and ESA VO Scientists.

2 Members are invited to actively participate in the meetings of the EURO-VO SAC, which will happen approximately twice a year. The participation in the meetings is financially supported by the EURO-VO Project. Teleconferences might also be used to discuss some particular topics.

3 The EURO-VO SAC Chair is selected by the EURO-VO Executive Board. This is a three year appointment.

4 The EURO-VO FC Scientist acts as EURO-VO SAC Secretary.

5 The EURO-VO DCA, TC, and ESA VO Scientists are also “de facto” members of the EURO-VO SAC.

6 The EURO-VO SAC will advise the Project in the following areas:

- a. High-level science requirements for the EURO-VO; consideration of the AVO Science Reference Mission;
- b. Promotion of VO science in Europe;
- c. VO tools and their astronomical applications;
- d. Existing European astronomical archives with suggestions for improvements;
- e. EURO-VO Science Operation concepts;
- f. Progress review of EURO-VO.

7 The EURO-VO SAC will also be a focal contact point between European astronomers and the EURO-VO project.

8 The EURO-VO will maintain web pages with the minutes and resolutions of the SAC. Work areas, restricted to the SAC members, will also be available, if needed.

9 The EURO-VO SAC membership will last for three years.