



EUSJA News

Newsletter of the European Union of Science Journalists' Associations

Summer 2013

A letter from the President

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Let's fight back

It's a worrying precedent. In Australia, where many fine science correspondents have lost their jobs, PhD students are being asked to write science stories from published research papers – for publication in the mainstream media without any payment! And all this while jobs in the industry, particularly across Europe, are falling.

The European Commission is listening to science journalists and is considering several ways to support our efforts

We at EUSJA are doing everything possible to ensure the future of science journalism, raise its profile and have the industry taken seriously. We are lobbying the EU, and just a few weeks ago Elmar Veerman, Fabio Turone, Joost van Kasteren and Connie St Louis had a meeting with Robert-Jan Smits, Director General for Research and Innovation, to hammer home the need for something to be done to stress the important role science



Board members and delegates at the 2013 General Assembly in Prague

journalists play. It was a positive meeting and Smits has promised to look at funding a number of initiatives including specialist training – perhaps during summer schools – and actions to create awareness of the value of science journalism. One proposal is to fund a European Conference of Science Journalism, managed by science journalists for science journalists. This could well be part of a future ESOF meeting.

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and not necessarily those of the EUSJA Board, the Editor or the Layout and Design Director

Editor:

Anna Nolan (anolan@iol.ie)

Layout and Design:

Fabio Turone (turone@sciencewriters.it)

Come to Helsinki!

The World Conference of Science Journalists will attract speakers, panellists, debaters, producers and attending journalists from around the world. Many of these are individual members of EUSJA's associations. With the Finnish association hosting the event, in conjunction with the World Federation of Science Journalists, Europe is to the fore. The EUSJA board, and its members are looking forward to participating enthusiastically. As a convenient guide, Wolfgang C. Goede (who is producing two sessions) describes some planned EUSJA-organised and EUSJA-related events

WOLFGANG C. GOEDE, EUSJA HON. SECRETARY

EUSJA continues to raise its international profile in Europe and beyond. At the world conference of science journalists in Helsinki, Europe's science journalists will be represented with several activities. They will address the past, present and future of our profession and help to develop new valuable skills and innovative tools.

The EUSJA board is happy to announce that it will be involved with five sessions at the World Conference of Science Journalists WCSJ 2013. Between June 24 and June 28, more than 700 (according to the registrations up to early June) delegates, science journalists and scientists from all over the world will meet in the Finnish capital Helsinki to discuss viable themes and issues of the profession as well as major perspectives and future developments.

Panels, debates and workshops will be embedded in an attractive social programme and rounded up by excursions to a variety of research labs throughout Finland and also to neighboring Estonia.

The hosts are the World Federation of Science Journalists in conjunction with the Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists (FASEJ). Their member **Vesa Niinikangas** is the current WFSJ president. He is a former EUSJA treasurer and well known to many EUSJA delegates and members. The EUSJA

board would like to express thanks to Vesa and his team, especially also to **Raili Leino**, Finland's EUSJA delegate for the close and fruitful cooperation. Our Finnish colleagues were very receptive to EUSJA's ideas and contributions the WCSJ 2013 programme. EUSJA has awarded three scholarships to facilitate the conference attendance of its members.

Don't miss this unique chance for your professional advancement

EUSJA starts off on June 24 with a pre-conference training session in science journalism. Essential tools of the profession, investigation, statistics and storytelling will be taught by some of the finest international experts in this field. Another highlight is a panel on Horizon 2020, the new EU communication strategy, scheduled for Thursday, June 27. **Robert-Jan Smits**, Director-

General for Research & Innovation, European Commission, Brussels will send his expert to respond to questions and concerns about how science journalism ties into the Horizon programme. Associated with the EUSJA world conference activities is a session, which has been organised by **Viola Egikova**, EUSJA vice president and head of the Russian science journalists' association Intellect. The heritage of totalitarian regimes and its impact on science journalism in the 21st century will be debated by her panel Tuesday, June 25, which will be chaired by EUSJA president emeritus **Istvan Palugyai**.

Many East European EUSJA delegates will join them with observations and reflections from their own countries.

Another EUSJA president emeritus, **Hanns-J. Neubert**, will present a topic, which Europe's science journalists first raised during ESOF 2010 Turin: debates as a new professional tool. On Tuesday, June 25, he will be joined, among others, by the long-time Estonian delegate and newly elected EUSJA treasurer **Priit Ennet**. He'll report his experience with this innovative method. Finally, an EUSJA event facilitating 'speed dating' between science journalists and scientists is planned.

"This will be more pro- and interactive with more learning potential than just a reception at the EUSJA stand," said EUSJA President **Barbie Drillsma**.

EUSJA contributions

Monday, June 24, pre-conference workshop 11:00 to 15:30

Blood infusion for staggering science journalism

<http://wcsj2013.org/blood-infusion-staggering-science-journalism/>

Science journalism is seriously ill. It is staggering and the profession urgently needs a blood infusion if it wants to regain its vital force. There are a number of reasons for this deterioration, but the main one is that unlike traditional journalism, science journalism has never enjoyed real independence. While political journalists for example, had to fight to enter



the political realm and become accepted as critical observers of governments and parliaments, science journalism was born out of science.

Many of the first science journalists were scientists who basically interpreted the findings of research for the public. The essential job of a journalist, namely to reveal both the sunny and the dark side of a topic, to make different views visible, and to ask how the public, taxpayers, and consumers benefit or suffer from it, was not pursued by science journalists until quite recently. Investigative science journalism, which also looks into the funding of research, is under way and raises questions about whose interests are being served. So a new breed of science journalist is developing, with no fear of controversy, and with an understanding of how to read the scientific language, how to decode statistics, and most important, how to apply journalistic research to tell a good story capable of reaching the mainstream of the public in a way that is both educational and enlightening on both the potentials and the dangers of science.

The WCSJ 2013 capacity building session is structured accordingly:

1. The craft of investigation, presented by **Fabio Turone**, science journalist, SWIM, Italy.
2. How to interpret statistics, presented by **Hans van Maanen**, science writer, author of an online course on statistics, Netherlands.
3. The narrative art and storytelling, presented by **Angela Posada-Swofford**, US Senior Correspondent of the Spanish publication *Muy interesante*, USA, Colombia.

Producer & facilitator: **Wolfgang C. Goede**, Munich, Germany, EUSJA Honorary Secretary

Hans van Maanen is known for a critical column in *De Volkskrant* about sloppy science. Author of 20 books, mostly on games, statistics and popular science. In 2007, he was awarded both the Van Walree Prize for medical writing by the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and the Eureka Prize for science writing by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research. He teaches science writing, journalism, and statistics at several Dutch universities.

Fabio Turone, president of SWIM, associate EUSJA board member, a member of the U.S. National Association of Science Writers NASW, member of Investigative Reporters and Editors and Association of Health Care Journalists.

Director of the Agency Zoe of scientific and medical information in Milan. Contributor to the *British Medical Journal*. Staff writer and contributor, among others, to *la Repubblica*, *la Stampa*, *Il Corriere della sera*, *Newton* and *Wired*. Managing editor of the *Italian Journal of Public Health*.

Course Director at the Erice International School of Science Journalism.

Angela Posada-Swofford, living in three worlds, three cultures, three styles of science journalism. Born in Colombia, living in Miami Beach, she was the first Hispanic journalist to be selected as a Knight Fellow in Science Journalism at MIT and Harvard. Articles, radio documentaries and TV in Astronomy,



Havis Amanda statue, between the Market Place and the Esplanade Park, is a popular meeting place. (Photo: imagebank.VisitFinland.com)

Wired, *National Geographic*, *The Boston Globe*, *El Tiempo Colombia*, *Spanish Muy Interesante*, *National Public Radio*, *Discovery Channel Latin America*. She was honoured as one of 100 distinguished Colombians living abroad (see also 'The Passionate', *EUSJA News Spring 2013*, which is on the www.eusja.org website).

Wolfgang C. Goede served as an editor for Germany's leading popular science magazine *P.M.* for 28 years. Deputy chairman of the German Association of Science Writers TELI, co-founder of the World Federation of Science Journalists WFSJ, member of the International Science Writers Association ISWA, EUSJA honorary secretary. He served as a member of the British Council's Science Think Tank and has been the speaker and co-organiser of numerous journalistic workshops (ESOF, PCST, WCSJ). His engagement revolves around the state of the art of science journalism, its ethics and history, democratic claims and reality.



EUSJA scholarships to the WCSJ

Three cash scholarships of 700 euro each to attend the World Conference on Science Journalism conference in Helsinki have been awarded to members of our EUSJA associations.

Michele Catanzaro from our Catalan association, **Klaartje Jaspers** from the Netherlands, and **Anthony King** from Ireland were the lucky three.

The board was inundated with scholarship requests, and it was a difficult and at times painful process to reach our final decision. However, we are delighted with the result and look forward to meeting up in Helsinki, and for those not attending to receive blogs, tweets and copy from them.

Barbie Drillsma

Thursday, June 27, 14:00 to 15:30

Horizon 2020 – how science journalists tie into the new EU strategy

<http://wcsj2013.org/Horizon-2020-science-journalists-tie-eu-strategy/>

The European Commission is launching a new strategy to connect research and citizens. The current one, science in society, will be integrated into Horizon 2020. What is the new approach to bridge the gap between the research and the public sectors all about; how will scientists try to reach society with their work; and how will this be communicated? In fact, communication is the key element to kick off and carry out this important programme. It is decisive for reaching the target audience. However, what kind of communication is intended: science communication, science journalism, both? Science journalism could play a crucial role to promote the new EU outreach programme and involve the civil society in science.

EUSJA will promote a panel discussion with scientific representatives of the Commission and science journalists. It is intended to clarify the extent of the new EU strategy, its goals and how they are being implemented. The focus of this session goes beyond Europe. It will also ask how ICPC countries, third countries as

part of the International Cooperation of Partner Countries may benefit and participate.

Expert on the panel: **Begoña Arano**, Head of Communication, representing Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General for Research & Innovation, European Commission, Brussels.

Moderator: **Barbara Drillsma**, Freelancer & EUSJA president, London
Presenter: **Menelaos Sotiriou**, EUSJA board associate member & journalistic expert on EU programmes, Athens

Debater: **Martin Schneider**, TV science programme director SWR & chairman of the German Science Journalists' Association WPK, Baden-Baden

Producer: **Wolfgang C. Goede**, Freelancer & EUSJA Hon. Secretary, Munich

Barbara Drillsma has worked on a range of newspapers throughout the UK as chief reporter, editor and special correspondent and was twice runner-up in the National Woman

Journalist of the Year Award. She wrote one of the first environmental supplements for a national daily, contributed to New Scientist, The Biologist, Chemistry in Britain, Channel Four News, wrote corporate publications for the British Science Association and the Royal Society. She has also worked for the European Science Foundation, Euroscience and the UK's Association of British Science Writers.

Menelaos Sotiriou: science writer and editor of the official Research and Technology online magazine in Greece; he has been involved in more than 30 EU projects in the areas of SiS, SSH, ICT; participated in several EC meetings as an expert in science communication issues; currently secretary general of Science View, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation engaged in science communication and science journalism.

Martin Schneider worked in the press department of the German Research Council; freelance science writer and TV producer for newspapers, magazines and broadcast companies in Germany; since 1999 staff member in the science department of SWR Television (Suedwestrundfunk, member of Public German Network ARD) and in charge of three magazine programmes and science documentaries; chairman of German Science Journalists' Association WPK.

Tuesday, June 25, 14.00 to 15:30

Science journalism in totalitarian countries: the impacts to a current time

<http://wcsj2013.org/science-journalism-totalitarian-countries-impacts-current-time/>

History offers numerous examples of the pressure facing science journalism. Such pressure was common under totalitarian regimes such as the one in Nazi Germany or in the Soviet-led "socialist camp". The political situation in these countries is quite different today, but political change does not automatically lead to corresponding changes in media. If the traditions of democracy are not strong enough, the media remains under pressure, but this pressure merely takes on a different form.

The 21st century fundamentally changed the conditions of the science journalist's job: modern technologies facilitate access to information, while opening new possibilities for communication and for the discussion of the urgent and timely scientific problems that are important for society. This is an important current





Front of the Main Building of the University, at Senate Square.. The building, designed by Carl Ludvig Engel in 1832, is the main venue of the conference. (Photo: University of Helsinki/Ilda Pimenoff)

trend, which affects even the countries without strong traditions of democracy and freedom of expression. But technological upgrades cannot help if society itself does not develop. Furthermore, the technologies can be used for the falsification of information in countries where journalists remain under pressure. The goal of this session is to give an overview of the situation with science journalism in former totalitarian countries: how it worked in the past and how it works today. We shall try to analyze how the totalitarian past continues to affect the current situation. The discussion will be especially important for the journalists from countries, which remain under a totalitarian system. We think it is also important to examine the situation in countries with strong traditions of democracy: even these countries had a period in which science journalism was under pressure. We believe that all presenters could critically reflect in their closing statements on the state of the art of science journalism across the continents. Western democracies are not always the best role models for the East and South. This is no excuse for past or present totalitarian countries; it is simply an invitation to recognise that we all still have a long way ahead of us and to shape up on the way (which will hopefully open up a lively discussion).

Producer: **Viola Egikova**, science journalist, EUSJA vice president, president of Intellect (Russia).

Moderator: **Istvan Palugyai**, senior science journalist for the newspaper Nepszabadsag (Hungary).

Panellists:

Dr Blanka Jergovic, professor of the University of Zagreb, science journalist for Croatian Radio: *Science journalism in transition: the Croatian experience*

Marina Huzvarova, editor-in-chief of Academic Bulletin (Czech Republic): *Meteor broadcasting – the light in the darkness*

Viola Egikova, science journalist, EUSJA vice president, president

EUSJA is planning to match up science journalists and scientists during the conference. Be sure to check the conference programme.

of Intellect (Russia): *Is censorship still alive?*
James Cornell, ISWA president (USA): *The tyranny of democracy*
Wolfgang C. Goede, science journalist, EUSJA honorary secretary (Germany): *The echo of Two Germanies and the lessons learned*
Istvan Palugyai, senior science journalist in the newspaper Nepszabadsag (Hungary): *Tomorrow starts yesterday*
Blanka Jergovic, assistant professor at the University of Zagreb, teacher at the University of Dubrovnik, science journalist for the Croatian Radio. She has worked as a researcher in various research groups within the European framework, coordinator of three scientific projects. Croatian EUSJA delegate and member of The International Network on Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST).

Marina Huzvarova worked for twelve years in Radio Prague; after the 'velvet revolution' as the editor of the independent magazine Cesky Dialog; since 2002 editor-in-chief of Academic Bulletin, the official science journal of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic. She is the president of the Czech Association of Science Journalists.

Viola Egikova heads the science desk at a daily independent newspaper in Moscow; president of Intellect, the Russian Association for Science Writers and Journalists, vice president of EUSJA, programme coordinator for Moscow Science Festivals; she has won a number of different prizes for journalists, e.g. Moscow State University Prize (2005), a medal from the City of Moscow (2009), and the Prize for Journalism from the Government of the City of Moscow (2011). She has represented the Russian association and EUSJA in various international conferences.

James Cornell is president of the International Science Writers Association ISWA; freelance writer, editor, and media consultant. For more than three decades, he was associated with the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics where he was responsible for the publication of both technical and popular science communication; author or editor of more than a dozen books for general audiences.

Istvan Palugyai is a senior science journalist in Nepszabadsag, largest daily newspaper in Hungary, responsible for the weekly science, environment, and IT columns and the monthly IT supplement; author of a number of popular science books, television programmes and films, an organiser of training in science journalism. He is a president emeritus of EUSJA, was vice president of the World Federation of Science Journalists, organiser of and speaker at many international conferences.



Rethinking science debates

HANNS-J. NEUBERT, PRESIDENT EMERITUS EUSJA, TELI BOARD MEMBER

It looks like science debates have been discovered as another public relations tool for science and technology. Governments, institutes, even research projects contrive debates – basically to gain acceptance from citizens in order to continue undisturbed. Science debates were quite a novelty when we introduced them on the European level as a tool for science journalists during ESOF Turin in 2010. Running a science debate can result in quite some new insights worth reporting and questions worth asking.

But despite the original intention of introducing system critics into science and society dynamics, the debates degraded into gossip forums about symptoms.

In my presentation at ESOF Turin 2010 I used the parable of a pipeline, saying that debates are useless when the pipes are laid out and we are only allowed to talk about the content to be flushed. Instead, we need real debates at the start of the pipeline: Do we need the pipeline at all? Where should it be put? How long should it be? Which means: do we need such a research project? Or: why not create a research project in response to our concerns?

Of course there has to be science for its own sake, basic research. We want to know how things work – or not. We want to know where we come from and where we may go. So an answer such as "we just want to know" is a reasonable one.

As science journalists we should be familiar with the framing of our stories. We should tell our audiences why a discovery is so important, what the background of the research work is, where it will lead, and who benefits from it in what way. We have made progress, no doubt. At least we have developed a sense for this kind of values.

However, my feeling is that our frames are usually too narrow, especially when it comes to longer stories. I propose that we climb to the next level in order to show the even bigger pictures, to approach system critics. That is something already

inherent in investigative science journalism – and science debates can be complementary. Can we really debate an already-funded project promising

to develop something more energy efficient, when energy efficiency still means energy consumption? Can we debate a biotechnology project while knowing that the most profitable results go into the development of junk food, resulting in submitting another project in order to reduce the negative

effects of such food using functional food? And can we debate a project at all where the results are already defined in the submitted proposal?

Again: we need to look over the edge of the plate – not to the next plate or around the table. We have to look at the whole dining room, look at research in a very broad frame.

As an example: Europeans like to look at the US, where enormous investments in science and technology take place, where one quarter of all scientists of the world are congregated. But did the US society improve in the face of the political power of creationists and climate change deniers, the output of more than double the amount of CO₂ per capita and per year as compared with Europe, the increasing number of people in poverty?

It should be our job as science journalists to find out how, where, when, and under which circumstances society as a whole does benefit from research and technology.

So we thought that it was time to raise the topic again, rethink science debates, go back to their roots.

We will do that in our session "Debate-driven journalism: Science debates as a tool and opportunity for science journalists" at WCSJ 2013 in Helsinki on 25 June among the parallel morning sessions. Shawn Otto (USA), Priit Ennet (Estonia), and myself (Germany), will be sharing our national and international experiences with science debates.

Tuesday, June 25, 11:00 to 11.40

Debate-driven science journalism: science debates as a tool and opportunity for science journalists

<http://wcsj2013.org/debate-driven-journalism-science-debates-tool-opportunity-science-journalists/>



At the moment these are merely items for discussion and there is nothing concrete and fully funded on the table. But they are positive steps, and if the sector can raise its standing, and demonstrate that science journalists are professional beings with a solid body of training behind them, things can only improve. When I entered the journalism profession it was necessary to enrol on the NCTJ course – National Council for the Training of Journalists. This training was undertaken, after a six month probationary period, over three years on day release courses, or two months a year block training and, of course, on the job training. Once one had the coveted diploma – and all future employers then asked for it – it was easier to move onwards and upwards. Maybe this is what science journalism needs, proper, structured training for all who would enter into the profession of journalism.

One controversial point raised recently is that perhaps there is a need for members to begin considering they are, first and foremost, journalists. Properly trained journalists should, using the basic tools of the trade, be able to turn their hand to writing anything. If those with staff jobs can demonstrate they can cover other areas, their positions may be more secure. I know this to many might seem a backward step but sometimes, especially in today's financially austere climate, one has to take two steps back to move forward. A recent show of hands at our General Assembly in Prague showed that a number of members have indeed taken a sideways step into areas such as science communication, training and public relations. Many are older members with a solid career in science writing and broadcasting behind them. Could they be the tutors of the future? Would they need to qualify as teachers before training others? Do we want and need proper structured training in the profession of journalism, and if we accept EU money for training are we in danger of becoming EU loudspeakers?

As I said earlier, these are some controversial points for discussion. Please do respond – on our web page or in a reader's letter to the next issue of EUSJA News. The EUSJA Board and EUSJA News would love to, and need to, hear your views. In



Some images from the General Assembly hosted by the wonderful Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, last March. Board member Menelaos Sotiriou illustrates the strategy in dealing with EU projects and proposals (top, right) while outgoing Dutch treasurer Elmar Veerman (top, left) follows along with national delegates (bottom, from left to right) Kaianders Sempler (Sweden), Merce Piqueras (Spain, ACCC), Istvan Palugyai (Hungary), Jacopo Pasotti (Italy, SWIM), Fabio Pagan (Italy, UGIS) and Jop de Vrieze (Netherlands).



the meantime please continue to raise EUSJA's profile. If you haven't already done so, add EUSJA to your business card, by adding "(affiliated to EUSJA)" after the name of your association. Take EUSJA leaflets to any conferences or international meetings you attend and encourage your colleagues to join your national associations.

There is strength in numbers.

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**BARBIE DRILLSMA,
EUSJA PRESIDENT**

Euroscientist – the future is to be the mass media

JENS DEGETT, MEMBER OF THE EUROSCIENTIST EDITORIAL BOARD

The European grass roots organisation Euroscience has recently re-launched its magazine, The Euroscientist, which covers topics relevant to researchers from across Europe, ranging from policy to poetry. New trends in communication are pointing towards greater engagement with the audience. This counts in particular for a grass roots organisation that wants to engage with its audience. Therefore all articles displayed in the relaunched version of the Euroscientist webzine feature buttons to comment, like and communicate the article to different social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Share This, Google+, Pinterest and Instagram. In addition, The Euroscientist is exploring the possibilities of being partly funded by its own readers. It launched a test crowd-funding campaign last April. As little as a 2 € donation could bring the magazine a long way if enough readers support it. Those generously inclined to donate greater amounts can choose to receive different perks including a science poetry book, having one's own podcast displayed or even an invitation to a special VIP party at ESOF 2014 in Copenhagen with travel and hotel arranged. Even Nobel Laureates cannot resist these offers.

NOOWIT platform (see www.noowit.com/euroscientist). This augmented version not only features original stories by the Euroscientist, but also provides curated stories picked up in relevant publications from across the web, carefully selected by the Euroscience editor from the vast number of articles published daily on topics relevant to scientists. An artificial intelligence algorithm, capable of learning the editor's preferences, helps her find the most relevant articles published online. The magazine is therefore at the forefront of web 2.0 publishing, combining original content with the best-curated articles from reference magazines.

It's a different way to work with journalism

The editor, Sabine Louët, describes the new magazine this way: "What is so unique about our magazine is that it gives scientists an opportunity to directly express their opinions outside the constraining format of scientific publications, without having to battle the jungle of traditional media to be heard". She adds: "It gives an opportunity to scientists to engage in citizen journalism".

Indeed, the principle of the Euroscientist is that it includes

journalistic articles written by some of Europe's finest science journalists, combined with opinion pieces from scientists and other experts on topics that they feel should be discussed among the wider scientific community. In addition, it gives some significant column inches to its readers, and publishes letters to the editor. This was particularly successful in its recent special issue on Research Austerity (euroscientist.com/austerity). Is this the end of science journalism? The answer is no! It is a different way to work with journalism where impact and success

may be more complex, that requires close association with readers as an integral part of the publishing process. But what does not change is that it all goes back to publishing good stories as a basic principle. Without such good stories you have nothing to share, no comments, no tweets, no likes, no followers and no crowd to fund you.

EUROSCIENTIST
by Euroscientist SCIENCE CONVERSATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY

In Society
10 articles
Policy
12 articles
Innovation
11 articles
Funding
7 articles
Career
& More
& More
12 articles
Look for more



One of the most recent issues, devoted to research austerity in Southern Europe.

The magazine has already received the support of Françoise Barré Sinoussi, 2008 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine. Others such as Bruce Alberts, Editor-in-Chief of Science magazine (www.sciencemagazine.org) and Federico Mayor, former General Director of UNESCO (www.unesco.org) have also expressed their support. More supporters are welcome. Another new and interesting feature of the Euroscientist is the availability of an enhanced version of the magazine thanks to the

Have a look: <http://euroscientist.com/>

Why I like to be a man with two hats

David Redeker is one of a growing group of science journalists. He is what could be called a hybrid – working sometimes as a traditional journalist, sometimes as a communicator, and sometimes as a public relations adviser. He explains why he prefers working like this, despite the disapproval of some other journalists.

DAVID REDEKER, VWN

I am both a communications adviser and a science journalist. And to get it straight from the start: I like it. I like to be a chameleon. I like to be a man with two hats.

How do I combine being journalist with being an adviser? And do I encounter problems?

First, let me introduce myself. I have worked for 14 years in science communication. I started in 1999 as a freelance journalist for the university newspaper in Wageningen. After a year I got a job as a press officer at NWO, the Dutch national science foundation. In 2012 I quit my job and became a freelance science writer and a communications adviser.

I am not alone in working in a mixture of ways. Last year the Dutch association of science journalists (VWN) held a survey. Of the journalists who in the first question answered that they were hard-core journalists, 75 per cent reported in the following questions that they received money from universities, government or NGOs [non-governmental organisations]. So, some hard-core journalists are not so hard-core as they think they are.

The situation not only is a hot topic in the Netherlands. I recently completed a survey that serves as input to a session at the World Conference on Science Journalism in Helsinki on 25 June. It has the same questions as the Dutch version a year ago.

Anyway, why do I combine journalism and public relations? The first reason is money. As a public relations person I can earn twice as much as I do as a journalist. Or, in other words: I can work half the time for the same amount of salary. That gives me quality time with my wife and children.

The second reason is that I love the variety of my two-hats practice. When I have written articles for days or weeks, I like to do something else. I advise on how to make an unreadable report readable, I train researchers and I coordinate a sponsored magazine.

If forced to choose between journalism and public relations I honestly do not know which would win. Yes, I get high when I see my name under an article in a popular science magazine, but I also love it when I can help in the back office at a Twitter debate organised by a government body.

Do I encounter problems? Yes. For example, I am an interim reporter at Quest, the largest popular science magazine in the Netherlands. The editor asked if I could write an article about robots and society. I declined the offer because I had just finished working on the annual report for the institute that did the



research on robots and society. Fortunately, there were other reporters who could write that story, and other articles that I could write.

Okay, one more thing. That is about the so-called war between journalists and public information officers. I have seen both sides of this for 14 years now. Sometimes there is some psychological warfare, but most of the time, especially in the field of science communication, journalists and PR persons battle together.

Thanks to my experience I know the tactics of journalists and I understand the strategies of press officers. And because I know both sides, I can use their strengths and turn them into my advantage. When I play the public information officer I know which Dutch journalists are specialists on a topic. I can directly contact them with some nice information. When I play the journalist I ask the press officer to persuade a busy scientist to arrange an interview.

Let's be realistic. I think most of the science journalists in the Netherlands are not gatekeeper journalists. Is that a pity? I don't think so. I think there have to be gatekeepers, but there have to be science correspondents too.

Some colleagues put me in the last category and say that I am no real journalist. I think they are too strict with their definition. But there is one thing that we, the strict ones and the loose ones, have in common. We both think that one has to be open and honest about your finances. That is why I always sign my e-mails with both of my hats, "communications adviser and science journalist"; that is why my business card is clear; and that is why I have a website that names my clients.

Remembering two EUSJA presidents

By a sad coincidence, EUSJA lost two former presidents in February, as notified to readers of the Spring 2013 issue of EUSJA News. Here we look back at just some of their many achievements as science journalists and communicators.

Casper Schuuring

Meteorologist, print and radio science journalist, who set up several initiatives to advance science journalism and science communication, and was present at the first meeting to set up EUSJA in Italy in 1972 and the first board meeting (now called the general assembly) in 1973

Casper Schuuring, grand old man of Dutch science journalism, passed away at the age of 85 on February 12, 2013. He was trained as a meteorologist but became a science journalist at the Brabants Dagblad, a regional daily newspaper. He was involved in making radio programmes about science, technology and the environment and was at the root of several initiatives to stimulate public discussion about the role of science and technology in society. He liked to write about (alternative) energy generation and envi-

ronmental issues and was especially interested in technological adaptations aimed at developing countries. At big energy conferences in the 1980s, his presence at the press tribune was always a guarantee of a good-humoured atmosphere.

Casper Schuuring was chairman of the science section of the national journalists' association (NVJ) for a good number of years. He was also co-founder of the Science Journalism and Communication Foundation and was one of the founding members of the Dutch science journalists' association (VWN). He was elected president of EUSJA in 1977 and again in 1983. He contributed greatly to the popularisation of science by means of science journalism. As a trusted expert he was frequently invited to join supervisory boards and advisory committees. He was a very amiable person.

Beginners in the profession could always rely on him for advice or for an introduction to a research organisation or an individual scientist.

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JOOST VAN KASTEREN, PRESIDENT VWN
 (ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY ELMAR VEERMAN, VWN)



Casper Schuuring in 1989

Arthur Bourne

All-media science journalist and writer on the environment, who helped to set up the first World Conference on Science Journalism

Arthur Bourne, who passed away on February 23, had a many-faceted career, taking in science, UNESCO, the International Whaling Commission, science journalism, science communication, publishing and much more. He was interested in science from the age of seven, and the adult Arthur Bourne spent four years in pathology, leaving it to travel. He later became editor of *Spectrum*. He joined the ABSW, was made its national delegate to EUSJA, and within two years was elected to the presidency of EUSJA. He had been thinking about the desirability of a world conference of science journalists since the late 1960s, and during his EUSJA presidency he played a major part in the birth of the first such conference in Tokyo. Another notable feature of his four years as president was the opening up of EUSJA to new association members from the

countries that used to be described as the eastern bloc. This followed on from initiatives by the Austrian association and several colleagues from Eastern Europe and Russia.

He became EUSJA president in 1989. When I became the national delegate from Ireland for my first time, he graciously welcomed me into the EUSJA family. He often helped me, always with great good humour.

He was re-elected in 1991, and just before leaving office two years later he organised a fascinating farewell dinner at Charles Darwin's home in Kent, UK. In a subsequent blog he stated: "I was touched to be made president emeritus of the association and to receive a long black box, labelled The EUSJA Music Box. It contained tapes, donated by my colleagues, of the music of the [EUSJA] countries."

Arthur wrote many articles on a variety of topics and several books on environmental matters. His final book (working title 'Ecomillennium') was almost ready for publication when he died. Apart from his scientific and journalistic activities, Arthur spent time on active service in the Fleet Air Arm in Korea where he was shot down (but escaped). He enjoyed sailing, music, reading, food and wine, and discussing new ideas.

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ANNA NOLAN, ISTJA NATIONAL DELEGATE



Arthur Bourne with his wife Fiona Steele

Changes ahead for Dutch association

JOP DE VRIEZE, VWN NATIONAL DELEGATE

The Dutch association, currently called 'Vereniging van Wetenschapsjournalisten in Nederland' (Association for Science Journalists in the Netherlands) is about to change its statutes and its name.

A majority of science writers and journalists function as both independent journalists and as communicators, paid by non-media organisations.

The main reason for this is the current existence of two types of members: A-members are science journalists and B-members are science communicators. A-members have the right to vote during general assemblies, B-members do not. In reality, a majority of science writers and journalists, in particular freelancers, have a double role: they function as both independent journalists and as communicators, paid by non-media organisations. In an attempt to reform the association in line with this reality, a commission appointed by the association board produced a

report in which it proposes to change the statutes so that the difference between A- and B-members is removed, and the association no longer solely focuses on journalism. They also proposed a new name: 'Vereniging voor Wetenschapscommunicatie in Nederland' (Association for Science Communication in the Netherlands).

This change will have to be confirmed at an extra general assembly that will take place later this year.

Although at the general assembly in March none of the attendees expressed sharp criticism and everybody seemed to realise this is just reality, following the meeting a tough email debate evolved. This debate showed that not everyone seems happy with the suggested changes. In particular the proposed drop of the term 'journalism' from the association name evoked strong emotions. Alternative options would be 'Vereniging voor wetenschapsjournalistiek' (Association for Science Journalism) or 'Vereniging voor wetenschapsjournalistiek en wetenschapscommunicatie Nederland' (Association for Science Journalism and Science Communication in the Netherlands). Some other combinations are still possible, since members were asked to send in their suggestions.

To be continued...

Priit Ennet, from Estonia (standing in the picture) was elected in Prague to be the new treasurer of EUSJA. The election is out-of-sync with respect to the other three positions in the board since former Treasurer Vesa Niinikangas resigned in 2011, having served five years, the maximum length allowable, under special circumstances, by the EUSJA constitution..



Books by members

Members' books that have won awards recently are featured this time. One winning book was written in Italian and one in Russian. There are probably others written by our members that have won awards in recent times – do please let us know.

And even if it has not won a prize, if you have published a book related to science journalism in the last few months, and you would like it to be mentioned in a future issue of EUSJA News, please send an email to Anna Nolan (anolan@iol.ie).

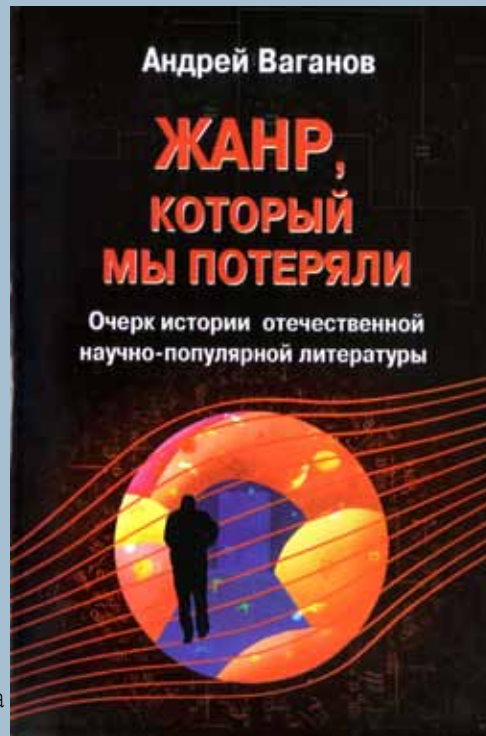
Popular science book wins literary prize

Viola Egikova, EUSJA vice president & president of Intellect

The prestigious Alexander Belyaev Prize has been awarded to Russian science journalist Andrey Vaganov for his book 'Genres we lost' (Moscow, Ekologia i zhizni, 2012; 248 pages). The prize was established in 1990 as a tribute to the famous Russian science fiction writer Alexander Belyaev, and is given to writers, editors, and interpreters of scientific and artistic matters, and for popular scientific books. This prize has no money equivalent, consisting of just a medal and a document, but winning it is a big honour.

Andrey Vaganov's book is subtitled 'The essays of domestic science-popular literature'. It is the result of probably the first research ever done on the situation in Russian popular scientific literature for the period since the beginning of the 20th century up to the present time.

It's a hard analysis since one may see an obvious lowering of interest in popular science books and magazines: the circulations have been dramatically cut. Editors prefer to publish books about cookery, novels for women and detective stories, and there is very little space for popular scientific literature. The facts and the statistics one may find in Vaganov's book are rather sad. That's why the book is entitled 'Genres we lost'. Why does this happen? The author tries



SERGIO PISTOI
**Il DNA
incontra
Facebook**
Viaggio nel supermarket della genetica

i Grilli Marsilio

to establish the reason, asking is the lowering of interest towards popular science books a real motive for the drop in publishing, or is the opposite true: has the neglect of and inattention to popular scientific editions had an influence on public interest? The readers of the book will draw their own conclusions.

Andrey Vaganov, a member of Intellect, is one of the most talented Russian science journalists. He is deputy editor-in-chief of Nezavisimaya Gazeta and editor of the supplement NG-Nauka.

Premio Galileo 2013

Sergio Pistoï's book *Il DNA Incontra Facebook*, which was featured in the Autumn 2012 edition of EUSJA News, has been awarded the Premio Galileo 2013 (<http://lnkd.in/8-Bq66>). This is the top science literary award in Italy.

The title translates into English as 'DNA meets Facebook'. Published by Marsilio Editori, the book asks: what happens now that our individual genomes can be decoded and transformed into digital content made of bits, like a picture or a video taken with our cell phone? How will we adapt to living in a world of pervasive genomics, where DNA redefines our notion of friends and family, and permeates our daily lives?

In search of answers, Sergio played the journalistic guinea pig and sent his own DNA to be analysed.

A taste of research in Prague

ANNA NOLAN, ISTJA NATIONAL DELEGATE

Geology, electronics, chemistry, botany: the EUSJA board and association delegates to the 2013 EUSJA annual general assembly were treated to a whirlwind tour of the latest research in these and many other fields when we met in Prague this March. Our host was the ASCR, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and we joined some of their researchers on Thursday afternoon and Friday, before our full-day meeting on Saturday 16 March.

Right: a drawing by Kaianders Sempier.
 Middle: Anna Nolan and Menelaos Sotiriou.
 Bottom: Priit Ennet, Ricardo Garcia Mercè Piqueras, Malgorzata Zaloga, Raili Leino and Jan Oliver Loeffken.
 (Photos: Academic Bulletin ASCR archive)



All our arrangements in Prague were taken care of very efficiently of by the Czech national delegate to EUSJA, Marina Huzvarova, who is also the editor-in-chief of the ASCR academic bulletin. She has written a short account of the visit on <http://abicko.avcr.cz/photogallery/eusja-2013.html> - visit it to see lots of photographs, too.

On Thursday we had a general talk, during which we were made to feel very welcome, and we visited the ASCR's beautiful historic library. Its high ceiling and spacious layout made for a very studious and calm atmosphere, but behind the timeless scenes there is a modern, electronic-based system as well as the stacks of printed magazines and books. Continuing with lovely buildings, we then enjoyed an evening concert at the Czech Museum of Music.

On the following day, we visited several different institutes – for geology, photonics & electronics, chemical process fundamentals and experimental botany.

One talk that especially appealed to me for personal reasons was that given by Professor Pavel Bosák on karst, that special landscape underlain by limestone that has been eroded by dissolution. There are only a few areas in the world where karst occurs in large amounts, and one of them is right beside my home in County

In the Library of the Czech Academy of Sciences.
 Right, from left to right: Anna Nolan, Mercè Piqueras, Kaianders Sempler, Jesper Odde Madsen.
 Middle of the page: Wolfgang Goede, Priit Ennet, Elmar Veerman and Marina Huzvarova.
 Bottom: Barbie Drillsma speaking in the meeting room of the Institute of Geology, in Prague
 (Photos: Academic Bulletin ASCR archive)



EUSJA study visits

There are several study trips currently on offer to members of EUSJA associations.

Details are given on www.eusja.org but please note that in almost all cases it is necessary to apply through your national delegate, not directly.

You will also find reports of the many trips that have taken place since the last issue of EUSJA News.

In fact, it's a good idea to check the site frequently.

Clare, Ireland. Another is in Slovenia, and during a 1999 twinning exchange visit between the Slovene and Irish associations, I heard a lot about their karst research, thanks to the Slovene association.

On learning of my interest, Professor Bosák very kindly gave me a fascinating book called 'Palaeomagnetism and magnetostratigraphy of karst sediments in Slovenia', by Nadja Zupan Hajna, Andrej Mihevc, Peter Pruner and Pavel Bosák. It is a lovely, and unusual, souvenir of my visit.

A practical example of how science journalism can spread its influence far and wide arose from the visit. Kaianders Sempler, the Swedish delegate, wrote an article about a microwave sys-

tem invented by an ASCR research team for drying library books damaged in the 2002 Prague floods. His article was published in Ny Teknik, and read in Buenos Aires, where there was a similar problem.

Now the ASCR is co-operating with researchers in Argentina to help them – and all because EUSJA had its annual general assembly in Prague this year (see the article on http://www.nyteknik.se/popular_teknik/kaianders/article3661064.ece).

It was very sad to see the flooding of this beautiful city on the television news over several days in June, and to learn of casualties there and elsewhere in Europe.

I hope that Prague will soon be back to its fairytale self. ●



President

Barbara Drillsma

17 Skardu Road,
London, NW2 3ES United Kingdom
Tel: +44 208 450 8760
barbiedrillsma@gmail.com

Austria

Oliver Lehmann
c/o Presseclub Concordia
Bankgasse 8
1010 Vienna
Tel: +43 1 5338573
E-Mail: klub@aon.at
wissenschaftsjournalisten.at

Belgium

Jean-Paul Vankeerberghen
Avenue de Pesage 125/1
1050 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 539 13 45
Mobile +32 478 471 759
vankeer@brutele.be
http://www.abjsc.net

Croatia

Blanka Jergović
Croatian Radio, Novinarski Dom
Perkovceva 2 - 10000 Zagreb
Tel: + 385 1 6343110
Fax: + 385 1 6343114
bjergovic@hrt.hr

Czech Republic

Marina Huzvarova
Academic Bulletin ASCR
Narodni 3
117 20 Prague 1
Tel +420 221 403 531
huzvarova@ssc.cas.cz
http://abicko.avcr.cz

Denmark

Jesper Odde Madsen
Tel: (+45) 8618 0840
Mobile: (+45) 4040 3732
Skype: jesper.odde.madsen
rescomm@rescomm.dk
www.videnskabsjournalister.dk

Estonia

Priit Ennet
(see board members list)

Finland

Raili Leino
Tekniikka & Talous
PO Box 920
00101 Helsinki
raili.leino@talentum.fi
www.suomentiedetoimittajat.fi

Germany

TELI representative:
Jan Oliver Loeffen
Wissenschaft aktuell
Auf dem Sande 1
20457 Hamburg, Germany
Phone: +49-40-360 91 290
Mobile: +49-163-360 91 29
oliver.loeffen@teli.de
www.teli.de

WPK representative:
Martin Schneider
SWR Fernsehen,
Hans-Bredow-Straße
76550 Baden-Baden
Tel: +49 7221 929 239 66
martin.schneider@swr.de
www.wpk.org

Greece

Menelaos Sotiriou
(see board members list)

Hungary

Istvan Palugyai
Népszabadság,
Bécsi ut 122-124
1034 Budapest
Tel: +36 1 43 64 565
Mobile +36 70 381 1000
istvan.palugyai@
nepszabadsag.hu
www.tuk.hu

Ireland

Anna Nolan
Aill Bhui, Brickhill West,
Cratloe, Co. Clare
Tel: +353 61 357 147
anolan@iol.ie

Vice-President

Viola Egikova

Intellect, Horoshovskoe Shosse 50-98
123007 Moscow, Russia
Tel: +7 499 256 5122
Fax: +7 499 259 63 60
violae@mail.ru

Honorary Secretary

Wolfgang C. Goede

German Association of Science Writers (TELI)
Strassberger Str. 32 80809 Munich
Tel: 0049 89 351 5570
w.goede@gmx.net

Italy

UGIS representative:
Paola de Paoli
Viale Ezio 5 - 20149 Milano
Tel +39 02 437 476
ugis@ugis.it
www.ugis.it

SWIM representative:

Jacopo Pasotti
Via Anelli, 1
20122 Milano
Tel: +393272090435
jacopo.pasotti@gmail.com
www.sciencewriters.it

Netherlands

Jop de Vrieze
St. Jospehlaan 12
3551 VC, Utrecht
mail@jopinie.nl
www.wetenschapjournalisten.nl

Poland

Magorzata Zaloga
Pölish Science Journalists'
Association Naukowi.pl
Zgrupowania Zmija 3b/114
01-875 Warszawa
info@naukowi.pl

Portugal

Ricardo Garcia
Rua Prof. Dias Valente, 168
2765-578 Estoril
Tel: +351 210 111 169
Ricardo.Garcia@publico.pt
www.arcaportugal.org

Romania

Alexandru Mironov
Unesco
Anton Cehov Street no.8,
sector 1, Bucharest
Tel: + 40 2 1231 13 33
mironovalexandru@gmail.com

Treasurer

Priit Ennet

Eesti Rahvusringhääling
Gonsiori 27, 15029 Tallinn
Mobile: + 372 51 45 608
priit.ennet@err.ee
www.teadusajakirjanik.ee

Associate members

Menelaos Sotiriou

Science View
3 Makri street
Athens, Greece 11742
Tel: +30 2109231955
Fax: +30 2109231956
info@scienceview.gr
www.scienceview.gr

Fabio Turone

Science Writers in Italy
Via Lorenzo Perosi, 3 - 20146 Milano
+393474419268
turone@sciencewriters.it
www.sciencewriters.it

Eusja Secretariat

Maria Suchanova

Euroscience,
1 Quai Lezay-Marnésia
67000 Strasbourg, France
Tel: + 33 3 88 24 11 50
eusja@euroscience.org

Russia

Viola M Egikova
(see board members list)

Slovenia

Goran Tenze
Radio Slovenija
Tavcarjeva 17
1550 Ljubljana
Tel: +386 1 475 24 23
Skype tenzigor
goran.tenze@rtvslo.si

Spain

AECC representative:
Antonio Calvo Roy
Ginzo de Limia 552
8034 Madrid
Tel +34 961 974 400
Fax +34 961 974 469
calvoroy@gmail.com
www.aecomunicacioncientifica.org

ACCC representative:

Mercè Piqueras
Rambla Catalunya, 10, 1r
08007 Barcelona
Tel +34-934121111
Fax +34-933178386
mercepiqueras@mesvilaweb.cat
www.accc.cat

Sweden

Kaianders Sempler
Ny Teknik, 106 12 Stockholm
Tel +46 8 796 65 67
Mobile +46 705 44 81 71
kaianders.sempler@nyteknik.se

Switzerland

Olivier Dessibourg
Le Temps
Place de Cornavin 3
Case postale 2570,
CH-1211 Genève 2
Tel +41 22 888 59 72
olivier.dessibourg@letemps.ch
www.science-journalism.ch

United Kingdom

Connie St Louis
President of the Association
of British Science Writers
19 Pembroke Road
Muswell Hill
London N10 2HR UK
Office : +44 208 365 2400
Mobile: +44 7802 213805
conniestlouis@gmail.com
www.absw.org.uk

Photo: ESA