The Space Education Programme
The year was a rich one in terms of educational activities and achievements. The positive impact of the many educational projects and activities undertaken, the development of networks, and the high level of internal and external coordination formed the basis for a sound effort in education. It also provided a timely foundation on which to base the creation of an Agency-wide Space Education Programme. A proposal outlining the objectives and mechanisms of such a programme in a ‘Master Plan’ is presently being developed. The Advisory Committee on Education (ACE), established in 2001 and composed of education experts from all of ESA’s Member States, will contribute substantially to the preparation of this important document by liaising with the national delegations.

Synergy within ESA
The Education Office pursued its objective of proposing and implementing ESA’s contribution to promoting pan-European space education. Through the Education Team (E-Team), which meets twice per year and includes representatives from all ESA Directorates, the Education Office’s coordinating role has been established and has resulted in a shared, Agency-wide understanding of ESA’s objectives in education.

The synergy between the ESA Directorates and the Education Office was exploited in many projects and activities in 2002. For instance, ESA’s participation in the ECIS (European Council of International Schools) conference in Berlin involved the Science, Earth Observation and Human Spaceflight Directorates and provided an excellent...
opportunity to present the Agency’s activities to numerous teachers and to further develop an extensive educational network. Cooperation was also visible in the review of various publications on science and space, in the support given to the development of educational material, in the contribution of valuable inputs for writers addressing space in their books, and in the development of joint activities.

Education was also given greater priority by the various Directorates with, for instance: the Hubble Exercises, SOHO activities and other projects set up by the Directorate of Science; the development by the Human Spaceflight Directorate of the ISS Education Kit, and the organisation of the SUCCESS 2002 contest inviting university students to devise an experiment for the ISS; the interactive CD-ROM produced by the Directorate of Launchers to explain how a launcher is built and how it works; the efforts made by the Directorate for Industrial Matters and Technology Programmes to encourage young children to discover the many applications of space technology through a colouring book; the support provided by the Directorate of Technical and Operational Support to the Student Space Exploration and Technology Initiative (SSSETI) project; the contribution by the Directorate of Earth Observation to the management of EDUSpace; the opportunity offered by the Directorate of Applications to familiarise children with telecommunications from space; and the contribution of the Directorate of Strategy and External Relations in adapting and publishing communications material for youngsters.

Student Projects
The Education Office again attracted many hundreds of students with its outreach and activity programmes. The Fifth Student Parabolic Flight Campaign in September allowed 120 students, selected from 300 applicants, to fly experiments of their own design and to experience weightlessness in the A300 Zero-g aircraft, in September. In October, 220 students, chosen from 650 applicants, were given the chance to participate in the 53rd IAF Congress in Houston and to mingle with the space professionals.
The high level of interest of students in space science and technology was also demonstrated by their active role in the SSETI project. This initiative, involving approximately 350 students in 11 European countries via the Internet in designing, building and launching a micro-satellite, is making tremendous progress. After the preliminary design review, ESA’s experts confirmed the feasibility of launching the SSETI satellite known as ‘ESEO’.

Secondary-Education Projects
The Education Office also focussed during the year on secondary education, with the ‘Physics on Stage 2’ festival attracting 350 physics teachers to ESTEC in April to brainstorm on various means of fostering youngsters’ interest in physics. The impact of Physics on Stage has been so positive that an agreement was signed in October by the Directors General of the EIROforum organisations and the European Commission on the European Science Teachers Initiative (ESTI). This Initiative will ensure continuity in the organisation of national activities and festivals for physics teachers and the setting up of other projects for this community.

In addition to the Physics on Stage event, secondary-school teachers benefited from courses directly applicable in their classes on space technology and science. Efforts also
continued to introduce space matters into a variety of children’s magazines and books, in cooperation with well-known publishers. To further develop this network to reach secondary schools, promising discussions were started with Globe, which in parallel with the taking-over of EDUSpace by ESA in October, will contribute to enhancing the tools available for stimulating the interest of youngsters in space via Earth observation.

Communication
Three issues of the ‘EDUnews’ newsletter were distributed in 2002 to keep readers abreast of the many ESA Education activities, projects and programmes, and to publicise such events as the organisation, together with the ESA Technology Transfer Programme, of the European Solar Car Tour. This tour gave thirty-five schools, with an average of six hundred pupils each, in twelve different European countries, the opportunity to see ‘Nuna’, the ESA-sponsored solar car that won the World Solar Challenge 2001.

The launch of the Education Website (www.esa.int/education) in December will increase interactivity between the ESA Education Office and the various target groups. The development of an ESA House Style for educational material and the creation of a catalogue of products in 2003 will further facilitate communication.

In 2003 also, primary education will be given a high priority, and the successful projects, programmes and activities of 2002 will be consolidated and built upon.