

### **PCST electronic discussion list.**

The PCST discussion list welcomes postings from people interested in the public communication of science and technology.

### **PCST Academy.**

The Academy is responsible for the creation of the documentary basis of the PCST and its main task is the drawing up of reports on particular matters in the field of communication and social understanding of science.

### **PCST Awards.**

At each major biannual conference, PCST network assigns one Great Service Award and some Junior Travelling Awards. The Great Service Award rewards excellence and remarkable achievements in the field of PCST. The Junior Travelling Awards support conference attendance by young scholars/practitioners in the field.

The PCST Network operates through a scientific committee led by an executive committee. The scientific committee is composed of about 25 world-leading experts in science communication.

### **The PCST Network activities interest the following categories of people:**

- Science journalists
- Science museum and science centre staff
- Academic researchers who study aspects of PCST
- Scientists who deal with the public
- Press and public information officers of scientific institutions
- Science theatre directors
- Anyone engaged in science communication interested in these issues



KI-81-08-205-EN-D

**For additional information about the PCST Network:**  
[www.pcstacademy.org](http://www.pcstacademy.org)



This leaflet has been produced with the support  
of the European Commission

# **The PCST Network**

**An international network  
on science communication**

## Why does science communication matter?

Since the second half of the last century, science and technology have been undergoing tremendous expansion. There are more scientists and engineers today than the total number who previously existed since the dawn of history.

At the same time, scientific and technological developments have given us increasing and even frightening power. We master atomic reactions and release huge amounts of energy; we modify or imitate natural processes and affect life on Earth; we travel faster and faster, even beyond our planet, and impact on the whole biosphere. Science and technology are everywhere in our daily life, and they raise many questions: what are their long-term effects on our lives, on our societies, on the Earth?

Against this background, it is no surprise that public communication of science and technology has gained importance and recognition. On one hand, most people consider that the public is not sufficiently represented when it comes to decisions about science and technology. On the other hand, scientists worldwide are more and more willing to engage with the public about their research work. Science and technology communication aims to increase public involvement and the quality of the decision-making process for research and technological applications, which can have today far-reaching effects.

As a result, increasing budgets and resources are devoted to science communication and popularisation, and many innovative forms of dialogues between science and society are being explored worldwide.

## What is the PCST Network?

The International Network on Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) was born in 1989 at the first International Meeting on Public Scientific Communication in Poitiers, France. The 130 participants from 14 countries decided to meet again to discuss the public's growing need for more information about scientific and technological matters and all the issues and developments concerning science communication.

The aim of the Network is to multiply opportunities for exchange and co-operation among both researchers and professionals who work in the many diverse but complementary fields of PCST. The Network especially intends to facilitate these interactions on an international basis. People may be inspired by foreign innovations and find solutions abroad to common problems.

## What does the PCST Network offer?

The aims of the PCST Network are the following:

- To foster PCST and dialogue among people interested in PCST, leading to cross-fertilization across professional, cultural, international, and disciplinary boundaries
- To encourage discussion of practices, methods, ethical issues, policies, conceptual frameworks, economic and social concerns, and other issues related to PCST
- To link practitioners of PCST, researchers who study PCST, and scientific communities concerned with PCST
- To link those from different cultures and countries worldwide, in both developed and developing parts of the world, concerned with PCST
- To organise international conferences, electronic discussions, and other activities related to PCST.

## PCST conferences

The PCST Network organises a major international conference every second year or so, as the list of past events shows:

- 1989 - Poitiers, France
- 1991 - Madrid, Spain
- 1994 - Montreal, Canada
- 1996 - Melbourne, Australia
- 1998 - Berlin, Germany
- 2001 - Geneva (CERN), Switzerland
- 2002 - Cape Town, South Africa
- 2004 - Barcelona, Spain
- 2006 - Seoul, South Korea
- 2008 - Øresund, Sweden & Denmark

**The next conference will take place in India in 2010.**

On average close to 1,000 participants attend the bi-annual PCST conference. Each event is a showcase of the best practices and the latest research on science communication, through hundreds of papers, communications, posters, debates and plenary lectures. Proceedings are available for most of these events. The PCST Network works to publish books: *At a Human Scale – International Practices in Science Communication* in 2006 and *Communicating science in social contexts-New models, new practices in 2008*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Donghong Cheng, Jenni Metcalfe, Bernard Schiele (in collaboration with Michel Claessens, Toss Gascoigne, Shi Shunke), Science Press, Beijing, 2006.