



WELCOME TO 2009, THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY!

Assuming you haven't been living in a cave or anywhere equally remote for the past few months, you will be keenly aware of the International Year of Astronomy 2009, a global celebration of astronomy and its contribution to scientific development and cultural enrichment. Organised by the International Astronomical Union and UNESCO, it has been many years in the making. Now is the time to celebrate! However, we astronomy communicators have the responsibility to make this year an example to follow throughout 2009 and beyond.

The European astronomical community has recently put together an unparalleled strategic plan for European Astronomy, the ASTRONET Infrastructure Roadmap. This lays out long-term scientific and investment plans for European astronomy over the next 10–20 years. This time education and public outreach (EPO) were not forgotten, and they play a major role in the document. A group of European experts analysed the current status of EPO in Europe and outlined a list of recommendations to implement over the coming years and decades. Working side by side with research, public outreach will require an effective synergy of resources across Europe and beyond. In this issue we reproduce the subchapter dedicated to Public Outreach. IYA2009 may represent the first real step towards the strategic goals laid down by the ASTRONET panel. The full, and very interesting, report may be found at www.astronet-eu.org.

Winds of change are already blowing across Europe. Last year the European Commission awarded its Science Communication Prizes to three of the most influential astronomy communicators in Europe, Jean-Pierre Luminet, Communicator of the Year, Peter Leonard in the Category of Audiovisual Documentary of the Year for his programme, *Most of our Universe is Missing*, and Nuno Crato, finalist in the category Science Communicator of the Year, a Portuguese mathematician and an astronomy enthusiast. In this issue we have the pleasure of sharing with you some tips from the 2007 Science Communicator of the Year in Europe, in an interview with Jean-Pierre Luminet.

Also in this issue, Daniel Kunth provides useful insights into the long-lived tumultuous relationship between astronomy and astrology, Greg Martin shares with us his know-how in space art, and Emily Lakdawalla summarises upcoming Solar System missions.

Between issues you can stay in touch through our website, www.capjournal.org, where you will find the current issue in PDF format, a job bank, submission guidelines and back issues. You can also post anything you have to say on the site or e-mail me at editor@capjournal.org. I'd like to know what you think!

Happy reading and a successful 2009,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pedro Russo'.

Pedro Russo
Editor-in-Chief