



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Community Research

EUROPEAN UNION CONTEST FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS

Background Fact sheet no. 1

Origin

The European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) was launched in 1989 and replaced the Philips contest which ran from 1968 to 1988. It has the clear objective of attracting more young people into careers in science and brings together the winners from national contests for a grand final.

The EUCYS is part of the European Union's wider *Science and Society* programme and addresses the problem of youngsters who are turning away from scientific studies and professions by encouraging young people to pursue their interest in science and embark on scientific careers.

The *Science and Society* action programme is also designed to increase awareness among those Europeans who feel ill-informed about science and do not understand the scientific community and their activities. The contest embodies one of the stated goals of the European Research Area (ERA), namely to encourage cross-border interaction in the scientific arena.

The first EUCYS took place in Brussels in 1989 and has since been hosted in Copenhagen, Zurich, Seville, Berlin, Luxemburg, Newcastle, Helsinki, Milan, Porto, Thessalonica, Amsterdam, Bergen, Vienna, Budapest, and Dublin. This year's event is being held in Moscow and the award ceremony will take place in the Hall of Church Councils of the Cathedral of the Christ the Saviour (<http://www.xxc.ru/english/>).

General Objectives

The objective of the EU contest is to build upon the work already done in each participating country in attracting young people to careers in science and technology. By using the competition as a platform the Commission is able to strengthen these efforts made by each participating country to encourage more and more young people into careers in science and technology.

Eugene Meieran, a former Jury member says: "It is both refreshing and encouraging to be surrounded by young people working in science and technology that will ultimately change the world for the better."

Experience of a Lifetime

Since 1989, more than one thousand students from all over Europe and beyond have exhibited their promising research work on this European stage. The EUCYS provides them with an unforgettable experience and gives talented young students the opportunity of having their work valued. Although the prizes are a great draw, the main reward is exposure to an international environment, which is so important in today's dynamic research community.

The European Union Contest promotes the ideals of co-operation and exchange of ideas between some of the most promising young European scientists. Open to young people aged between 15 and 20, the contest provides a fantastic opportunity for them to compete with the best of their contemporaries from across Europe.

At this year's showcase in Moscow, 126 contestants from 35 countries will exhibit 79 projects. They will also have the opportunity to meet and interact with other young like-minded scientists and some of the most highly regarded scientists in Europe.

In recent years, an increasing number of young women scientists have taken part in the contest, which reflects the growing interest in science among women. There are 53 girls and 73 boys participating in this year's competition.

Scientific Community

Over the years the competition has gained a highly respected reputation amongst the scientific community and is now recognised by many institutions as a forum where the next generation of talent can be found. Bauman Moscow State Technical University (BMSTU), Russia's oldest technical university and close collaborator with the Russian Academy of Sciences and with industry, recognizes this and is the organiser of the 2005 EU Contest. BMSTU's Rector, Igor Borisovich Federov, will host the award ceremony, with Achilleas Mitsos, Director-General for Research at the European Commission, Nobel laureates and other internationally renowned scientists also in attendance.

The winners will go on to represent the European Union at other international science events in Europe and may also be chosen to work with leading scientists and engineers on scientific projects (see fact sheet no.3). Another key characteristic of the contest is its willingness to embrace participants from non EU member countries. Scientists from Russia, as well as Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia have helped to enrich the competition. The EU Contest has also embraced guest scientists from the United States, Japan and South Korea and it is hoped that in the future the contest will extend to other countries and regions of the world.