

Organizing a workshop: the 9th PCGG workshop

The organization of a scientific workshop is a challenge that requires some organization and coordination. A workshop abroad, however, is still more attractive for the participants as they get to see new sites and have the chance to travel around a bit. Additionally, attractive new contacts to local scientists might be established. For this reason, Marseille has been chosen as the location for the 9th PCGG workshop that took place from March 19 to March 21, 2007.

For the organizers, on the other hand, a workshop abroad is a bigger challenge. The organization at place requires additional help by local people and more coordination between the members of the organization committee.

In the case of this 9th workshop the organization committee was formed by the local organizer Stéphane Coussan and the organizers from the Göttingen side: Ingo Dauster, Josée Kupferschmid and myself. The idea of organizing a workshop in Marseille was established by Martin Suhm and Stéphane Coussan. I myself was in charge of different duties and responsibilities on both sides as I spend some time in Marseille as well during my work. So I was ideally suited to coordinate and communicate between Göttingen and Marseille.

We obtained additional help from other people, for instance Aurélien Trivella who agreed to organize a dinner for one evening in Marseille. Nevertheless, a lot of time for this kind of organization needs to be provided. In the following I try to summarize the main **things that need to be remembered when organizing a workshop**.

- **Hotel and accomodation. S. Coussan, T. Wassermann, J. Kupferschmid.**

Especially when a workshop abroad is organized, a suitable accomodation needs to be found. In this case the Etap Hotel in the old Marseille harbor was chosen. This was a good choice because we could stay in the center with lots of restaurants and bars around and did not get bored like this in the evenings.

For the organization of this, the hotel needs to be contacted and the rooms have to be reserved in time. A list of all participants and the distribution into the different rooms has to be transmitted to the hotel and, of course, payment has to be taken into account.

- **Travelling and transport. J. Kupferschmid, T. Wassermann, S. Coussan.**

The travelling to the workshop location is of profound importance. In this case, the travelling for most of the participants was organized by J. Kupferschmid (incl. train and plane tickets).

As the participants arrive in a foreign place, they will need some help for the first orientation. For this purpose a detailed plan was furnished to all participants, explaining the transfer from the airport to the hotel and between the different workshop locations.

- **Workshop locations. S. Coussan, T. Wassermann.**

A scientific workshop requires special locations. For talks and conferences, a suitable place has to be found and booked in which presentations and discussions can take place. Also a room for a poster session needed to be organized.

At the 9th workshop, lab visits in different physical and chemical laboratories were offered. For this purpose, the responsible persons must be contacted.

- **Social program. A. Trivella, T. Wassermann, S. Coussan.**

The work in our graduate school also comprises to establish personal contacts between the members of the different groups. This is best done during some social events where all members

reunite. In this case a dinner for all students and also one for the supervisors was organized together with some students from Marseille.

- **Technical details. T. Wassermann, I. Dauster, S. Coussan.**

The presentation of scientific work requires some technical equipment (videoprojector, laser pointer etc.), so some people need to take care that all this equipment is available. This includes also the organization of name tags for the participants, especially when not all the participants know each other yet.

- **The program. T. Wassermann, I. Dauster.**

Additionally the program for the workshop needs to be prepared and coordinated. This includes also the contacting of the guest speakers and chairmen. A suitable topical order for the different talks should be found.

The final program of a workshop should include sufficient breaks so that all participants can recover between the different sessions.

In summary the organization of such a scientific workshop is interesting. But on the other hand the amount of work should not be underestimated.

When finally all work is done and the workshop takes place it is of course great if everything works fine and if the participants are enjoying the workshop.