

# EARSC - The beginning

A few weeks ago, I wrote about the meeting in Baveno to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Copernicus programme. I wrote about how interesting it was to compare notes and perspectives on what happened at the event 20 years ago.

At the event, it was a particular pleasure to meet Claes Goren Borg who was the EARSC chairman in 1998 and Marcello Ricottilli who was chairman from 2000 to 2003. As a result, we had the 3 chairs from 1991 through to 2003 all together in the meeting! I was chairman from 1991 to 1996, Claes Goren was chair from 1997 to 2000, and then Marcello to 2003.



A little bit of EARSC history shown in the picture - and that set me thinking! For some time, I have been meaning to write about the history of EARSC; why not do this as a series of blogs? I hope that others who have been involved with the Association can comment and add their views. Let me start at the beginning.....

EARSC was started following an initial meeting held at the behest of ESA on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987 in Paris. There were 50 attendees of which 38 were from 32 companies and others came from ESA, the CEC and some research institutes. We have no further record of this meeting other than the planning to set it up according to ESA memoranda.

The next event on record is the first General Meeting which took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1989 in Paris. In the meantime, the statutes had been drafted under the leadership of Bruce Smith who I knew well at the time. Bruce was also active in the British Association of Remote Sensing Companies, BARSC on which EARSC was modelled. According to the invitation letter sent out by Bruce, there had been a meeting of the steering committee in December 1988 at which it had been decided to register EARSC in Belgium as an "International Scientific Association". Clearly there was a change of mind afterwards since EARSC is now registered as an International non-profit association (AisBL) under Belgian law.

The minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> General Meeting record that Bruce Smith took the chair and was elected as chairman for the 1<sup>st</sup> year. Rupert Hayden from GAF was elected as vice-chair and Bill Jackson (who was my boss at the time in Marconi Space Systems!) became the treasurer. The 1<sup>st</sup> board was elected including Marcello Maranesi (representing Telespazio) and the 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting was scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> June.

The Association got off to a good start and the 1st General Meeting was attended by 25 company representatives. The first board was elected :

|                   |                            |             |            |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Bruce Smith       | Smith Systems Engineering  | UK          | Chairman   |
| Rupert Hayden     | GAF                        | Germany     | Vice-Chair |
| Bill Jackson      | Marconi Space Systems      | UK          | Treasurer  |
| Rob Beck          | DHV                        | Netherlands |            |
| Fred Hagman       | Eurosense                  | Netherlands |            |
| Marcello Maranesi | Telespazio                 | Italy       |            |
| Pascal Piau       | Alcatel                    | France      |            |
| Y. Reginster      | Walphot                    | Belgium     |            |
| Bill Trevett      | Hunting Technical Services | UK          |            |
| R. Wirum-Bye      | Fjellanger Wideroe         | Norway      |            |

Some of this first board are still active and Marcello Maranesi is still an expert advisor to the EARSC board today. Rob Beck is still active running NEO and Fred Hagman, although retired, still appears at occasional meetings. I regret to have lost contact with the rest.

I could get to this point in our history using copies of documents that had been kept by ESA. We have no further formal records for the next few years. In this case, to continue the history, I shall need to rely on my memory and those of others who were involved at the time. But this is for the next blog on EARSC history. Anyone with any memories or valuable records of EARSC prior to 2004, please be in contact I should be delighted to hear from you.