

## Call for papers

7th International Conference of the European Society for the History of Science (Prague: 22-24 September 2016)

### **"Science and power, Science as power".**

<http://www.7eshs2016.cz/http://www.7eshs2016.cz>

#### **"The power of norms: standardisation and normalisation through International Scientific Organisms"**

##### ***Session organized by Danielle Fauque and Brigitte Van Tiggelen***

Most international scientific unions, such as IUPAC, IUPAP, IUPAB, IAU, IUGG, URSI, ... etc., were creations of the 20th century, and aspired to be pure scientific bodies, above national government or cultural influences, and making decisions or issuing recommendations on strictly rational grounds. One of their aims, especially in the case of IUPAC and IUPAP, was to draw up norms and standards to facilitate the development and the propagation of science. In the frame of ICSU for instance, IUPAC and IUPAP founded joint special commissions to deal with specific matters: symbols, units, nomenclature, constants, atomic weights, physicochemical standards, analytical methods, etc. Furthermore, IUPAP or IUPAC also developed joint commissions with the other international organizations mentioned above for special common subjects.

Standards allow for a better diffusion and exchange of knowledge by creating and maintaining a common language. But standards, terminology and norms also are a mean of power. It comes thus as no surprise that before these standards were enacted and accepted locally, whenever they were, heated or extended debates took place inside commissions before reaching consensus. Afterwards, the task still remained for the international bodies to diffuse the new standard as a scientific recommendation to be followed by its users, especially in teaching and publishing.

Few historical studies have been devoted to this contingent part of scientific activity up to now, as it appears at first to be a purely administrative or technical part of scientific management, whereas this process of normalization eventually impacts and structures the science itself. The proposed session will focus on this under-investigated facet of the scientific work, to which nonetheless several scientists, often of great fame - see for example, F. and I. Joliot-Curie, E. Bauer, G.T. Seaborg, G. De Hevesy or J. Timmermans... -, have devoted a notable part of their time and activity.

Contributions can take the form of case-studies on a specific norm (elaboration of an unit, a constant, a symbol, a physicochemical standard, standardization of analytic methods, publication of constants tables, approval of measure instruments...) or sketch of the historical trajectory of actors or groups of actors, like a commission for instance, or the examination of local reception of international rules and standards by their users.

If you are interested by contributing to this session, please send your proposal in English (name, function, title, and abstract no longer than 120 words), by 26 November 2015 to Danielle Fauque: [danielle.fauque@u-psud.fr](mailto:danielle.fauque@u-psud.fr) and Brigitte Van Tiggelen : [vantiggelen@memosciences.be](mailto:vantiggelen@memosciences.be)