

2019  
ANNUAL  
REPORT





Zanne and Emiel, two edutainers at Technopolis (Mechelen, Belgium) who started weekly science experiment vlogs in 2019. For the first time Technopolis strategically made use of influencers and generated a record of new online followers.

**Celebrate Reflect Act**  
Ecsite Annual Report 2019



Visitors enjoying the new Medicine Galleries that opened in November 2019 at the Science Museum (London, United Kingdom).  
Picture © Science Museum Group.

**Celebrate Reflect Act**  
Ecsite Annual Report 2019





Young visitor enjoying the 20 objects and a wrench exhibition at the Norwegian Petroleum Museum (Stavanger, Norway) together with his grandmother.  
Picture: NOM / Shade Barka Martins.



Vivian Xu and her Silkworm Project that explores the possibilities of hybrid bio-machine worlds that can generate self-organising two- and three-dimensional silk structures. Kapelica Gallery / Kersnikova Institute, 2019 (Ljubljana, Slovenia). Picture: Miha Fras.



European network of science centres and museums

# ecsite

**Shaping & sharing ideas and practices**

Largest European science engagement conference  
EU-funded projects  
Communities of practice  
Awards & grants  
Monthly online magazine

**Representing our members**

Advocating for science engagement at European level  
Forming partnerships and alliances



# since 1989

**330+** member organisations

Science centres & museums  
Research bodies & universities  
Science festivals  
Foundations and learned societies  
Private companies and more  
Organisations that connect people to science and technology

**A common vision**

Foster creativity and critical thinking in European society  
Embolden citizens to engage with science

**40+** million citizens engaged each year

Exhibitions & shows  
Workshops  
Dialogue events  
Community projects  
Afterschool clubs  
Art and science performances

# 2019

**30**

YEARS OF EXISTENCE FOR OUR NETWORK

**135**

SIGNATORIES FOR OUR HORIZON EUROPE OPEN LETTER TO THE RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMISSIONER

**1,190**

PARTICIPANTS TO THE ECSITE CONFERENCE

**20**

NEW ECSITE MEMBERS

**11**

ISSUES OF SPOKES, OUR ONLINE MAGAZINE

**1**

WINNER OF THE FIRST ECSITE BEACON OF THE YEAR AWARD

**39**

MEMBERS INVOLVED IN EU-FUNDED PROJECTS WITH ECSITE

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## Celebrate – Reflect – Act

7 June 2019, 22:15. “Encore, encore!” demand the crowd. Laughing, the Ecsite Jazz band starts the world-famous chorus for the tenth time in a row. We are in Hellerup, just outside Copenhagen, standing underneath the iconic double helix copper staircase of the Experimentarium science centre.

The moment however doesn't lend itself to architectural contemplation: the science centre's massive hall is filled with hundreds of dancing, cheering, clapping bodies. Then the voices rise again, a joyful collection of accents from the four corners of the world singing: “Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, dear... Ecsite!” Our network turned 30 in 2019.

Our field and Ecsite have grown, matured and diversified considerably in the past three decades, from two dozen players of the then nascent European science centre scene to 330+ Ecsite members today, representing the full breadth of science engagement, from museums to festivals, from public engagement departments working inside research bodies to private companies servicing the field. Truthful to our enthusiastic beginnings, we still are a family, one that greets old friends with a warm embrace and welcomes newcomers with open arms – and the only European association we know of that had its birthday song played by its very own amateur jazz band.

As you'll read next, Ecsite was born in several stages and pinpointing a single anniversary date would have been artificial – this is why, mirroring the network's gestation that took multiple gatherings over two and a half years, thirty years later we decided to grant ourselves the luxury of time: a whole anniversary season starting in autumn 2018 and spanning three years. Our anniversary is

an invitation to celebrate, reflect and act. In 2019 we took pride in our accomplishments with a series of interviews and a film and orchestrated the festive & symbolic moment described above at the 2019 Ecsite Conference. We also started building from these roots up to shape the future of our network.

As we look ahead, we see a landscape of challenges and opportunities for our field. Science engagement has a crucial role to play in facilitating the science & society dialogue around the huge difficulties facing every individual, every organisation and every society in the next decades. This forms the core message of the European advocacy campaign, aimed at European Union policymakers. We have been running this campaign since 2018 together with Ecsite members and an alliance of science engagement networks. We are happy to see that involving citizens in the next European Research & Innovation funding programme Horizon Europe (starting in 2021) is now a priority for the European Commission, though we are still asking for a holistic approach and dedicated funding to science engagement in the programme.

The strategic plan we are currently working on will make sure that our mature and resilient network nonetheless keeps fostering critical thinking and emboldening citizens to engage with science. Together with our audiences and the many stakeholders who have placed their trust in us over the years, we have a responsibility to tackle misinformation, climate change communication, the ethics of artificial intelligence or the future of European democracy to name a few. Count on us.

**Herbert Munder**  
Ecsite President  
General Manager,  
Universum Bremen  
Bremen, Germany

**Catherine Franche**  
Ecsite Executive Director  
Brussels, Belgium

## Happy anniversary, Ecsite!

On 17 October 1988, ten European delegates of the Association of Science Technology Centers (ASTC) conference met at the Roof Café of the Museum of Science, Boston. The meeting had been called by Joël de Rosnay, Director of Development and International relations at La Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Paris. Inspired by the peer learning enabled by ASTC for 15 years already and convinced that the growing European science centre stage needed its own professional exchange hub, this group of people decided to found a European network of science centres – this was the birth of what would become Ecsite.

It took two and a half more years and many steps and meetings until the creation of Ecsite as a legal entity in January 1991 – which did not prevent the first Ecsite Conference from taking place in the meantime on 19-20 June 1990, gathering a little less than 100 people at Museon in The Hague, The Netherlands. The Ecsite network owes everything to a small determined group of people and organisations who believed that learning from each other would make them better professionals. They were, as late science museology pioneer Jorge Wagensberg reminisced a few years back, “young Europeans [...] dreaming [...] of the Europe of the 21st century”.

United by the common mission to serve their audiences and the common necessity to continuously invent the many learning, design, financial, or operational tools they needed to do so successfully, they did not let cultural or organisational differences get in the way. They drafted statutes, worked out budgets, invented exhibitions hiring contracts and started advocating for informal learning at EU level. Every year they gathered in a different European city to advance the field at the Ecsite Conference, whose attendance grew steadily over time.

From left to right, from top to bottom:

- Founding meeting of Ecsite, Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, 9 January 1989 (Paris, France). © B. Baudin / EPPDCSI.
- First meeting of chemistry group at the Deutsches Museum, September 1994 (Munich, Germany). Picture shared by C. Johnson.
- Board meeting at the Museum für Automobilgeschichte, 4 October 1997 (Amerang, Germany). Picture shared by C. Johnson.
- Attendees at the 1999 Ecsite Conference in Prague (Czech Republic). Picture shared by Christopher Boyle (Concepts plus).



“From the very start it became obvious that the network could be a real vehicle to convey European science and technology challenges, and to build a bridge between European ambitions and citizens.”



**Brigitte Coutant**

Ecsite Honorary Fellow,  
Former Head of International  
Relations, Unverscience,  
Paris, France.



“Our common purpose is to serve fellow citizens. Some of the challenges ahead of us: serving migrant visitors, acting on climate change, challenging the misuse of social media.”



**Colin Johnson**  
Ecsite Honorary Fellow, Director/  
CEO of Techniquist Science  
Discovery Centre, 1997-2004,  
Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom

Within 30 years membership numbers, conference crowds and the Ecsite team were all increased tenfold. Our network became involved in EU-funded projects, advocacy campaigns and international collaborations. It produced manuals, magazines and launched online platforms. Its governance and finances became more sophisticated. Yet in spite of our network’s and field’s impressive growth and diversification beyond Ecsite’s “historic” science centre and science museum membership, the founding values of cooperation, openness, professionalism, generosity and diversity are intact. They have been passed on and nourished by an ever-growing web of passionate professionals. The enthusiasm that prevailed to the foundation of Ecsite is still furiously contagious three decades later, urging the field to look ahead and invent what it takes to serve ever-changing European societies.

As our President and Executive Director wrote in this report’s introduction, Ecsite is taking this opportunity to celebrate, reflect and act: doing justice to our heritage and building a solid basis for the years to come, our anniversary season is spanning almost three years, from autumn 2018 until the end of 2021. This anniversary offers a mix of solemn, joyful, introspective and prospective moments. After a more retrospective phase end of 2018 and beginning of 2019, the 2019 Ecsite Conference (our 30th edition) was full of festive opportunities that culminated in the giant “happy birthday” moment pictured a few pages back. The next “reflect” and “act” phases are intertwined, as the Ecsite Board leads our community in shaping the future of Ecsite – more in the next section.

### More about our anniversary

Read five “back to the roots” interviews that celebrate Ecsite’s achievements and look ahead:  
<https://www.ecsite.eu/feature/lookout/30-years-ecsite-back-roots>



Watch our anniversary film:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ssyb9t4>



And for a peer-reviewed account of the history of science centres and Ecsite’s role in driving the European field forward: Lipardi (2013). “The Evolution and Worldwide Expansion of Science Centres”, in *Science Centres and Science Events - A Science Communication handbook*, Bruyas and Riccio (eds.), Springer, pp. 49-61.

## Governance and strategy

The Ecsite network rests on three decades of cross-border professional exchange, advocacy, shared values and common history. Taking stock of this solid heritage, the Ecsite Board made it its mission to safeguard this common good and build robust scaffolding for the future, making sure that our members and the societies they serve can keep relying on an agile and professionally run network.

In 2019, this meant laying the foundations for a new strategy, advocating for science engagement at European level and continuing to work with key international partners.

### Preparing the ground for a new strategy and a new Conference

In recent years Ecsite has been working with five-year strategic plans and a new one was due in 2020. The network's 30th anniversary year and the spirit of reflection and forward-thinking it engendered, coupled with changes in the internal and external environment, led the Ecsite Board to strive for a more fundamental review of Ecsite strategy than in other recent exercises. A first phase took place in 2019 where external strategists were consulted and recruited. 2020 will begin with a preparation phase to make sure that Ecsite's new strategy meets the needs of our membership and rises to the challenges posed to the whole science engagement field. Ecsite members will be invited to join the process, for instance through design sessions taking place in several different countries.

The Ecsite Conference is also turning 30 and is naturally included in the Ecsite anniversary's self-reflection process. The Ecsite Board thus invited the Conference's Programme Committee to a joint meeting in September 2019, to specifically look at the future of our flagship event. A vision emerged, which will be further developed and implemented over the next few years:

- More in-depth content
- More content-related networking for all staff
- Embedded inclusion and diversity
- Societal challenges better addressed
- More sharing platforms for different communities
- Stronger links with science & research.





## On the EU scene: our Horizon Europe campaign

Determined to make science engagement and science & society count in Horizon Europe, the European Union's (EU) upcoming research and innovation programme covering the years 2021-2027, Ecsite launched an advocacy campaign in 2018 and took the lead for the science engagement field at European level. In 2019 our efforts to influence Horizon Europe continued despite delays in the approval of the European Union's overall budget, uncertainties over Brexit and the usual "pause" that preceded Parliamentary elections in May.

Ecsite's most visible advocacy action in 2019 was the publication of an Open letter, sent to EU Commissioner for Research and Innovation Carlos Moedas in July. The Open letter was endorsed by 135 organisations and networks from 28 European and associated countries, reflecting Ecsite's mobilisation power. Ecsite and the signatories welcomed the European Commission's intention to involve citizens in co-creating and co-designing the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (R&I). However we saw important gaps in the planned involvement strategy and urged the Commission to meaningfully engage with citizens, work with professional organisations and be more ambitious on science engagement.

The signatories suggested three communication objectives that would maximise Horizon Europe's relevance and impact: enhance European citizens' scientific culture; involve stakeholders and citizens in R&I priority setting; and develop the Coordinating Supporting Actions (CSAs) to communicate on specific topics high on the EU agenda. The letter led to a meeting with a representative of the Moedas Cabinet and was presented again to the new Commissioner Mariya Gabriel in 2020.

**"To meaningfully engage with citizens, don't rely on top-down communication approaches where research and innovation results are "delivered" and "explained" to citizens: in numerous circumstances, these have been proven to fail. Be more ambitious on science engagement and rely on cost-effective actions led by very experienced and committed science centres and museums and other science engagement organisations, all over Europe."**

Extract from Ecsite's Open letter to Commissioner Moedas, July 2019

### Ecsite Advocacy Group

Board members Luigi Amodio, Michiel Buchel, Robert Firmhofer, Helen Jones, Tapio Koivu, Bruno Maquart, Herbert Munder and Anna Omedes; Ecsite Executive Director Catherine Franche; and Rosalia Vargas, President, Ciência Viva – Pavilion of Knowledge, Lisbon (Portugal)

Behind the scenes, less visible but nonetheless crucial work was taking place. Together with other organisations, Ecsite has been involved in a citizen involvement working group called by the European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation in 2018. Two meetings took place in the second half of 2019 on how to involve citizens in Horizon Europe strategic planning. In a similar vein, in 2019 Ecsite answered consultations on Horizon Europe Co-Design, Horizon Europe Strategic Planning and the Future of the European Research Area. We were also invited to a bilateral meeting with the European Research Centre's (ERC) Communications department.

In October we were on stage at a SiS.net event in Warsaw and in December we took part in the Joint Research Centre's Science engagement festival in Brussels: our Executive Director was invited to speak and team members presented three projects.

Moreover, Ecsite Executive Director Catherine Franche has been accepted on the European Commission's Mission Assembly Board on Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and inland Waters. She is one of few science engagement professionals sitting on a Mission Assembly.

Since 2018 a wide coalition has been involved in our advocacy campaign to make science & society count in Horizon Europe: Ecsite's special Advocacy group, its Board members, many of its institutional members and of course several other science engagement networks. Though the mainstreaming of science engagement is a priority in Horizon Europe there is no dedicated science & society strand in the programme as we write these lines beginning of 2020. Talks with the European Commission are continuing.

This campaign allowed us to prove our mobilisation power beyond Ecsite members and to show that citizen engagement mattered to other stakeholders, a legacy we will be building on. It also made our members and their work better known to members of the European Parliament, Commissioners and civil servants.

## Working with our worldwide sister networks

Ecsite has counterpart science centre & science engagement networks around the globe. Together, we are shaping a Science Center World Summit every third year, for which meetings were held in Panama in April 2019 and in Canada in September. The next Summit will be taking place in Mexico City from 1-4 December 2020. We also celebrated the fourth edition of Science Center and Science Museum day on 11 November and several networks supported the second LGBTSTEMDay on 5 July. Together with NAMES (North Africa and Middle East Science centers network), Ecsite also contributed to the fourth edition of the Euro-Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) Summer School, which took place on 27-31 October in the capital of Kuwait, where it was hosted by The Scientific Center of Kuwait (TSCK). The EMME Summer School aims to build the capacities of professionals working in the field of science communication in the Euro-Mediterranean and Middle East regions. The 2019 edition brought together twelve speakers and 37 participants from eight countries and the project-based programme counted contributions from many Ecsite members.



"The 4<sup>th</sup> EMME Summer School was a unique learning experience both from students and lecturers who jointly explored topics in different contexts, from museums to events to academia. There was a vibrant atmosphere and the shared wish to learn as much as possible from other cultures and experiences."



**Leonardo Alfonsi**  
Director, Psiquadro,  
Perugia (Italy) & Ecsite  
Board member.





“The Kavli Foundation is honoured to partner with Ecsite. We share a commitment to ensuring society has a strong relationship with science, and to ensuring the professionals, researchers, innovators, scientists and community-builders who nurture this relationship are supported. We are grateful for Ecsite’s leadership in this space, and proud to be part of the vibrant Ecsite community.”



**Eric Marshall**  
Vice President of Public Engagement and Prizes,  
The Kavli Foundation, USA.

## Two special cooperations, with the European Space Agency and The Kavli Foundation

Ecsite and the European Space Agency (ESA) have been working closely together since 2012 through the Ecsite Space Group, a platform for science centres and museums to promote and highlight communication about European space achievements and activities. This community of practice allows 210+ participants to share experiences, expertise, knowledge, tools, resources and best practice. Joining the Ecsite Space Group is an opportunity to get closer to space professionals and science centres willing to communicate about space. It also allows participants to be better informed about space news, programmes, achievements and next launches. For ESA, National Space Agencies, industries, research institutions and academia, the Space Group offers the possibility to build close collaborations with science communication professionals. In 2019 the Ecsite Space Group continued work on a thematic cycle spanning several years and entitled “Space for Life”, with a particular focus on Earth Observation captured by the motto ‘Space for Earth’. Bringing Space ‘down to Earth’ is a priority for the Space sector: Space is a vantage point for monitoring our ever-changing planet and Europe plays a leading role in this field. The “Space for Life” cycle combines professional development & networking events with the creation, piloting and mutualisation of public engagement resources. More on Ecsite Space Group activities p.36.

Based in the United States, The Kavli Foundation is dedicated to advancing science for the benefit of humanity, promoting public understanding of scientific research, and supporting scientists and their work. The Kavli Foundation funds research in the fields of astrophysics, nanoscience, neuroscience and theoretical physics, as well as a programme in public engagement with science. Ecsite and The Kavli Foundation have been collaborating since 2017, when the Foundation started supporting one of Ecsite Conference’s two keynote speeches. In 2019 Audrey Dussutour, slime mould specialist, delivered The Kavli Foundation keynote lecture at the 30<sup>th</sup> Ecsite Conference. The lecture focused on a widely-acclaimed exploration of slime moulds and the research of them taking place. The partnership also went one step further with a two-day pre-conference workshop on 4-5 June supported by The Kavli Foundation on the topic “Beyond fact checking: Addressing misinformation”. Attended by 23 people from nine different countries, the workshop explored the role of the science communication professionals in an age of misinformation, at a time when values outweigh facts. The workshop featured social scientists from Europe and the USA doing research on misinformation-related topics as well as practitioners sharing their public engagement experience and was designed to promote discussion and collaboration to better equip participants to address the challenges of misinformation in their professional activities. To quote a few of the concepts that were introduced and discussed: cognitive biases, inoculation theories, the ethics of debunking, social media’s role in spreading conspiracy theories, the role of humour, etc. Learnings and recommendations were shared with the approx. 150 participants who attended a summary session of the workshop as part of the Ecsite Conference’s main programme on 6 June. A resource document will be widely disseminated in the Ecsite community in 2020.

## New members

Welcome to the 20 organisations that became Ecsite members in 2019!

### New Full members

- Athena Institute – VU Amsterdam, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
- Bruxelles Environnement / Brussels Environment, Brussels (Belgium) [10]
- Centre for Research in Medical Devices (CURAM) / National University of Ireland, Galway (Ireland)
- Danish Museum of Science & Technology, Elsinor (Denmark)
- FHNW Institute for Data science, the Astroinformatics and Heliophysics Group, Windisch (Switzerland)
- Futurium, Berlin (Germany) [8]
- Kreativum Science Centre, Karlshamn (Sweden) [11]
- Magurele Science Park, Magurele / Bucharest (Romania)
- Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen (Denmark)
- NAWAREUM, Straubing (Germany) [6]
- Stiftung Planetarium Berlin / Foundation of Berlin Planetariums, Berlin (Germany)
- Università degli Studi di Catania / University of Catania, Catania (Italy)

### New Associate members

- Center for the Innovation in Informal STEM Learning, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona (United States) [7]
- The Mind Museum, Taguig City (Philippines) [13]

### New Sustaining members

- Flying Fish Exhibits, Mornington, VIC (Australia)
- Istanbul Cezeri Müzesi / Istanbul Jazari Museum, Istanbul (Turkey) [14]
- JRA, Cincinnati (United States) [12]
- Star Group, China, Beijing (China)
- Stellar Fireworks, Gdansk (Poland) [9]

### New One-Person Company member

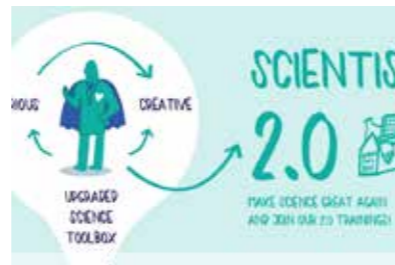
- HWConsult, Cardiff (United Kingdom) [5]

... and welcome to those members accepted by the Ecsite Board end of 2019 and whose membership started beginning of 2020:

- Alvertox, Brussels (Belgium) [2]
- Blue Telescope, New York (United States)
- Centre for the Research in STEM Education, Exeter (United Kingdom) [15]
- Culture Instable, Bristol (United Kingdom)
- GANTNER Ticketing, Ieper (Belgium)
- National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden (The Netherlands) [4]
- Pakistan Science Club, Karachi (Pakistan)
- TechnoMagicLand, Sofia (Bulgaria)
- Tengt, Warsaw (Poland)
- Toyno, Lisbon (Portugal) [3]
- Usturlab, Istanbul (Turkey) [1]



[1] Usturlab, Istanbul (Turkey)



[2] Alvertox, Brussels (Belgium).



[3] Odette Ferreira exhibition designed by Toyno for the Pharmacy Museum (Portugal) / Toyno, Lisbon (Portugal).



[4] National Museum of World Cultures, Leiden (The Netherlands)



[7] Center for the Innovation in Informal STEM Learning, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona (United States) © Emily Maletz / NISE Network.



[10] Bruxelles Environnement / Brussels Environment, Brussels (Belgium)



[13] The Mind Museum, Taguig City (Philippines)



[5] HWConsult, Cardiff (United Kingdom)



[8] Futurium, Berlin (Germany) © Futurium / David von Becker



[11] Kreativum Science Centre, Karlshamn (Sweden)



[14] Istanbul Cezeri Müzesi / Istanbul Jazari Museum, Istanbul (Turkey)



[6] NAWAREUM, Straubing (Germany)



[9] Stellar Fireworks, Gdansk (Poland)



[12] At the Ecsite Conference: team member of JRA, Cincinnati (United States)



[15] Centre for the Research in STEM Education, Exeter (United Kingdom)



## Ecsite Board

Ecsite Board members are elected by the Annual General Assembly, the governing body of Ecsite composed of representatives from Full Member organisations. Among other duties the Board defines Ecsite's strategic orientations and budget and is responsible for the association's legal compliance and financial sustainability. Board members serve for a two-year period renewable twice for a maximum of six years. A warm thank you to all of them for their dedication and commitment. In June 2019 Herbert Munder was re-elected President for a second two-year mandate and eight Trustees were elected or re-elected. Congratulations!

## Executive Committee

### Presidency

- 1 Universum, Bremen (Germany) - Herbert Munder, General Manager

### Past Presidency

- 2 Until June: NEMO Science Museum, Amsterdam (The Netherlands) - Michiel Buchel, CEO
- 3 From June, Acting Past Presidency: Universcience, Paris (France) - Bruno Maquart, Chairman and CEO

### Vice-Presidency

- 4 Natural Sciences Museum of Barcelona, Barcelona (Spain) - Anna Omedes, Director

### Treasury

- 5 Heureka - The Finnish Science Centre, Vantaa (Finland) - Tapio Koivu, CEO

### Ecsite Executive Director

- 6 Catherine Franche

## Trustees

- 7 Cité de l'Espace, Toulouse (France) - Jean Baptiste Desbois, Executive Director (until June)
- 8 Copernicus Science Centre, Warsaw (Poland) - Robert Firmhofer, Chief Executive Officer
- 9 Experimentarium, Hellerup (Denmark) - Kim Gladstone Herlev, Executive Director
- 10 focusTerra - ETH Zurich, Zurich (Switzerland) - Ulrike Kastrup, Museum Director
- 11 Fondazione IDIS - Città della Scienza, Naples (Italy) - Luigi Amodio, Director of the Science Centre (until June)
- 12 NEMO Science Museum, Amsterdam (The Netherlands) - Marjolein van Breemen, Deputy Director (from June)
- 13 NOESIS, Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum, Themi, Thessaloniki (Greece) - Thanassis Kontonikolaou, Director General
- 14 Psiquadro, Perugia (Italy) - Leonardo Alfonsi, Director (from June)
- 15 Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, Leiden (The Netherlands) - Amito Haarhuis, Director (from June)
- 16 Science Museum Group, London (United Kingdom) - Helen Jones, Director of Global Engagement and Strategy
- 17 Stiftung Neanderthal Museum, Mettmann (Germany) - Bärbel Auffermann, Director (from June)
- 18 Technopolis, the Flemish Science Centre, Mechelen (Belgium) - Stephane Berghmans, CEO
- 19 Vitensenteret, the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, Oslo (Norway) - Jan Alfred Andersson, Head of Science Centre Department (until June)



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## Events, professional development and publications

As a network, one of Ecsite's most crucial missions is to support the sharing of ideas and practices in the science engagement field. Thousands of peers connect with each other thanks to our Conference, Directors Forum, magazine, online platforms or communities of practice – and contribute to making them such vibrant moments and places.

### Ecsite Conference Copenhagen, Denmark

A record-breaking 1,190 participants from 59 different countries gathered in Hellerup near Copenhagen (Denmark) for the 30th edition of the Ecsite Conference. It was hosted by Experimentarium and all sessions took place inside the science centre, a real treat for participants who could discuss science engagement in the hands-on context of Experimentarium's 18 exhibitions, re-opened to the public in January 2017. Sessions took place in auditoria and workshop rooms, but also directly on the exhibition floor, on the venue's iconic double helix staircase or on its rooftop terrace. A warm thank you to Experimentarium, whose team rose up to every logistical challenge and gave attendees a superb welcome.

As usual, the Conference combined two days of in-depth pre-conference workshops on 4-5 June with three days of parallel sessions, keynote speeches and trade fair on 6-8 June. The 2019 theme was "Pushing Boundaries": for this 30th edition the science engagement community was invited to build on three decades of science communication and look ahead.

#### Pre-conference workshops

Nine in-depth parallel workshops took place over the course of two days. Participants investigated computational tinkering activities, developed tools for space science communication or devised strategies for organisational change on diversity, equity and inclusion. They discussed how to engage audiences with global issues or how to address misinformation, prototyped games, learned how to make the most out of EU funding opportunities and gained insights into the evaluation of learning activities.

#### Conference sessions

No fewer than 120 parallel sessions involving almost 450 speakers and convenors were on offer on 6-8 June, spread between rooms, exhibition spaces and our dedicated MakerSpace and GameLab. Topics included climate change communication, scientific heritage collections, futures thinking, art-science collaborations, citizen labs, virtual reality, soft power, the Sustainable Development Goals, science shows, universities & science centres, escape games, the ethics of brain technology, upwards management, decolonising the museum... and many, many more.

#### Local flavours

Maritime views, shiny graphic design, an emphasis on cycling and public transport and of course Smørrebrød (open sandwiches) counted among the local ingredients of this Danish edition. The Conference Host made a point of showcasing Copenhagen's highlights, with nine local tours ranging from museums to green neighbourhoods to an innovative local school. Experimentarium staff also shared their very own favourite restaurants in a much-appreciated recommendations list.

Participants took the sustainability commitment made by Ecsite and the Conference Host seriously: single-use plastic food containers delivered by mistake on the event's first lunch prompted vigorous comments, a reaction our community can only be proud of.





"I know that the wonderful teams who organised the Conference feel privileged to have you here. Because you are tremendously powerful and you can improve the world. You reach so many people, in ways that are between the traditional boundaries, in styles that society needs. This year's Conference theme is "Pushing Boundaries" and I wish you a magnificent time here in Copenhagen. Make the boundaries of your heart porous, allow trespassing on your property, practice brain osmosis, open the gates to receive floods of friendships."



**Catherine Franche**  
Ecsite Executive Director,  
Ecsite Conference Opening  
speech, 6 June 2019

## A busy social programme

On 5 June speakers and convenors were invited to attend the Speakers Reception at Øregård Gymnasium. In the serene white marble hall of this high school, they received a warm welcome from Pia Nyring, Rector of the Øregård Gymnasium and elected member of the Municipal Council of the City of Gentofte; Kim Gladstone Herlev, Executive Director of Experimentarium; Frida Frost, Chairperson of the Board of Experimentarium and Herbert Munder, Ecsite President.

On 6 June newcomers started early with a networking breakfast before joining all other attendees at the Opening event, live-streamed from a central stage to several locations around the Experimentarium building. Among other highlights: a choir flash mob, a percussion jam session, the premiere of a movie celebrating Ecsite's 30th anniversary and the unveiling of the Mariano Gago Ecsite Award winners. In the evening everyone re-convened for an unusual Gala Dinner & Show, held at the Wallmans Circus, a landmark of Copenhagen cultural life.

On 7 June participants enjoyed a lively Business Bistro Happy Hour before spreading through the Experimentarium building filled up with marine-themed science entertainment for the Nocturne. They enjoyed a rich programme of shows, demonstrations and music and all sang along at a big "Happy Birthday Ecsite" moment. The conference found its conclusion at the Farewell Party at the Docken, a former salt warehouse re-converted into a cultural venue. Attendees chilled by the water and danced away in Docken's beautiful industrial space.

## Business Bistro

60 exhibitors had set up their booths, presenting the latest techniques and services and welcoming attendees with demonstrations, portfolios and delicacies. Exhibitors from Finland to Singapore and Portugal to Sweden presented products and services ranging from ticketing solutions to planetarium domes and immersive virtual reality experiences to touring exhibitions. As usual, every coffee break took place around the Business Bistro booths.

## Thank you, dear conference sponsors

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## Keynote speeches

The Conference programme included two plenary keynote speeches that attendees could see from the main auditorium or follow from one of several livestreaming locations at Experimentarium, which included cosy cinema rooms and lie-down beanbag lounges.

“Mathematics as Material Play” was the title of writer, artist and curator Margaret Wertheim’s speech on 7 June. She discussed her work using material play practices as a way to engage people with mathematics, “the orphan child of STEM”. She argued that maths – like music – can be played out as a joyful embodied activity open to all people. She described the Coral Reef Project which she led together with her twin sister, using crochet to introduce hyperbolic geometry and raise environmental concerns. Her lecture was also a strong call for gender equality in science and STEM, urging the audience to overcome gender snobbery towards crafts traditionally perceived as “feminine”.

On 8 June Audrey Dussutour from the Research Centre on Animal Cognition of Toulouse University (France) was on stage, for “The blob: a genius without a brain”, a lecture supported by The Kavli Foundation. Her unit works on animal cognition, neuroscience, animal behaviour and computational biology. In a witty and wonderfully illustrated lecture, Dussutour shared her most recent work focused on proto-cognition in slime moulds (single-cell eukaryotic organisms). Among others she explained how they build optimal networks, are able to find the shortest way through a maze and have picky food preferences. Her group’s recent studies suggest that slime moulds may be an ideal model system in which to investigate fundamental mechanisms underlying the ground-floor of learning abilities, as they are able to learn and share knowledge without the help of a brain. Dussutour also shared her love of public engagement, which has led her to classrooms or prisons.

## Conference Programme Committee

### Mikko Myllykoski

Experience Director, Heureka  
- The Finnish Science Centre,  
Vantaa (Finland) – Chairperson

### Dacha Atienza

Head of Scientific Area, Natural  
Sciences Museum of Barcelona  
(Spain) (from September)

### Alice Brighi

Project Manager, Natural  
History Museum of Geneva,  
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September)

### Carlos Catalão Alves

Board Member, Pavilion of  
Knowledge - Ciência Viva,  
Lisbon (Portugal)

### Vasyl Dunets

Project coordinator, National  
Centre “Junior Academy  
of Sciences of United  
Kingdomraine”, Kiev (Ukraine)  
(from November)

### Dobrivoje Lale Eric

Head of International  
Cooperation, CPN, Belgrade  
(Serbia) (from November)

### Maria João Fonseca

Interim Executive Coordinator  
/ Head of Communication,  
Natural History and Science  
Museum of the University  
of Porto (MHNC-UP), Porto  
(Portugal)

### Amito Haarhuis

Director, Rijksmuseum  
Boerhaave, Leiden (The  
Netherlands) (until September)

### Lea Hjalmsø Hansen

Project Manager,  
Experimentarium, Hellerup  
(Denmark) (until September)

### Mairéad Hurley

Education & Learning Manager,  
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September)

### Brad Irwin

Head of International  
Partnerships, The Natural  
History Museum, London  
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### Joanna Kalinowska

Development Director,  
Copernicus Science Centre,  
Warsaw (Poland) (until  
September)

### Jurij Krpan

Art Director, Kersnikova  
Institute, Ljubljana (Slovenia)

### Sheena Laursen

Programme Manager –  
International Relations and  
Learning, Experimentarium,  
Hellerup (Denmark)

### Elin Ravndal Bell

Marketing Manager,  
Jaermuseet, Sandnes (Norway)  
(from September)

### Barbara Streicher

Executive Manager, Science  
Center Network, Vienna  
(Austria)

### Nele Van der Elst

Experience Director,  
Technopolis, the Flemish  
Science Centre, Mechelen  
(Belgium)

### Dorothee Vatinel

Curator, Unverscience,  
Paris (France)

### Siri Vinje

Head of Department, Public  
and Marketing, Norwegian  
Petroleum Museum, Stavanger  
(Norway) (from September)

### Julie Becker

Communications and Events  
Manager, Ecsite, Brussels  
(Belgium)

### Catherine Franche

Executive Director, Ecsite,  
Brussels (Belgium)

**Thank you for your passion and  
dedication, dear Committee  
members!**





“You are the people who decide what appears in our imaginations when we hear the word ‘science’. If you are serious about reaching the UN’s goals, you will need the general public to want to reach the goals too. You need to make it abundantly clear what is at stake, and you need to make it clear in a way that is captivating enough so that it inspires action.”



**Iver Solhjem and Alexander Caspian Thorvaldsen Alterskjær**  
Members of the Youth Council of the City of Trondheim, speaking at the Opening of the 2019 Ecsite Directors Forum.

## Ecsite Directors Forum, Trondheim, Norway

### Future thinking - the Sustainable Development Goals as an opportunity for developing organisations

Each autumn Directors and Senior Managers of Ecsite Full members gather for the Ecsite Directors Forum, a carefully orchestrated 44-hour mix of strategic talks, peer learning, networking and local highlights. 65 participants were greeted by crisp cold and sunny river views as they gathered in Trondheim on 13-15 November for the 2019 edition, hosted by the Trondheim Science Centre in partnership with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Two years on from the Tokyo Protocol that saw science centre networks around the world commit to help deliver the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the event offered a collective moment for our field’s leaders to concentrate on the organisational and strategic level of SDG implementation. A pressing challenge, as representatives of The Youth Council of the City of Trondheim reminded attendees in a powerful contribution to the Opening.

Two very different keynote speakers shared their thoughts on the theme. Nathalie Ireland, Board member of the Happy Museum (United Kingdom) challenged attendees to rethink the mission of science engagement, sharing her experience of developing methods for the museum sector to respond to the challenge of a changing world. Biology professor Hans Stenøien from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology invited attendees to consider humans’ biological and cultural relationships with their environments from deep history until today. “We need collective incentives and grand narratives if we want system level changes,” he stated and challenged attendees: “Can we be the fireplaces around

which new grand narratives are invented?”

Three parallel workshops allowed to dig deeper and put ideas into practice, respectively exploring storytelling around the SDGs; the SDGs as a springboard for new partnerships and sponsorships; and how Happy Museum ideas might be applied to our organisations.

The Directors Forum is also an opportunity for Full members to exchange with the Ecsite Board and discuss strategic issues for our network. This year participants worked on the question: “On which topics would you like Ecsite to advocate?” Climate change communication and sustainability came out as strong priorities from all groups.

Last but not least, social and local highlights: participants had the Trondheim Science Centre to themselves on the first night, enjoying performances, exhibitions and a beautiful vocal improvisation piece in the planetarium; on the second night they shared a “pilgrim’s supper” at the Grand Hall of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Archbishop’s Palace and enjoyed a stunning organ concert in the Nidaros Cathedral.

## Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards

Created in 2015, the Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards encourage creative and impactful work within the science engagement sector. Two prizes and one special mention were awarded in 2019 and the winners received their trophy from the hands of Jury Chairperson Sharon Ament at the Opening of the 2019 Ecsite Conference in Hellerup.

### Jury of the Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards

#### Sharon Ament

Director, Museum of London (United Kingdom)  
– Chairperson

#### David Harvey

Former Senior Vice President of Exhibition, American Museum of Natural History / David Harvey Design, LLC, New York (USA)

#### Sarah Davies

Lecturer, University of Copenhagen (Denmark)

Thank you, dear Jury!



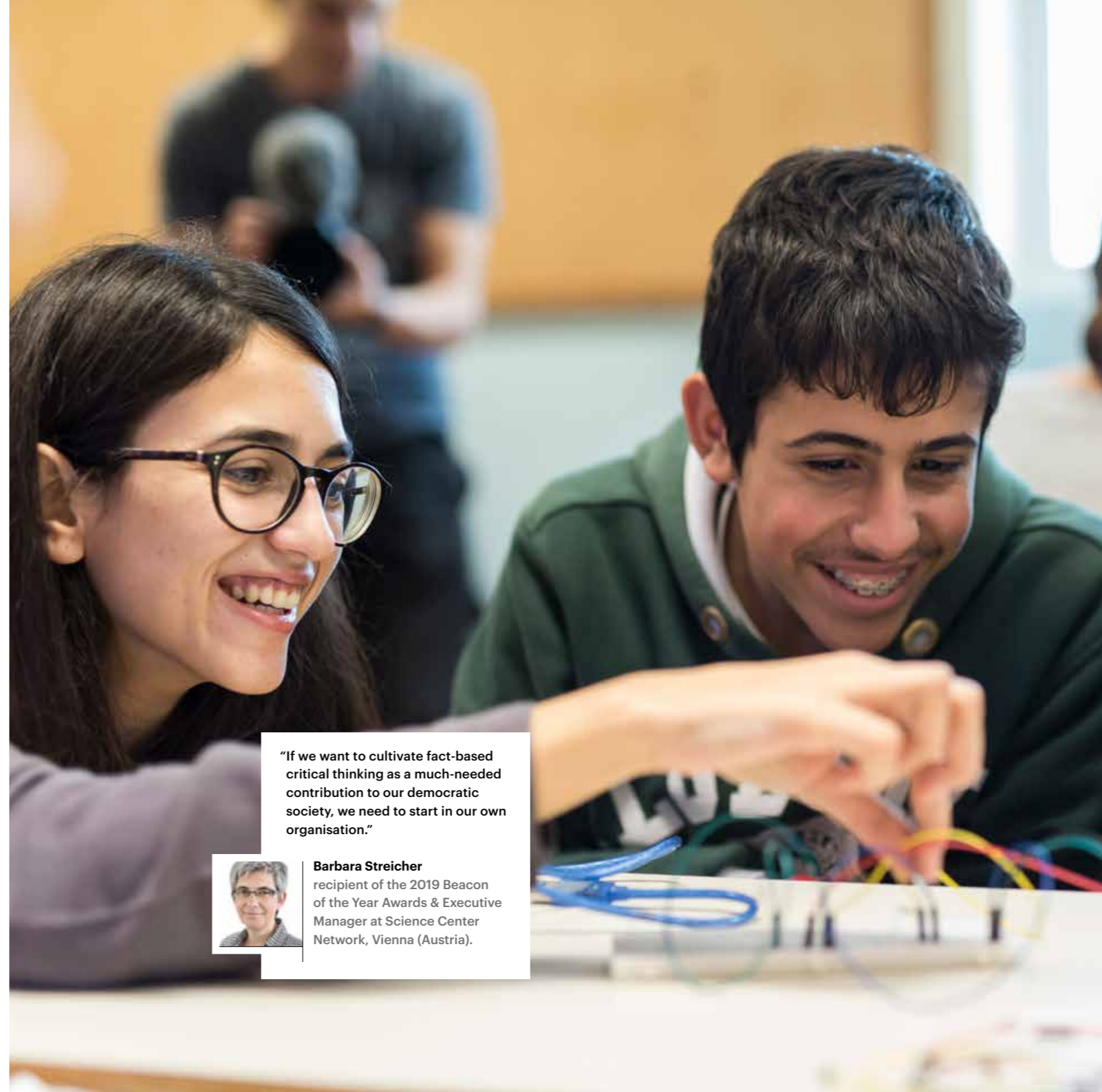
Barbara Streicher, Executive Manager at Science Center Network, Vienna, Austria, won the first ever Beacon of the Year Award, for personal embodiment of our network's values. Barbara has been an active member of the Ecsite Conference Programme Committee since 2015, and has been providing significant contributions to the Ecsite community as one of the Hosts of the 2016 Ecsite Conference in Graz, as a key committee member of the Facilitation Group, an Ecsite thematic group devoted to empowerment of explainers and human interfaces in science centres, and through initiating an advocate group for social inclusion, equity and diversity within the science centre community in 2017.

Barbara was nominated by peers from several science engagement organisations across Europe. "Emerging issues, such as diversity, inclusion and social equity, ask for pondering beyond common sense statements and call for leaders that do not simply govern or dominate: Barbara is such a leader, smartly urging everyone to reflect, re-question and be critical. She is shaking our minds and changing our field", they wrote when putting her name forward.

The non-profit organisation SciCo (Athens, Greece) won the Sustainable Success Award for "STEMpowering Youth" - a STEM educational programme which brings together young students and educators from remote areas of Greece in order to work together out of school, come up with their own innovative ideas and develop them into real-life projects that solve local community problems.

Universcience (Paris, France) received a special mention for taking a timely stance to counteract the spreading of misinformation with the "Data Science vs. Fake News" project, which sets a brave example for the science engagement field.

A warm thank you to the Laboratory of Instrumentation and Experimental Particle Physics (LIP), generous contributor to the Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards.



"If we want to cultivate fact-based critical thinking as a much-needed contribution to our democratic society, we need to start in our own organisation."



#### Barbara Streicher

recipient of the 2019 Beacon of the Year Awards & Executive Manager at Science Center Network, Vienna (Austria).





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February 2019, #49



March 2019, #50



April 2019, #51



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December 2019, #58



Read Spokes online

## Spokes, the Ecsite magazine

Published monthly on the Ecsite website and delivered to hundreds of science engagement professionals' inboxes, the Spokes magazine lies at the heart of Ecsite communications.

Every four weeks it combines network updates, conference news, jobs, good reads etc. with two feature articles, written by professionals or academics of the wide science engagement scene.

In June 2019 Maarten Okkersen, who had been the Chairperson of the Editorial Committee since the magazine's creation in 2014, reached the end of his second and final three-year mandate. As Ecsite President Herbert Munder wrote: "It was under Maarten's leadership that the long-standing Ecsite newsletter was re-born as a magazine in 2013, first as a quarterly paper publication and two years later as the monthly online magazine we know today. Maarten's insatiable trendspotting curiosity, his marketing expertise, his flair for design and his contagious enthusiasm lastingly shaped the soul of Spokes and its Editorial Committee".

The Ecsite Board chose Maria Xanthoudaki as a successor, a highly respected learning specialist in the Ecsite community and a familiar face for Spokes readers. Maria has been a member of the Spokes Editorial Committee since July 2015 and authored or co-authored several pieces in the past few years, for instance on digital & learning, STEAM, new learning philosophies or Tinkering.

In 2019 Spokes continued to offer an eclectic mix of features, ranging from pseudoscience to gender equity in the work place, from science shows to post-colonial museums, from co-creation to business models. Two innovations were piloted: Portfolios, a new image-based format meant for visual learners and for those stories better told in visuals than words; and Spokes collections, online repositories of Spokes articles ordered thematically. As usual, the most striking and long-lasting articles published online in 2019 were gathered in a paper volume called Spokes Panorama, an exclusive publication for Ecsite members.

Spokes could not exist without the Ecsite members, science engagement professionals, readers and writers that feed the magazine each month, or without its faithful Editorial Committee, whose members (and their organisations) generously contribute their insights, time and energy. Thank you all.

### Spokes Editorial Committee

**Maarten Okkersen**  
Head of Communications,  
Museon, The Hague  
(The Netherlands) –  
Chairperson (until June)

**Maria Xanthoudaki**  
Head of Education and  
International Relations,  
Museo Nazionale della Scienza  
e della Tecnologia Leonardo  
da Vinci, Milan (Italy) –  
Chairperson (from June)

**Julie Becker**  
Communications and Events  
Manager, Ecsite, Brussels  
(Belgium) – Editor

**Michèle Antoine**  
Director of Exhibitions,  
Universcience, Paris (France)  
(from November)

**Andrea Bandelli**  
Executive Director,  
Science Gallery International,  
Dublin (Ireland)

**Emily Cronin**  
Partnerships Manager,  
Touring Exhibitions, Science  
Museum Group, London  
(United Kingdom)

**Raquel da Cunha**  
Events and Communications  
Officer, Ecsite, Brussels  
(Belgium)

**Wiktor Gajewski**  
Events Director,  
Copernicus Science Centre,  
Warsaw (Poland)

**Aliki Giannakopoulou**  
Project Manager,  
Ellinogermaniki Agogi,  
Pallini (Greece) (until June)

**António Gomes da Costa**  
Director of Mediation and  
Education, Universcience,  
Paris (France) (until June)

**Pilvi Kolk**  
Member of the management  
board, AHHA Science Centre,  
Tartu (Estonia)

**Frank Kupper**  
Assistant Professor of Science  
Communication, Athena  
Institute - Vrije Universiteit  
Amsterdam (The Netherlands)  
(from November)

## Ecsite communities of practice

Ecsite counts several communities of practice bringing together professionals for exchanges on specific topics within the field, some of them formally constituted as “Thematic Groups” and others organised as more informal working groups. Thank you to all Ecsite members contributing energy and ideas! In 2019 the Ecsite Board laid the foundations of a new scheme to better support such initiatives: the Ecsite Collaborative Grants.



## Space Group

In cooperation with the European Space Agency, ESA, in 2019 the Ecsite Space Group continued to explore a thematic cycle entitled “Space for Life” which started in 2015.

On 4-5 June 2019, 38 Ecsite Conference participants from 16 different countries joined a two-day pre-conference workshop on the topic “Space for All, Space for Earth”, focusing on the intersection between Space science & exploration and pressing scientific and societal challenges. Attendees heard updates on the latest European space developments, which of course included European exploration activities communicated to the general public at the occasion of the 50th moon landing anniversary. The second day of the workshop was organised in coordination with Planetarium Copenhagen and included a behind-the-scenes visit of the 2018 Mariano Gago Ecsite award-winning ‘Made in Space’ exhibition.

“Space for Life” has also allowed the development of shared public engagement resources. The project’s second pilot, the ‘Alive!’ board game, led by Valencia Science Centre (Spain), was presented at the 2019 Ecsite Conference.

Throughout the year Space Group participants kept working together and engaging audiences with collectively developed resources. They held their annual meeting at ESRIN, the ESA Centre for Earth Observation in Frascati (Rome), Italy – which included behind-the-scenes visits.

**Aim: to offer a platform to share information, ideas, practices and expertise for developing joint projects to promote European space programmes**

**Twitter: #EcsiteSpace**

## Steering Committee

**Maria Menendez**, Head of Corporate Exhibitions and Events, European Space Agency, Paris (France) – Co-Chairperson

**Marc Moutin**, Shows and Development Director, Cité de l’Espace, Toulouse (France) – Co-Chairperson

**Ana Noronha**, Executive Director of Ciência Viva, Pavilion of Knowledge - Ciência Viva, Lisbon (Portugal) – Co-Chairperson

**Barbara Budassi** - Ecsite Space Group Coordinator for ESA

Look up the 210+ Space Group members on the Ecsite website!



“Science and its achievements should be accessible to all, and ESA will continue to push in this direction, especially via its cooperation with Ecsite. Our common mission: to reach out to the larger public.”



**Philippe Willekens**  
Head of ESA Communication  
Department



### Nature Group

The Nature Group ran a full-day workshop at the 2019 Ecsite Conference, on the topic “Engaging audiences with big global issues”. The workshop explored new thoughts on how to attract and participate in new alliances across institutions, reach a wider audience and take action. Concepts heard in the room: wicked problems, civic science, trust, activism, authenticity...

**Aim: to bring together professionals and institutions who engage audiences with nature**

### Steering Committee

**Henrik Sell**, Deputy Director, Natural History Museum, Aarhus (Denmark) – Chairperson (until June)

**Uwe Moldrzyk**, Head of Exhibitions, Natural History Museum - Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Berlin (Germany) – Chairperson (from June)

**Thomas B Berg**, Senior Scientist, Collection and Exhibition Manager, Naturama, Svendborg (Denmark)

**Francis Duranthon**, Museum Director, Natural History Museum of Toulouse (France) (from June)

**Michele Lanzinger**, CEO, MUSE - Museo delle Scienze, Trento (Italy) (until June)

**Yuri Matteman**, Head of Education, Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden (The Netherlands)

**Ana Noronha**, Executive Director of Ciência Viva, Pavilion of Knowledge - Ciência Viva, Lisbon (Portugal) (until June)

**Carole Paleco**, International relations and projects, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels (Belgium) (from April)

**Camille Pisani**, Director, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels (Belgium) (until April)

### REV Group

The REV Group had its activity peak in June 2019 during the Ecsite Conference, where it held a two-day pre-conference workshop entitled “Measuring learning – an introduction”. The workshop offered both theory and practical exercises, as tools were tested in Experimentarium’s exhibition and tinkering spaces. Through its Twitter account, the REV Group also relayed visitor studies news and events throughout the year.

**Aim: to stimulate and help facilitate research and evaluation in science centres and museums across Europe**  
**Twitter: @Ecsite\_REV**

### Steering Committee

**Nils Petter Hauan**, Head of Development, VilVite, Bergen Science Centre, Bergen (Norway) - Chairperson (until June)

**Ilona Iowiecka-Tańska**, Head of the Research Department, Copernicus Science Centre, Warsaw (Poland) - Chairperson (from June)

**Elizabeth McGregor Jacobides**, PhD, Cambridge University (United Kingdom)

**Roy Schedler**, Head Marketing and Partnerships, Swiss Science Center Technorama, Winterthur (Switzerland)

### Facilitation Group

In 2019 the Facilitation Group organised a Conference session entitled “The explainer in me” that explored the knowledge, skills and professional acumen developed by former explainers who moved to other science engagement positions - an experience they considered essential in their new capacities.

**Aim: to build a community for all staff who deliver learning experiences within a museum or science engagement organisation**  
**Twitter: @Ecsite\_TFG**

### Steering Committee

**António Gomes da Costa**, Director of Mediation and Education, Universcience, Paris (France)

**Brad Irwin**, Head of International Partnerships, The Natural History Museum, London (United Kingdom)

**Ryan Jenkins**, Co-Founder, Education, Wonderful Idea Co., San Francisco (USA)

**Heather King**, Research Fellow, King’s College London (United Kingdom)

**Miha Kos**, Director, The House of Experiments, Ljubljana (Slovenia)

**Sofia Lucas**, Head of Education Unit, Pavilion of Knowledge - Ciência Viva, Lisbon (Portugal)

**Matteo Merzagora**, Director, TRACES - Espace des Sciences Pierre-Gilles de Gennes, Paris (France)

**Paola Rodari**, Toward ESOF2020 Trieste “Science in the City” Programme Manager, Trieste International Foundation (FIT), Trieste (Italy)

**Barbara Streicher**, Executive Manager, Science Center Network, Vienna (Austria)

**Maria Xanthoudaki**, Head of Education and International Relations, National Museum of Science and Technology ‘Leonardo da Vinci’, Milan (Italy)

### Other communities of practice

It is impossible to draw a comprehensive list of the more informal groups active in the Ecsite community. Let's nevertheless quote three particularly dynamic ones. Since 2013 a relentless dozen of practitioners have been running a space dedicated to making and tinkering at the Ecsite Conference, the so-called MakerSpace. They also have been organising dozens of sessions, workshops and pre-conference workshops on the topic. Similarly a group of passionate gamers have been coordinating the Ecsite Conference's dedicated GameLab space and offering game-related sessions since 2014, heralding the learning power of games in the science engagement community. Last but not least, a group has been working towards an inclusion and diversity framework for our community since 2017, organising a series of workshops and happenings and advancing its ideas by (respectfully) "hacking" other workshops and sessions at the 2019 Ecsite Conference. Barbara Streicher (Executive Manager at Science Center Network, Vienna Austria), one of the group's initiators, was awarded the 2019 Beacon of the Year Award for personal embodiment of our network's values.

### Forthcoming: Ecsite Collaborative Grants

In order to support the full diversity of communities of practices in the Ecsite community the Ecsite Board decided to create a new scheme in 2019 for Ecsite members: Ecsite Collaborative Grants. These grants support the advancement of the science engagement field by funding cross-country collaborative actions in the Ecsite professional community that fill a gap in our field and leave a long-lasting legacy. Any group of science engagement professionals, working for at least five Ecsite members (with one Full member leading) and from at least three different countries could apply for the first call, which opened in autumn 2019. A Selection Committee composed of Ecsite Board members will be choosing Funded Actions each year and assessing their outcomes. An overall budget of €20,000 was available for the first edition. The first funded actions will be taking place in 2020 – more in next year's annual report and of course on our website!

### EXTRA, the marketplace for scientific touring exhibitions

Hosted on the Ecsite website, the EXTRA database lists almost 400 science-related exhibitions. Browsing is open to all, while advertising is reserved to Ecsite members.



Thank you, dear EXTRA sponsors  
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## EU-funded projects

Ecsite regularly takes part in EU-funded projects as a project partner, involving Ecsite members in the development and delivery of public engagement activities. Together with 39 of our members, in 2019 we were part of nine projects, all funded under Horizon 2020, the European Commission's framework for research and innovation. There are many benefits to participation in these projects, such as the development of resources useful to the whole field, professional development opportunities for staff or the birth of cross-border collaborations that will continue beyond the project's time frame.

EU-funded projects also offer the field a precious opportunity for self-reflection analysis. Let us quote a few current examples. SySTEM2020 clarified definitions of formal, non-formal and informal learning, its online map is drawing a much-needed picture of STEM initiatives across Europe and the project will next be tackling accreditation in informal learning. SISCODE challenged what "co-creation" should mean and unpacked the challenges facing these demanding approaches. Putting science & society under the magnifying glass, RETHINK will provide an overview of the science engagement landscape in Europe.

### SySTEM2020

#### In short

**Mapping science learning outside the classroom across Europe, sharing best principles for educators in this field and piloting self-evaluation tools for learners**

**Timeframe:** May 2018 – April 2021

**European programme:** Horizon 2020

**Coordinator:** Science Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin (Ireland)

**Ecsite role:** Partner and work package leader on communication, dissemination and exploitation of the research outcomes

**Ecsite members involved:** 16

**More information:** [www.system2020.education](http://www.system2020.education) and the April 2019 Spokes article "The SySTEM 2020 Map: a view into nonformal learning."

#### 2019 highlights

2019 saw the launch of SySTEM 2020's flagship online map, pinpointing 2,200+ STEAM initiatives (and counting!) around Europe. Important theoretical ground was also laid with a systematic literature review and clarified definitions of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The next step of the project was co-designed by learners and educators from several countries who came together in Helsinki in March 2019 to unpack three topics for the future of informal learning: engagement, inclusion and accreditation.

## SISCODE

### In short

**Understanding the co-creation phenomenon flourishing in European science centres, museums, FabLabs, living labs, smart cities (etc.) and identifying the conditions for effective introduction, scalability and replication**

**Timeframe:** May 2018 – April 2021

**European programme:** Horizon 2020

**Coordinator:** Politecnico di Milano, Milan (Italy)

**Ecsite role:** Partner and work package leader on engagement and dissemination

**Ecsite members involved:** 4

**More information:** [www.siscodeproject.eu](http://www.siscodeproject.eu)

and the “We need better problems” article in the October 2019 issue of Spokes, directly fed by ideas from the project.

### 2019 highlights

In 2019 the project undertook a crucial piece of research, outlining co-creation’s potential as a means for public engagement and unpacking the challenges still facing it. On the ground the project’s ten partner laboratories started analysing and using co-creation in their locality to tackle a broad range of local issues.

Prototype of “VR Best Friend,” invented by one of the participants to a three week-long workshop on mental health and well-being hosted by Science Gallery, Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland) as part of the SISCODE project.

## RETHINK

### In short

**Overcoming barriers and inequalities that prevent open and reflexive connections between science and society**

**Timeframe:** January 2019 – December 2021

**European programme:** Horizon 2020

**Coordinator:** Athena Institute, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

**Ecsite role:** Project partner and work package leader coordinating the ‘Rethinkerspaces’

**Ecsite members involved:** 6

**More information:** [www.rethinkscicomm.eu](http://www.rethinkscicomm.eu)

### 2019 highlights

In 2019 Ecsite was busy establishing the project’s so-called ‘Rethinkerspaces’ that will generate a thorough and widespread overview of the science engagement landscape in Europe. Rethinkerspaces mapped their local science engagement landscape and the first workshops involving practitioners and academics took place.

“Being involved in RETHINK will be a great way to get to know the science communication community in Portugal even better, to be a part of the sector’s European portrait and to participate in ongoing discussions about our field’s role. Thanks to Ecsite we have access to a new network, new partnerships and of course to the great people working on the project.”



**Joana Lobo Antunes**

Professor in Science  
Communication, Universidade  
Nova de Lisboa (Portugal) -  
Ecsite Third Party in RETHINK





“We urgently need to transform our food systems to become more sustainable. In FIT4FOOD2030, we chose to work with science engagement organisations, using their convening power to mobilise a wide variety of actors, including citizens and farmers, and tackle global challenges at a local level. Our Living Labs across Europe are influencing R&I agendas, raising awareness and building competences.”



**Prof. Dr. Jacqueline E.W. Broerse**  
Full Professor, Athena Institute, Faculty of Science, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands) & FIT4FOOD2030 project coordinator

## FIT4FOOD2030

### In short

**Creating communities of practice to transform European food systems towards greater sustainability, resilience, competitiveness and inclusion**

**Timeframe:** November 2017 – October 2020

**European programme:** Horizon 2020  
**Coordinator:** Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

**Ecsite role:** Partner and work package leader, coordinating the work of 14 City Labs set up by science centres and museums and science shops all over Europe

**Ecsite members involved:** 4

**More information:** [www.fit4food2030.eu](http://www.fit4food2030.eu)

### 2019 highlights

Throughout 2019, the project's seven City Labs were busy prototyping and piloting educational modules about food systems meeting their communities' needs. Seven science engagement organisations joined them halfway as a new cohort of 'Labs'. They too have embarked on a dialogue with citizens and stakeholders around future-proofing the local food system and will be delivering the training in their cities. The project's model of city-level engagement also had the privilege to be showcased in an Independent Expert Report published by the European Commission and the City of Milan about European cities leading in urban food systems transformation.

## GRACE

### In short

**Creating institutional change through Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in six research organisations**

**Timeframe:** January 2019 – December 2021

**European programme:** Horizon 2020  
**Coordinator:** Fondation européenne de la science (ESF), Strasbourg (France)

**Ecsite role:** Partner, advising citizen engagement and science education actions

**More information:** [www.grace-rri.eu](http://www.grace-rri.eu)

### 2019 highlights

To support the six research funding and/or research performing organisations embarking on an institutional change journey through the project, GRACE partners started by developing ideas for RRI grounding actions. Ecsite gave advice on public engagement and science education specifically.

## EU-Citizen.Science

### In short

**Building a European citizen science platform, at the service of other projects**

**Timeframe:** January 2019 – December 2021

**European programme:** Horizon 2020  
**Coordinator:** Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin (Germany)

**Ecsite role:** Partner and work package leader on communication and dissemination

**Ecsite members involved:** 3

**More information:** [www.eu-citizen.science](http://www.eu-citizen.science)

### 2019 highlights

The project's first year was dedicated to laying a solid basis in order to best support the EU-funded citizen science actions that EU-Citizen.Science is serving. This included: defining citizen science, mapping the community's needs, creating a joint newsletter, launching two surveys etc.

## spaceEU

### In short

Developing outreach and educational activities that use the excitement of space to encourage young people to choose careers in science and technology and stimulate a sense of European and global citizenship

### Timeframe:

December 2018 – November 2020

**European programme:** Horizon 2020

**Coordinator:** Leiden University, Leiden (The Netherlands)

**Ecsite role:** Partner, coordinating ten "engagement nodes" that will carry out public engagement activities

**Ecsite members involved:** 6

**More information:**

[www.space-eu.org](http://www.space-eu.org)

### 2019 highlights

In the first year of the spaceEU project each "engagement node" sent a representative to the space education Summer School organised by project partner Ellinogermaniki Agogi in Attica, Greece. They will be key ambassadors in the upcoming public engagement campaign that will also feature the "Step into Space" exhibition, first shown at the Ars Electronica Festival (Linz, Austria) in September 2019. Exhibition materials are available for reproduction for free.

## ERC=Science2

### In short

Raising the profile of the European Research Council (ERC) by highlighting its scientific research, achievements and success stories while stimulating greater public interest in science

### Timeframe:

October 2015 – March 2019

**European programme:** Horizon 2020

**Coordinator:** Science I Business, Brussels (Belgium)

**Ecsite role:** Partner and work package leader, coordinating the design and delivery of public engagement activities, together with Ecsite members

**Ecsite members involved:** 10

**More information:**

[www.sciencesquared.eu](http://www.sciencesquared.eu)

### 2019 highlights

2019 was ERC=Science2's closing year. Over the 42 months of the project's life, no less than 66,340 people living in 10 different European countries discovered cutting-edge European Research Council (ERC) funded research presented by ERC grantees in public events organised in cooperation with ten Ecsite members. After 'The Human City', 'Food', 'Longevity', 'Sensory experiences' and 'Music', the last public engagement activities showcased the topic 'Artificial Intelligence' and were carried out in France, Bulgaria and Latvia.

## NANO2ALL

### In short

Cultivating a Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) governance ecosystem for nanotechnology

### Timeframe:

October 2015 – March 2019

**European programme:** Horizon 2020

**Coordinator:** Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI), Porto (Portugal)

**Ecsite role:** Partner, coordinating the action of Ecsite members organising dialogue events

**Ecsite members involved:** 6

**More information:**

[www.nano2all.eu](http://www.nano2all.eu)

### 2019 highlights

The final year of the project saw the release of its 'Roadmap for a more inclusive nanotechnology development in Europe'. These recommendations are the result of a thorough research, dialogue and stakeholder consultation process whose learnings are applicable to emerging technologies beyond nanotechnologies.







## Join us

As a network, Ecsite catalyses its members' collective strengths into a powerful voice, at the forefront of science engagement.

Through Ecsite, members keep up to date with current issues in the science engagement field, spread information about their news and events, meet up at the largest European science engagement conference and participate in European projects...  
Join the network! Check out the details on our website's members section.

### Expected 2020 highlights

- A new strategic plan for Ecsite
- The first funded actions under Ecsite's Collaborative Grants
- Two Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards: 'Sustainable Success' and 'Beacon of the Year'
- A content-rich Conference edition in Ljubljana on 11-13 June
- A Directors Forum with a strong sense of place in Manchester on 28-30 October
- A new EU-funded project on water mining
- An international gathering of International Senior Managers at the Science Center World Summit in Mexico City on 1-4 December

## Ecsite Executive Office

- 1 **Catherine Franche**  
Executive Director
- 2 **Julie Becker**  
Communications and Events Manager
- 3 **Marie Couëdic**  
Special Projects Assistant
- 4 **Raquel da Cunha**  
Events and Communications Officer
- 5 **Daphnie Daras**  
Administrative and Communications Assistant
- 6 **Carmen Fenollosa**  
Senior Project Manager
- 7 **Suzana Filipecki Martins**  
Project Manager (until February)
- 8 **Cristina Paca**  
Project Manager
- 9 **Lucie Steigleder**  
Project Assistant
- 10 **Mariette Wennmacher**  
Administrative Manager
- 11 **Helen Wilks**  
Communications & Events Officer  
(from January 2020 – we couldn't wait until next year to introduce her!)
- 12 **Andrew Whittington-Davis**  
Project and Communications Assistant
- 13 **Maria Zolotonosa**  
Senior Project Manager

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A warm thank you to our 2019 interns, Simon Bourdin, Fanny Trifilieff and Jaime Valle; and a special mention for Anne Urger, Administrator (on leave).

We would also like to say a very big, heartfelt thank you to Julie Becker, Ecsite's former Communications and Events Manager who left Ecsite in January 2020 after six years. You will be greatly missed.



## Ecsite members

Active in the field of science engagement, our 330+ members include science centres, museums, research bodies, festivals, universities, planetariums, foundations and learned societies, companies offering products and services to the field, local authorities, etc.

Ecsite members engage a wide range of audiences with science and technology: toddlers, school children, teenagers, families, adults, seniors...

Activities include exhibitions, workshops, dialogue events, shows, online platforms, lectures, community projects, festivals, afterschool clubs, art and science performances and more.

The pictures throughout this report give you a glimpse of what happens at Ecsite member organisations on a daily basis.

Celebrate Reflect Act - 2019  
Ecsite Annual Report

Written by: Julie Becker, assisted by Daphnie Daras, Raquel da Cunha, Jaime Valle and Helen Wilks  
Graphic design: Kate Houben, The Fox House  
Responsible Editor: Catherine Franche, Executive Director, Ecsite  
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This Annual Report is a publication for Ecsite members.







Lichens and bryophytes under the microscope at a BioBlitz event (an intensive field study involving professional researchers and volunteers) organised at Porto's Botanical Garden (Portugal). Picture: MHNC-UP.



Celebrate Reflect Act  
Ecsite Annual Report 2019



Tinkering activity organised by the Science Center Network the Wissenshof, a temporary space located in a library's courtyard (Vienna, Austria, summer 2019).

Celebrate Reflect Act  
Ecsite Annual Report 2019

One of the museum guides / student assistants explaining the effect of the melting of land ice on the global sea level in comparison to the melting of sea ice. The photo was taken during the annual "Zurich's Long Night of Museums" (September 7, 2019). Picture © focusTerra - ETH Zurich

**Celebrate Reflect Act**  
Ecsite Annual Report 2019

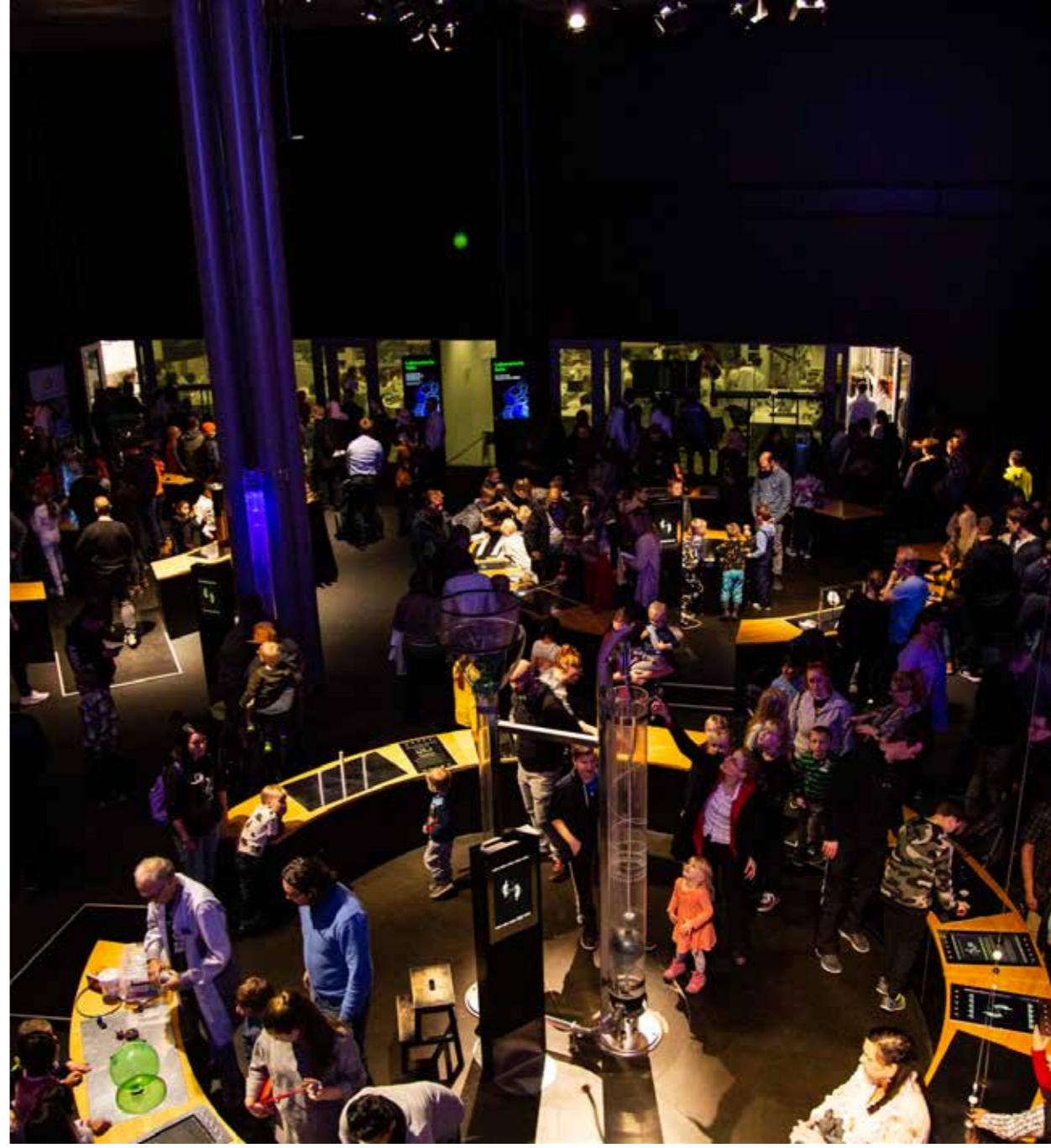
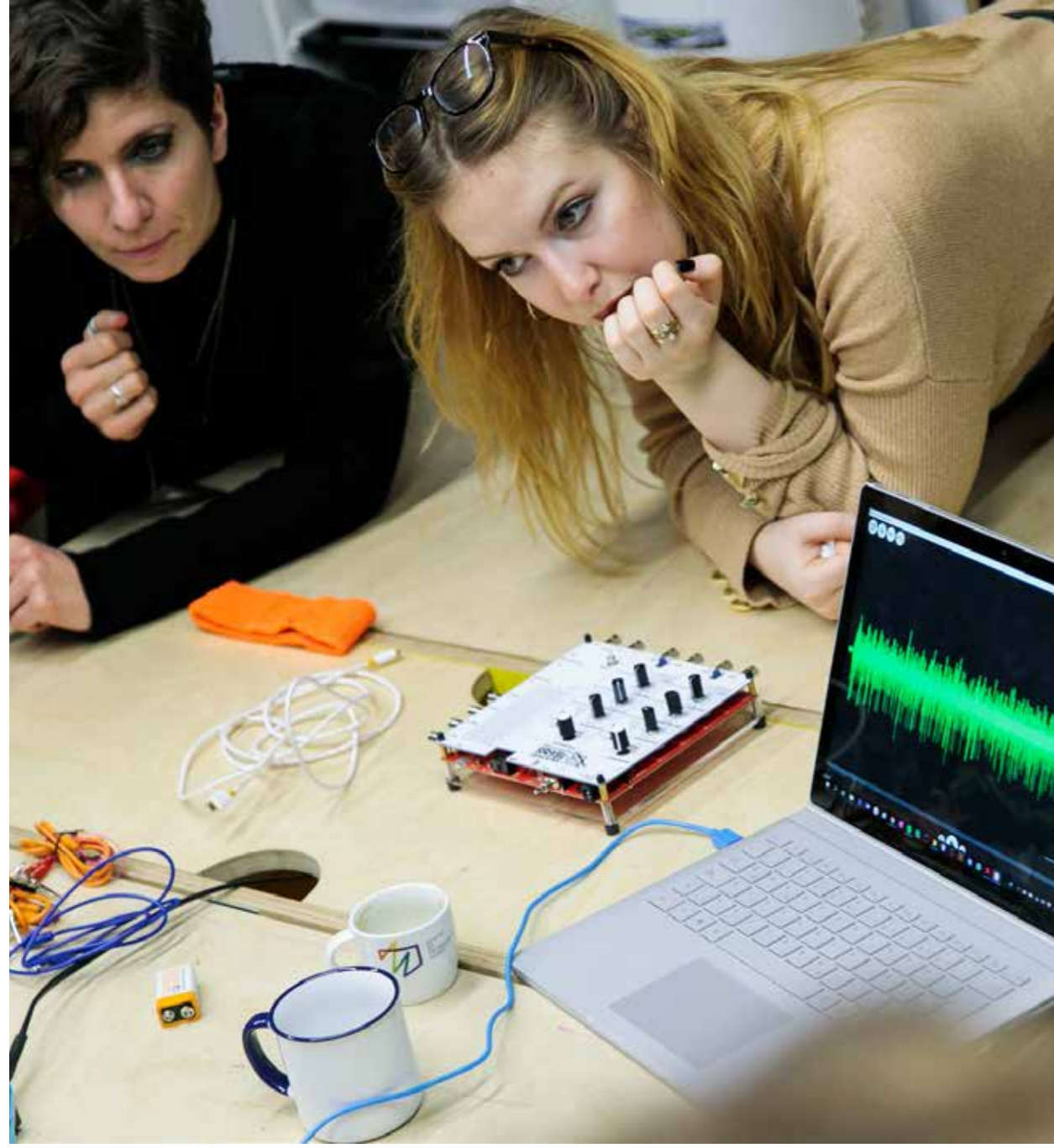


"Museum of the Moon" by Luke Jerram at the Copernicus Science Centre (Warsaw, Poland). The artistic installation was part of a whole season celebrating the 50th anniversary of Moon landing in spring and summer 2019.

**Celebrate Reflect Act**  
Ecsite Annual Report 2019









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CELEBRATE  
REFLECT  
ACT