

Brief impressions of Governing Board members on Marches for Science in various cities

Here are some brief impressions of members of the Governing Board of EuroScience who participated in Marches for Science in several European cities.

Istvan Palugyai (Budapest)

I attended the March in Budapest. The march was relatively small, only about 200 people were attending including professors, even a head of a research institute of the Academy. Young students made attractive physics presentations.

One reason of the gathering not being larger was that on the same day was a big bicycle demonstration. And there was another one by a party that is critical about Orbán's government, and so the attention was divided. Moreover, there was also another science communication event (Physics for everyone). However, the factor of apprehension played a role as well: big state owned organisations like universities didn't want to join the organisation.

The organisers (smaller science civil organisations) asked me to make a closing speech where I made remarks on the CEU (Central European University) issue as well.

Camilla Modéer (Stockholm)

The March for Science in Stockholm was a great success with more than 2500 participants – despite a cold and wintry weather. Speeches were given by Ministers, the Governor, prominent Professors, President of The Royal Academy of Sciences, the CEO of Gapminder (of late Hans Rosling) and several other distinguished persons – all participating in the March. The event was well covered by all large Swedish media – daily papers, television and radio. And of course, by social media. There were successful Marches also in 4 other big cities in Sweden. And April 22nd was directly declared to be the yearly Day of Science with Marches and other manifestations.

The Swedish Minister of Research and Education stressed also in her speech that we all must put strong efforts to hinder the possible closure in Hungary of the Central European University. When I talked to her afterwards asking what she thinks is important and needed, she emphasized that the statement by the Commission (and others like the EuroScience letter!) needs to be complemented by strong statements by many more member states, than what has been heard of so far. So, I urge you all to use your influence on the politicians of your own countries to make distinct statements!

Jens Degett (Copenhagen)

In Copenhagen, the March for Science was a great success. Christine and I were in the organising committee. We had decided that the march should not display representatives from the political parties. Instead we had very popular scientists, representatives from the academic union, climate research, the chair of Danish Science Journalists (me) and the President of the Royal Academy of Science. The march started at the Niels Bohr Institute and went to the Parliament where we also had live music. It stretched out more than one kilometer long and took about 30 minutes to pass central Copenhagen with police escort. More than 5.000 participated in the march (maybe 7-8.000), all newspapers, television news and radio covered the march. I wrote several articles, one with the former minister of research, now the opposition. Both she and the current Minister for research participated in the march. Temperatures were freezing cold and wind was very high. Here is a typical article:

<http://politiken.dk/indland/art5920861/Mindst-5.000-demonstranter-gik-p%C3%A5-gaden-i-K%C3%B8benhavn-for-videnskaben-og-mod-faktaresistente-politikere>

The speeches were mostly on Danish science, not so much Trump. All agreed that science was fundamentally important for society and threatened by populism. One of the most charismatic (a TV celebrity scientist) speakers attacked the parliamentarians for having a primitive economic view of science. Many speakers blamed the government for budget reductions, I attacked the media and the

national broadcast for not taking science serious. Some speakers made their presentation in English and we also streamed the speeches to the main march in Washington.

We will turn the organisation group of the March for Science into a platform for future activities. We have already formed a legal entity with bank account and tax number and Christine is elected board member.

There was also a March for Science in Aarhus with fewer media coverage and fewer people.

Peter Tindemans (Amsterdam)

I was at that the Amsterdam March. Prominent actors on stage, such as rectors of universities, the minister, the president and president-elect of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, the president of the national funding agency. There were about 300 to 400 people, compared to the Washington DC March with according to news agencies around 10,000 people. Good to see important actors make common cause, but one would hope more of the grassroots scientists would participate.

Thomas König (Vienna)

There were approximately 2-3000 participants; a relatively high turnout also because of a large geoscience conference starting the next day, and its organizers mobilized participants to attend the demonstration.

In attendance were prominent speakers; even politicians responsible for science policy in Austria. There were very different messages: concern about the role of science in general; Trumpism; CEU solidarity. Much visibility in social media; some kind, short reports in traditional media.

Gail Cardew (London)

I went on the London march. There were an estimated 12,000 or so in London, plus there was a smaller march in Bristol. Photos here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/gallery/2017/apr/22/people-march-for-science-around-the-uk-gallery>

It was a lovely afternoon. There were 10 or so speakers who spoke with humour, humility and passion from the heart about things they care about (e.g. science being used as a force for good, the importance of speaking to people outside 'the research culture' and international collaboration).

Raymond Seltz (Strasbourg)

I attended the science march Strasbourg organized by students.

An estimated 350 people, about 50% students, gathered place Kléber center Strasbourg for a 45 min. walk to the place de l'Université.

No politicians but strong presence of the University with several acting vice-presidents and 2 former presidents. The atmosphere was a family one

Speeches were given by a vice-president of the University, CNRS researcher, guest researchers from the US and Australia, and students.

April 2017