

## FOREWORD

The present volume contains review papers, oral and poster contributions presented at the Colloquium *International Cooperation in Dissemination of the Astronomical Data* held at the Pulkovo Observatory, St. Petersburg, Russia, from 2 to 9 July 1996.

The meeting was proposed by Olga Dluzhnevskaya at the IAU 22nd General Assembly in The Hague (August 1994) within the framework of the *Task Group on Data Centers and Networks* of IAU Commission 5. It is the first meeting effectively devoted to this subject, although some reports concerning the cooperative efforts of the data centers can be found in the *Astronomy from Large Data-Bases* (ALDB) meetings (Garching, 1988; Haguenau, 1992), the *Library and Information Services in Astronomy* (LISA) meetings (Washington, 1988; Garching, 1995), and in other meetings.

The Pulkovo meeting effectively dealt with the topic of the dissemination of the astronomical information: there were presentations and reports from the data centers in Beijing (Guo Hongfeng and Ke Darong), Moscow (O. Dluzhnevskaya), Strasbourg (F. Genova), Tokyo (K. Nakajima) and Washington (N. Roman); there were also presentations of many aspects of the new possibilities of information dissemination: electronic publishing, electronic distribution of ground- and space-based observations, including a world-wide access to very old observations which were previously almost inaccessible.

It was especially interesting to hear about the multiple activities of our colleagues from the Eastern countries; also, in this tremendously fast moving world of electronic exchange, it was a pleasure to learn that the connectivity of Russian astronomers is rapidly improving, and a WWW server devoted to this colloquium was installed before the meeting and is available at the URL: <http://www.inasan.rssi.ru/~colloq>.

It is also a pleasure to thank the organizers for the success of the meeting and numerous discussions, as well as for all material aspects which made the meeting so pleasant.

Finally, the participants wished to dedicate a special thought to C. Jaschek, the former director of the CDS, who initiated, developed and promoted the cooperation for the dissemination of the astronomical data in the scientific community all over the world.

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