

IVS NEWSLETTER

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The summit of Germany's highest mountain, the Zugspitze, with breathtaking views (credit: Neidhardt)

IVS General Meeting 2026 to Take Place in the Bavarian Alps

Alexander Neidhardt (for the Research Facility Satellite Geodesy, Technical University of Munich)

The Technical University of Munich (TUM), in cooperation with the Chair of Astronomy and the Earth Observation Research Cluster, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, will host the 2026 General Meeting of the International VLBI Service for Geodesy and Astrometry (IVS). The event is scheduled to take place from April 12 to 17, 2026, in the Bavarian Alps, combining the well-equipped facilities of the Congress Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen with the unique scientific setting of the Environmental Research Station Schneefernerhaus, located just below the summit of Germany's highest mountain, the Zugspitze.

The location is not only attractive for its natural beauty and infrastructure but also for its growing strategic importance in the context of VLBI and geodetic research. It is closely linked

to the development of the Wetterstein Millimeter Telescope (WMT) project, a new scientific initiative led by the Chair of Astronomy in Würzburg, Matthias Kadler. Positioned at high altitude near the summit of the Zugspitze, the WMT is expected to contribute significantly to international VLBI networks, especially at short wavelengths. The telescope is currently in an advanced planning stage and will support long-baseline observations at centimeter-to-millimeter wavelengths, including connections to projects such as the

Inside this issue

IVS General Meeting 2026 to Take Place in the Bavarian Alps	1
ESA Seeks Revelations with the Genesis Satellite	2
Shaken, Not Stirred—VLBI Community Bonds in Matera	4
Newly Elected EVGA Chairs Susana and Maria	6
TOW2025: Two Different Perspectives, One Shared Conclusion	12
New Board Meets in Matera	14
2025–2026 Meetings	14

(continues on p. 10)

ESA Seeks Revelations with the Genesis Satellite

IVS Chair Rüdiger Haas took on a leading role in ESA's planned Genesis mission. As chair of the science exploitation team WG on VLBI, he is involved in coordinating the VLBI efforts of this satellite for co-locating the four space-geodetic techniques in space. Newsletter editor Hayo Hase interviewed Rüdiger via email to obtain an overview of where things stand and where they are headed. Read on to learn more.

Rüdiger, the Genesis mission has a big name, almost divine. What is Genesis about?

Genesis is a mission of the European Space Agency (ESA) to be launched in 2028. It is managed by ESA's Navigation Directorate as part of its FutureNAV Programme with Sara Gidlund from ESA ESTEC at the helm. The mission has the goal to contribute to improving the International Terrestrial Reference Frame (ITRF) by an in-orbit co-location of the four space-geodetic techniques, i.e., VLBI, GNSS, SLR, and DORIS. ESA set up a Genesis Science Team, including a Genesis Science Management Board and a Genesis Science Exploitation Team (GSET). GSET has a coordinator, Özgür Karatekin, from the Royal Observatory of Belgium, a co-coordinator, Francesco Vespe, from Agenzia Spaziale Italiana (ASI), and five working groups. There is one working group per space-geodetic technique, and one for the overall combination and the ITRF. My role is to chair the ESA GSET working group on VLBI. The working group chairs, the GSET coordinator and co-coordinator, as well as the ESA Genesis Science Representative form the Genesis Science Management Board.

The VLBI component is an artificial quasar on a satellite rather than a radio telescope in space. What are the technical characteristics of the satellite? What kind of signal will be transmitted?

The plan is to transmit a white-noise signal that mimics a natural radio source and can be

received with the broadband VGOS telescopes. The signal strength will be tunable and not exceed 20 Jy on the surface of the Earth. The satellite is planned to be at an orbital height of 6,000 km with an inclination of 95 degrees.

The orbital period is about 3 hours and 48 minutes, with an angular velocity of 0.026 degrees per second; so there is no problem tracking the satellite with VGOS telescopes. Even legacy S/X stations should be able to track it but can only receive a small portion of the signal since they do not cover all Genesis frequencies.

What are the frequencies planned for Genesis?

The satellite is going to be equipped with a VLBI transmitter sending four frequency bands. These are frequency bands that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has designated in their radio regulations for Earth exploration-satellite services. The bands are: 3100–3000 MHz, 5250–5570 MHz, 8200–8400 MHz, and 9300–9800 MHz.

Quasars define the ICRF. How will Genesis be tied to the ICRF or to the ITRF?

The details of the observation mode are still under investigation, and a lot of simulations are performed, and various approaches are studied. One possibility is to blend in observations of Genesis into a standard geodetic VLBI session in an alternating mode. Then the Genesis observations can be used to estimate the satellite orbit and contribute to the determination of the other geodetic parameters, such as station positions and Earth orientation parameters. Since a combination with the other space-geodetic techniques is foreseen, the creation of corresponding normal equation matrices is envisaged that then can be stacked and analyzed together with corresponding normal equation matrices of the other techniques.



With an altitude of about 6,000 km, there will be a parallax seen at VLBI stations between the moving Genesis satellite and the ICRF sources. How will you deal with this parallax as well as the Doppler shifts in correlation and analysis?

In contrast to the natural radio sources, the satellite is in the near field of the Earth, thus the wave front is not planar but curved. Corresponding models that are necessary for correlation and post-processing have been developed and tested already several years ago, for example with VLBI observations to GNSS satellites and a radio source on the Moon. So, this is well established and nothing new in that sense.

Is Genesis a demonstration project or will we see a series of Genesis satellites in the future?

Genesis is a mission that is planned for an operational duration of two years, with an optional extension. Whether there will be follow-up missions of a similar type is not decided yet; it will definitely depend on the results derived from the Genesis mission.

As Genesis is an ESA project, which ground station network will be involved? Will the station time be paid by ESA?

ESA will not pay for station time but relies on voluntary activity of the ground stations and wants to work with the IVS.



Artist's rendition of the Genesis satellite.

What is the role of the IVS in the Genesis mission?

The IVS will collaborate with ESA on a voluntary basis. Since the IVS is part of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) and Genesis is addressing an important issue of the IAG (i.e., the ITRF), it is well justified that the IVS, together with its sister services, takes the opportunity and observes the Genesis satellite. It is, of course, very important that no harm be done to the operational geodetic products that the IVS delivers. It is anticipated to be a win-win situation, where the IVS continues delivering high-precision, high-accuracy products but also contributes to the Genesis mission.

Will Genesis have an impact on the generation of the ITRF/ICRF?

The expectation is that Genesis primarily will help to improve the ITRF by identifying, and then removing, technique-specific biases. An improved ITRF will, in turn, contribute to improvements in EOP and the ICRF.

How should stations and analysts prepare for Genesis?

Before its launch in 2028, the ESA GSET working group on VLBI will do a lot of simulations and tests to get the schedulers, ground stations, correlators, and analysts ready and prepared well ahead of time. Once the satellite is launched and commissioned, the IVS should be ready to observe, correlate, and analyze.

Where can the project be followed?

There is some information available on the ESA webpages at https://www.esa.int/Applications/Satellite_navigation/Genesis. ESA has organized Genesis workshops on an annual basis, and I expect that there will be presentations on Genesis at many of the upcoming geodetic conferences over the next few years.

I wish you a lot of success. Thank you very much for your introduction.

Shaken, Not Stirred—VLBI Community Bonds in Matera

Lisa Kern, TU Wien

While it was James Bond to uncover mysteries in the ancient city of Matera (Italy) in *No Time to Die*—this time, it was the VLBI scientific community's turn to shed light on new findings and exchange knowledge. From April 7 to 9, 2025, the 27th European VLBI Group for Geodesy and Astrometry (EVGA) Working Meeting took place in the Sassi district, the heart of Matera's UNESCO-listed old town. These ancient cave dwellings, carved directly into limestone rock, provided a breathtaking and truly unique setting for a scientific meeting.



EVGA meeting in progress with Lisa Kern chairing a session.

VLBI experts gathered to share their latest research, discuss developments, build connections, and, of course, soak in the stunning views. The Scientific Organizing Committee consisted of eight members, while the Local Organizing Committee consisted of four. As in previous years, the scientific program was structured into three main themes: Technology, Observations, and Analysis. A total of 41 oral presentations and 34 poster presentations were delivered.

The meeting kicked off on the evening of April 6 with an icebreaker event at the Palazzo Viceconte, the main conference venue. While name badges were picked up, the first conversations sparked in the elegant halls of this historic building. The frescoed ceilings and art-adorned walls created a remarkable atmosphere, with posters displayed right alongside them—a setting unlike any other. The Palazzo also offered panoramic views of Matera's ancient cityscape, elevating the experience even further.

Following the welcome words of EVGA Chair Rüdiger Haas and Francesco Vespe on the first conference day, participants dove into updates from VLBI stations and correlators, new technological developments, and observation-related studies—including those involving the Chang'E-5 orbiter and ESA's NovaMoon mission. The well-balanced sessions allowed



A glimpse of Matera.



Francesco Vespe cutting the ribbon at the dedication ceremony for the new Matera antenna.

plenty of time for fruitful discussions and short “stretch-your-legs” breaks, which encouraged interactions and let participants explore the beautiful venue while engaging with posters and presenters.

The second day started with the community’s current hot topic: the VLBI scale. This was followed by sessions on terrestrial and celestial reference frames, atmospheric modeling, and EOP determination. After the morning sessions, the focus shifted to the poster presentations, which continued into the late afternoon. The day ended with a gala dinner at the Palazzo, generously sponsored by Telespazio and e-GEOS—featuring excellent food and a lively, cheerful atmosphere.

On the final day, discussions centered on source structure and various observation-related topics, including simulated VLBI observations to ESA’s Genesis satellite. In the closing session, Rüdiger Haas officially announced the new EVGA Chair, Susana Garcia Espada, and Co-Chair, Maria Karbon, and together they brought the meeting to a close.

But that wasn’t the end! In the afternoon, participants were honored to attend the inauguration ceremony of the new Matera VGOS



The new Matera VGOS antenna at the ASI Space Centre. Avanti VGOS!

antenna at the ASI Space Centre, including a guided tour of the research facility. Although this wasn’t the first telescope many of us had seen, it was nonetheless a special and memorable moment. The visit ended with a celebratory toast before heading back together by bus.

In addition to the EVGA meeting itself, several other events took place in Matera that week, including the IVS Analysis Workshop (April 10), various splinter meetings, and the IVS Directing Board Meeting (April 11).

To sum up: this was a well-organized and highly enjoyable meeting with outstanding scientific content. The weather was surprisingly cold (as even the locals noted), but that didn’t dampen our spirits, nor did it prevent the event from becoming a great success. Until next time!

Newly Elected EVGA Chairs Susana and Maria

At the EVGA meeting in Matera, Susana García Espada and Maria Karbon were elected as the new EVGA Chair and Co-chair, respectively, succeeding Rüdiger Haas. IVS Newsletter editor Hayo Hase checked in with Susana and Maria to learn more about the new chairs and their plans.

Susana, Maria, you are the newly elected EVGA chairs. Congratulations! What does EVGA stand for and what is its relation to the IVS?

Susana & Maria: Thank you very much! It's a great honor for us to be elected and to serve.

Maria: EVGA is the European VLBI Group for Geodesy and Astrometry. It predates the IVS (its first meeting was in 1980) and has always had a distinct role: it serves as a regional driver of collaboration, innovation, and training in VLBI within Europe. While IVS connects us all globally, EVGA ensures that European contributions are well integrated, forward looking, and supported by strong educational initiatives.



Maria Karbon.



Susana at the new Ny-Ålesund observatory.

EVGA doesn't duplicate IVS, it complements and enriches it from a European standpoint.

Susana: That's right. Europe has a special setup when it comes to VLBI. There is a dense network of stations, strong correlator infrastructure, and a wide variety of analysis centers—all backed by excellent research groups and universities. This creates a natural environment for collaboration, not just within single countries but across borders. One of the things I value most is how much emphasis we place on training and education. Through the VLBI school, we're not just keeping the system running, we're preparing the next generation of scientists and engineers to take it even further.

You have different backgrounds, and you work in different countries, meaning you complement each other well. Could you briefly introduce yourselves?

Susana: I currently lead the operations at the Norwegian Mapping Authority's Geodetic Earth Observatory in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard—the northernmost VGOS station in the world. I've been working in geodesy for almost 20 years. My path into VLBI started at the National Geographic Institute (IGN) and the Yebes



Maria at the IVS GM in Tsukuba, Japan, in 2024.

Observatory in Spain, and later I continued at the RAEGE Santa Maria station in the Azores. In the beginning, I was mostly focused on VLBI data analysis, which gave me a solid understanding of the science behind the observations. Over time, though, I found myself more and more drawn to the operational side—from setting up and running sessions to maintaining receivers and antennas. For the past twelve years (since 2013) I had the good fortune to serve as EVGA Co-Chair with Rüdiger Haas, which was a great learning experience. Being elected Chair in April 2025 feels like both a continuation and a new chapter. Earlier this year, in February, I also joined the IVS Directing Board as a Networks Representative. This has given me a broader view of how everything connects globally—from policy and strategy to practical work done at the stations. I am also interested in spectrum protection. With increased pressure on radio frequencies, it's becoming harder to safeguard the bands VLBI

relies on. We plan to stay active on this front, working with national regulators and international groups to make sure VLBI's voice is heard, and our observational capabilities are protected. My work has covered everything from data analysis to site operations and planning, and I think that complements Maria's more academic and methodological focus well. Together, we bring a full-picture approach which I think reflects the strength and diversity of the VLBI community in Europe.

What are the main activities of the EVGA?

Susana: One of the most visible and important things we do at EVGA is our biennial Working Meeting. This event serves as a vital forum where the entire European VLBI community comes together to present scientific progress, discuss technical and operational challenges, coordinate ongoing and future projects, and foster new collaborations. These meetings are essential for maintaining a connected, productive, and forward-looking VLBI network across Europe. EVGA isn't just about technical



Susana at the Ny-Ålesund 20-m antenna (credit: Esther Horvath, National Geographic).

(continues)



Susana giving an observatory tour.

coordination, it's also about building community, sharing knowledge, and making sure Europe continues to contribute to the global VLBI landscape. Another key part of what we do is training and education. We regularly organize the VLBI School which covers everything from how we observe and correlate the data to how we analyze and interpret it. These events are essential for building the next generation of VLBI experts and making sure the field stays strong in the long run. In fact, our next VLBI School will take place in October 2025 in Gothenburg, Sweden. It's aimed at early-career researchers and engineers, and it will offer a mix of theory and practical training across all aspects of geodetic VLBI. If you're interested, you can find more info here: <https://www.maanmittauslaitos.fi/en/about-nls/organisation/cooperation-groups/ivs-committee-education-and-training/5th-ivs-training>

Maria: A key priority is meeting the demanding goals of the Global Geodetic Observing System (GGOS), which requires unprecedented precision in Earth reference frames. Central to this is VGOS, a true technological leap with new antennas, broadband receivers, and advanced software correlation. But hardware improve-

ments alone won't cut it. We need to innovate on the analysis side too, challenging outdated assumptions and modernizing our geodetic products to fully realize VGOS's potential and bring geodesy into the 21st century. EVGA also faces real technical challenges, including radio frequency interference from mega-constellations like Starlink, radar stations, telecom infrastructure, and other sources. These pose a serious threat to the quality of

VLBI and radio astronomy observations overall. Unfortunately, frequency allocation decisions favor private interests, which complicates protection efforts. We actively advocate for safeguards both nationally and through international bodies like the UN and ITU.

What are your plans for the chairmanship? Which important topics do you intend to address?

Susana: One of EVGA's main goals is to continue building on the strength of the European VLBI community and its role in global geodetic and astrometric efforts. One of our big



Icebreaker meeting in Tsukuba, Japan.

milestones will be organizing the next EVGA Working Meeting in 2027. We're aiming to continue organizing relevant events—a place where we not only present the latest science but also kick off new joint projects, especially as VGOS continues to roll out across Europe. Training and education will also remain a big focus. The EVGA VLBI School is key to bringing new people into the field and helping them grow.

Another exciting goal is the support of ESA's GENESIS mission which will deliver extremely precise, space-based measurements of Earth orientation and reference frame parameters. The EVGA is not directly involved, but many European institutions and stations are already working on this. We plan to stay closely involved—especially through ESA's GSET Working Group—to make sure the global VLBI community contributes to and benefits from the mission, particularly when it comes to data co-location and science opportunities.

Maria: One thing I think is important is figuring out how we can make communication and traceability smoother across the whole VLBI process. That means from experiment design and scheduling all the way to analysis. It's important that feedback flows both ways, so analysts can share insights back with schedulers and operators. This kind of open dialog has come up many times in recent meetings and is key to improving quality and catching issues early. Another growing need is better communication with policy-makers to help secure stable funding. This too has been raised by several members, and I think working together with other bodies, such as GGOS/IAG, could really strengthen our voice. I'm also committed to supporting VLBI schools and



Susana chairing a session at the EVGA 2025 meeting.

capacity building. Europe is struggling with a shortage of qualified people, and the academic career path is tough. Unstable contracts mean many talented researchers leave early, and fewer students are drawn to the field. It's essential we find ways to nurture and keep talent.

Where will the next EVGA event take place?

Susana: The location of the next EVGA Working Meeting, scheduled for 2027, has not yet been determined. We would like to formally encourage any institution with the capacity and interest to organize the next EVGA meeting to submit a proposal. Hosting this event represents a valuable opportunity to contribute to the advancement of the European VLBI community, foster international collaboration, and highlight local scientific and technical expertise. The EVGA will, of course, provide guidance and support throughout the planning process to ensure a successful meeting.

We wish you great success. Thanks for the interview.

(continued from p. 1)

next-generation Very Large Array (ngVLA) and VLBI with the Square Kilometre Array (SKA-VLBI). In addition to its astronomical goals, the WMT will offer new opportunities for geodetic VLBI observations, particularly in the K-band, and could serve as a test platform for new instrumentation and techniques.

The main sessions of GM2026 and the analysis workshop are planned at the Congress Center Garmisch-Partenkirchen, which provides a full suite of conference amenities including plenary and breakout rooms, exhibition space, and reliable internet connectivity. The town itself is a well-established location for scientific and cultural events, with accommodations, restaurants, and transportation infrastructure that can easily support an international workshop of this scale. Several hotel options are within walking distance of the venue.

As part of the program, an excursion to the Zugspitze is being organized. This includes a visit to the Schneefernerhaus research station close to the planned site of the future WMT. The



The Environmental Research Station Schneefernerhaus supports a wide range of scientific investigations including atmospheric chemistry, climate monitoring, environmental physics (credit: Neidhardt).

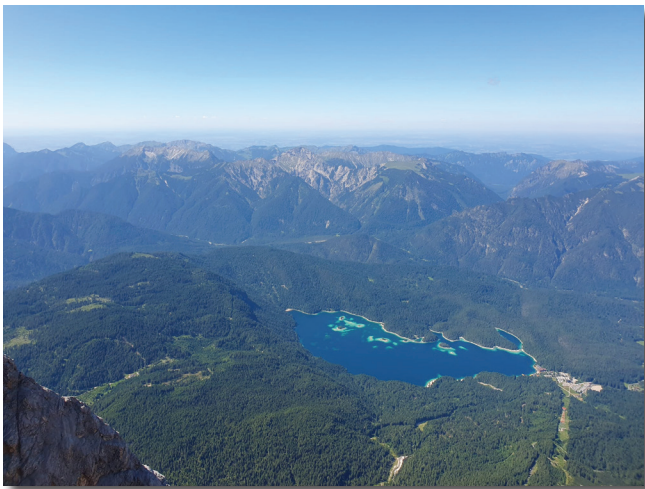


The area on the Zugspitze with possible locations for the WMT (credit: Neidhardt).

Schneefernerhaus, situated at an altitude of 2,650 meters, is one of Germany's foremost high-altitude environmental research facilities. It supports a wide range of scientific investigations including atmospheric chemistry, climate monitoring, environmental physics, and geodesy. The Zugspitzbahn cog railway and cable car offers direct access from Garmisch-Partenkirchen, and the ascent to the summit is itself a memorable Alpine experience. The station also provides facilities for smaller meetings, such as the planned IVS Directing Board meeting, which offers both scientific inspiration and panoramic views.

The preliminary schedule envisions six days of events. The meeting begins on Sunday, April 12, with registration and an icebreaker in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. From Monday through Wednesday, April 13 to 15, the GM sessions take place at the Congress Center. On Thursday, April 16, the IVS Analysis Workshop and splinter meetings are planned. The final day, Friday, April 17, is reserved for the IVS Directing Board meeting at the Schneefernerhaus and an optional excursion to the Zugspitze, including the research station and the WMT site, for a limited number of registered participants.

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is conveniently accessible via direct train service from Munich, with a travel time of about 90 minutes. Munich Inter-



One of the most beautiful lakes in the Alps, the Eibsee, directly at the foot of the Zugspitze Mountain (credit: Neidhardt).

national Airport (MUC) offers connections to major cities around the world, making international travel to the venue straightforward. Once in the region, local transportation options and organized group travel to the Zugspitze summit ensure smooth logistics for all participants.

Organizational preparations are underway, with venue reservations in place and planning in relation to catering, the workshop dinner, and

transportation. A dedicated website and registration system will be launched in the autumn of 2025. The Local Organizing Committee is currently being formed and will include representatives from both host institutions.

GM2026 promises a scientifically stimulating environment in a unique high-mountain setting. By linking the meeting to the development of the Wetterstein Millimeter Telescope, the event offers a chance to strengthen ties between the geodetic and astronomical VLBI communities and to discuss emerging opportunities at the interface of science, astronomic instrumentation and techniques, and geodesy.

Wetterstein Millimeter Telescope: <https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/singleg/news/ein-teleskop-der-weltspitze/>

Congress Center: <https://gapaconvention.de/en/Kongresshaus>

Zugspitze Mountain and Environmental Research Station Schneefernerhaus: <https://zugspitze.de/en> and <https://schneefernerhaus.de/en/>



Model of the Wetterstein Millimeter Telescope at one of the possible locations on the Zugspitzplatt on the Zugspitze Mountain (credit: mtex antenna technologies / JMU Würzburg).

TOW2025: Two Different Perspectives, One Shared Conclusion

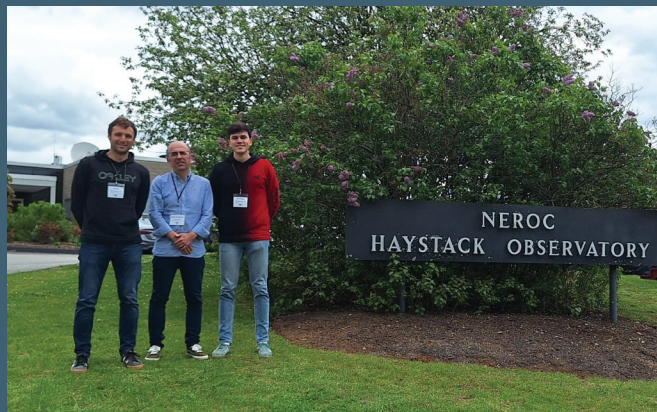
*Javier González and Santiago de la Fuente
Yebes Observatory, IGN, Spain*

The 13th IVS Technical Operations Workshop (TOW2025) was held at MIT Haystack Observatory from 4–8 May 2025. We attended this edition of TOW with two very different perspectives: for one of us (Santiago), it was both the first TOW and the first time visiting the United States; for the other (Javier), it marked his third participation since his first TOW back in 2013. Unsurprisingly, our individual experiences of the week varied—yet we saw eye to eye on the aspects that made this event truly enriching.

One of the most valuable parts of TOW is the opportunity to learn from the wider VLBI community—not only from those in similar roles, but also from colleagues working in areas such as data analysis, correlation, and beyond. Mutual feedback across different domains within the IVS network is essential. It fosters collaboration and helps us overcome day-to-day technical challenges. As several speakers emphasized, perhaps the greatest strength of TOW lies in personal connections formed—the chance to interact closely with staff from observatories around the world, to share insights, and to discover how things are done elsewhere.

Unfortunately, we didn't arrive in time to attend the traditional Sunday evening icebreaker, which was a real pity—like the rest of TOW, the food is typically plentiful and delicious. This time, the weather wasn't on our side, breaking the recent lucky streak of meetings held under warm, sunny skies. The rain didn't allow much time outdoors during the first few days. But in New England, you can always expect some unpredictable weather at this time of year!

The technical contents of the meeting started on Monday morning after the welcome given



Yebes Observatory delegation at TOW2025 (L to R): Javier González García, José Antonio ("Pepe") López Pérez, and Santiago de la Fuente Lasa.

by the Director of MIT Haystack Observatory, Philip Erickson. We also received the opportune announcements from the LOC—good organization and plenty of information offered by the organizing committee needs to be remarked. The traditional lecture covering the general aspects of geodetic VLBI opened the workshop, this time by Pedro Elosegui. Lectures are intended for the general audience, whereas most of the TOW content is distributed in seminars and workshops which are in turn divided into maintenance and operations. The introductory lecture gave the participants a very complete overview of the technique. It is impressive how useful this information is, not only for newcomers but even more for experienced ones. You will probably find yourself in the future sitting at your desk and going over those slides trying to find the missing piece from the puzzle in your mind, that maybe you have forgotten again. After the opening session, people dispersed across the six designated rooms, following the schedule assigned to each of them. In addition to the four conference rooms at Haystack, the correlator area and the Westford antenna hosted some of the workshops. Even beyond the technical insights offered at the

meeting, simply visiting one of the places where VLBI first began is well worth it.

Many classes have found a fixed spot in the TOW agenda because of their undoubted usefulness: phase cal basics, antenna gain calibration, or Field System operation and coding are just examples of those long-term contents that you may struggle to find in a complete and organized way by yourself. Nonetheless, it is always a pleasure to reconnect with colleagues in Westford and exchange thoughts on the common concerns faced by VLBI antenna operators. Alex Burns, Chris Coughlin, and Roger Hammargren warmly welcomed anyone wishing to learn from their extensive experience operating an antenna with a longstanding role in the IVS network. A lecture for general discussion was also included, this time moderated by Karine Le Bail and the IVS Network Coordinator Alexander Neidhardt. In that session, station personnel could share their doubts and concerns, but also ideas for improvement. Karine emphasized the importance of communicating events at the stations that might lead to alterations in the collected data. Even the most unexpected details can end up affecting the results of a careful analysis—sometimes even years later—so the key takeaway was that it's always advisable to report any incidents through one of the IVS mailing lists.

The following day, near the end of the meeting, Dhiman Mondal gave the science overview lecture,

which highlighted the importance of careful data acquisition and processing. It also complemented the general overview provided by Pedro's initial talk. These presentations about the ultimate applications of geodetic VLBI are always inspiring and boost the morale of everyone involved in some way with this technique, making us feel part of humanity's ongoing evolution.

There's something special about the informal conversations that unfold during coffee breaks in the corridors of Haystack. These moments offer more than just a pause between sessions—they build a sense of community, even family, among participants. There is a genuine generosity in how experienced professionals take newcomers under their wing, offering advice, encouragement, and fresh ideas to take home and discuss with colleagues. In addition, the outstanding personal attention from Heidi Johnson, Nancy Griffis, and the entire Haystack staff, along with a generous and delicious selection of food, drinks, and pastries for the coffee breaks—and you definitely won't want to miss the next edition. Just be sure to plan a few workout days afterward to burn off all those extra calories!

Equally, the technical content delivered during the sessions is exceptional. Whether you're new to the field or a seasoned expert, there's always something to learn. This is particularly vital in a domain as technologically dynamic as VLBI, where continual refinement—from data acquisition to final analysis—is essential to improving results.

To summarize, TOW2025 was a week of learning, sharing, and connecting. We return with not only new knowledge but also a renewed sense of belonging to a global effort—and with plenty of inspiration for the work ahead.



Participants of TOW2025.

New Board Meets in Matera

Dirk Behrend, NVI, Inc./NASA GSFC

Following the EVGA and related splinter meetings, the members of the newly elected IVS Directing Board had its first full-day meeting at Matera station on April 11, 2025. As is customary, the outgoing board members were invited to participate and facilitate a smooth transition. One of the major agenda items concerned the election of the IVS Chair for the next four-year term. Incumbent Chair Rüdiger Haas was re-elected for a second term for the period February 2025 through February 2029. Congratulations, Rüdiger!

The board discussed the scheduling technique for the operational 24-hour VGOS sessions (VGOS-OPS) and decided to phase in the source-centric scheduling method as championed by Matthias Schartner. In the second half of 2025, VGOS-OPS sessions will be scheduled alternating between source-centric scheduling and standard SNR-based scheduling. In the Master Schedule the techniques will be differentiated by using “vo” (in the session code) for the standard approach and “vs” for the source-centric approach. After a six-months period, the results of the two approaches will be evaluated, and a decision will be made on the future scheduling approach.



IVS Directing Board during its 52nd meeting on April 11, 2025, in Matera, Italy

The board also discussed the future of the Observing Program Committee (OPC) chairmanship and agreed that Lucia McCallum would become the next OPC Chair following a transitioning period, with the length of the transition being at least six months. Lucia will take over the reins from Dirk who has served in this function for more than two decades.

2025–2026 Meetings

21–25 October	10th International VLBI Technology Workshop
26–28 October 2025	5th IVS Training School on VLBI for Geodesy and Astrometry
12–17 April 2026	IVS General Meeting

The IVS Newsletter is published three times annually, in April, August, and December. Contributed articles, pictures, cartoons, and feedback are welcome at any time.

Please send contributions to the General Editors; the deadline is one month before the publication date. The editors reserve the right to edit contributions.

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