

**Parallel Session 20: Museums and Science Centres in the transmission of  
cultural diversity**

**PROGRAMS OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC  
OBSERVATORY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CITY**

*Authors: Sílvia Bravo<sup>1</sup>, Carme Prats<sup>2</sup>, Pau Senra<sup>1</sup>, Tina Roig<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Observatori Científic de la Ciutat Mediterrània. Avda. Marquès de Comillas  
s/n. Poble Espanyol-Parc de Montjuïc. 08038 Barcelona. Tel: + 34 93 426  
1999, E-mail: cimciencies@mail.bcn.es*

<sup>2</sup> *Subdirecció General del Patrimoni Cultural. Direcció General del Patrimoni  
Cultural. Departament de Cultura. Genrealitat de Catalunya. Portaferrissa, 1.  
08002 Barcelona. Tel: + 34 93 316 27 40 Fax: + 34 93 316 27 52. E-mail:  
carme.prats@gencat.net*

**Abstract**

The Scientific Observatory of the Mediterranean City (SOMC), the program of public communication of Science leded from the Science Centres and Museums of Catalunya, promotes projects to introduce science to all audiences, using new technologies and background experience of traditional museums.

Three successful projects have already started:

1. Medciencies Forum ([www.bcn.es](http://www.bcn.es)). Experts introduce different subjects to promote the participation of online users.
2. laTalaia laboratories. Experimental laboratories to promote the participation of general public.
3. The Scientific Autumns of Barcelona. Online and live activities around a given subject to promote the participation of general public as well as scientific discussion.

**Key words:** Public Understanding, Science Museums, Citizen participation

**Text**

Context

The Scientific Observatory of the Mediterranean City (SOMC) is the program of public communication of Science, leded from the Science Centres and Museums of Catalunya, using the new technologies of information and communication.

Objective

The SOMC wants to promote interdisciplinary projects to introduce science to all audiences to help science museums to become a reference centre of science learning and interpretation.

Methodology

Different agents of our society- scientists, museum experts, teachers and general public- are encouraged to participate in the projects of the SOMC. The idea is to bring together the new trends in communication and the background experience of the traditional museum, to develop new formats to approach science to the general public. The production of new resources for formal and non-formal education as well as spaces for transversal scientific discussion is also pursued.

Results:

Up to now three main projects are already working which have been proved as successful tools to articulate the science communication action from different science centres. The participation of students and general public has fulfilled initial expectations.

1. The online forum in Medciencies ([www.bcn.es](http://www.bcn.es)).

Three different subjects are proposed each year, introduced by short texts and questions by experts. The participation of all internet users visiting Medciencies is the final objective. Up to know five different forums have already been proposed about physics, obesity, Earth's climate, biodiversity and evolution.

2. The laboratories in laTalaia, the digital scientific bulletin

Experimental laboratories to be performed at home or in the colleges are proposed by teachers and educators. The participation of students and general public with science curiosity is the final objective. Up to now 16 different laboratories have been proposed, one at each edition of the digital bulleting, covering all science subjects. The bulletin has already more than 1,500 subscribers, many of them from professionals and people interested in science education.

3. The Scientific Autumns of Barcelona.

Online and live activities are proposed, around a different subject each year, to allow the introduction of general public to a given subject as well as the scientific discussion from different approaches. Up to now, two editions have taken place, one about biodiversity and another about evolution. The participation of museums, research and scientific communication groups is achieved by their collaboration in the organization. More than 20 different institutions have participated in each edition and the SOMC is working to increase this number in the coming edition. The participation of general public is achieved by concentrating the live activities during the Science Week of the city and through the online services of the Observatory. Around 1,000 people have participated in the live activities in each edition and a much larger number in the online activites (taking into account the number of visits of our web portal, more than 140,000 during 2003, a number that has been increasing since the activity of the SOMC started)

Conclusions

The Scientific Observatory of the Mediterranean City has started specific programs to promote the researches and collections of the catalan museums, as well as the researches performed in universities and other scientific centres.

Three different projects are already working, which have achieved an important participation of different sectors of the population.

### **Notes**

The web portal of the SOMC can be found at [www.bcn.es/medciencies](http://www.bcn.es/medciencies). All the contents have been developed by the team of the SOMC with the collaboration of many scientists, teachers and museum experts (among others). New products and contents are being developed and will enriched this portal in the near future.

