

The European Spallation Source Celebrates 300 Employees, Representing 40 Nationalities

MAR 30, 2015

ESS HQ. As the construction of the European Spallation Source moves reliably forward, so does the growth of the Lund and Copenhagen based staff working daily to realize the world-leading neutron science facility.

BYLINE — LUND — Last month the European Spallation Source (ESS) celebrated the hiring of its 300th employee and the hiring of another employee who marks the 40th nationality represented by ESS staff members. Currently the staff numbers 311, from 41 nations.

'It is clear that ESS is an attractive project and many people want to be a part of developing and realizing a world-leading neutron spallation source,' says Anne Säfström-Lanner, acting head of Human Resources at ESS.

An Irishman, David Fitzgerald, is ESS employee number 300. He joined ESS as a test engineer in the Motion Control and Automation group. Only a week into his new job, Fitzgerald was honored with a certificate and a bouquet of flowers from ESS Director General Jim Yeck.



ESS employee number 300, David Fitzgerald, of Ireland.
PHOTO: Julia Öberg / ESS

'I didn't know before that I was employee number 300, but it is a nice thing to celebrate,' said Fitzgerald. 'It is the first time I got flowers in my life! It really was a good start for me here at ESS.'

One of the very first ESS employees still working here today is Patrik Carlsson, of Sweden, associate director for Operations, Environment, Safety and Health, and Quality Assurance. He joined the ESS project in 2002, then as a scientific project manager. At that time, Lund was considered only a dark-horse candidate for the site of the world's next generation neutron spallation source. When the Swedish government eventually established the ESS-Scandinavia secretariat in 2007, there were only seven employees.

'This development with a growing number of employees is great, it is what we were hoping for from the start,' said Carlsson. 'The big difference is that before we did not have all this competence in-house. Now we have that competence to a great extent in the building, together with important external collaborations.'

The ESS project evolved rapidly following the 2009 decision to build the facility in Lund, and continues to expand. ESS added a third of its workforce in 2014, growing by 111 employees, and civil construction of the facility is now advancing daily. While construction is projected to continue through 2025, first neutrons are expected by the end of this decade, with an active user program beginning as soon as 2023. The ESS staff is expected to top out somewhere between 400-500 employees.



ESS Director General Jim Yeck presenting Benjamin Davidge with a certificate. Davidge, from New Zealand, represents the 40th nationality among ESS employees.

PHOTO: Julia Öberg / ESS

While ESS is a European partnership with 17 member countries, its staff is recruited from all over the world. In January, with the hiring of Benjamin Davidge from New Zealand, the ESS staff hit 40 nationalities. Davidge made the distant relocation to Sweden at the beginning of the year, and is working as a mechanical design engineer in the Engineering and Integration Support division.

'I feel very privileged to be working here, and to be the first Kiwi at ESS,' said Davidge. 'It seems most people here are very passionate about what they do, and so am I.'

Säfström-Lanner is confident that more countries will be represented at ESS. 'We strive to recruit our employees from all over the world. Research concerns everybody,' she says. 'I am proud of the recruiting managers and our recruiters who worked hard to find these talents. They are often not living next door, and it is hard work behind every person we employ.'

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