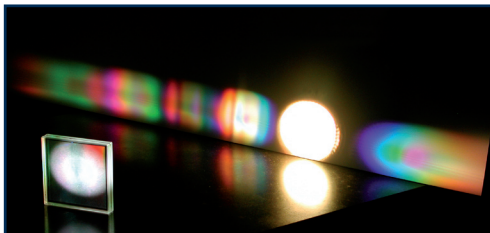


OPTICON, the Optical Infrared Coordination Network for Astronomy, is an 'Integrated Infrastructure Initiative' supported by the European Union's FP7 programme. The EU contract of €10 million is supplemented by significant national matching funds.

OPTICON combines networking activities, a trans-national access programme involving major European astronomical and solar telescopes and six Joint Research Activities. OPTICON's objective is to strengthen European astronomy by co-operation and rationalisation. A major OPTICON goal, which is underpinned by many of these individual activities, is to help develop and promote the scientific case for the European Extremely Large Telescope.



A Volume Phase Holographic Grating, being developed by JRA-6, which could upgrade existing astronomical spectrographs

The OPTICON mission

OPTICON brings together many of Europe's astronomical observatories, data centres and laboratories. Our goal is to identify opportunities where greater progress can be made by collaboration than by competition, and to take unified actions to achieve those agreed goals.



OPTICON is funded by the European Commission under Grant Agreement number 226604

Networking

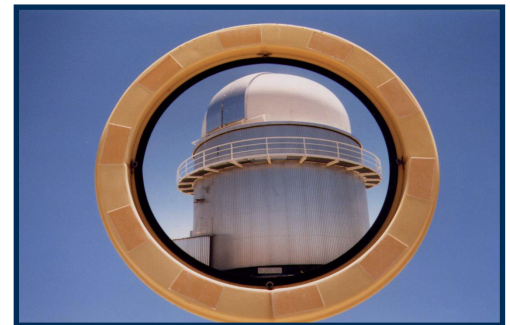
OPTICON seeks to identify challenges and opportunities for optical-infrared astronomy which require collaboration across Europe. Existing and new Europe-wide working groups are bringing together appropriate individuals and agencies to agree goals and then take action to achieve them.

Working groups cover topics such as ELT science goals, common software, future key technologies, Interferometry, development of the astronomy communities in Central and Eastern Europe and the future of Europe's 2-4m telescopes.

Trans-national Access

The OPTICON trans-national access programme opens up 22 European telescopes to wider access. Travel and other support may be available to qualified European users. The network includes 18 night-time and 4 solar telescopes at a wide variety of locations, i.e.

The Anglo-Australian Observatory
The CAHA at Calar-Alto
The Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope
ESO + MPG telescopes (La Silla)
The Isaac Newton Group (WHT+ING)
The UKIRT in Hawaii
The TNG on La Palma
The Nordic Optical Telescope
The Observatoire Haute Provence
The Telescope Bernard Lyot
The Carlos Sanchez Telescope
THEMIS
The Vacuum Tower Telescope
The Swedish Solar Telescope



The Dutch Open Telescope
The Liverpool Telescope
Aristarchos (from 2010)

Joint Research Activities

OPTICON supports 6 joint research activities in technology development. These are co-funded by many of the OPTICON partners. The projects are in the areas of :

- Interferometry
- Adaptive Optics
- Smart Instrument Technologies
- Detectors for Adaptive Optics
- Photonic Technology for Astronomy
- VPH Gratings

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