Word from the CSO - CERN’s unique scientific breadth

Whilst we are all clearly focused on completion of the LHC and the detectors around it and look forward to a successful start of operations later this year, we should not forget that CERN has yet more to offer in addition to this highest priority programme ‘at the energy frontier’. Indeed, CERN also attracts a large scientific community seizing the opportunities offered by its other facilities. Sometimes I wonder whether we are not too modest and should not emphasize more CERN’s unique scientific breadth. ISOLDE, at the PS Booster, relies on innovative techniques to produce results at the forefront of nuclear physics very cost-effectively. nTOF has provided unique measurements of interest to nuclear technology, nuclear astrophysics and basic nuclear physics, and still has an ambitious programme ahead of it after refurbishment of the target. Another unique facility is the Antiproton Decelerator, at which the study of antimatter is being pursued with ingenious experiments and a scientific community from our Member States and beyond. At the PS the very sophisticated DIRAC experiment provides unique tests of QCD.

At the SPS a high-intensity neutrino beam is sent to the Gran Sasso laboratory 730km away, where experiments hope to unravel the mysteries of these elusive particles. Also at the SPS the successful programme of ‘Kaon physics’ with unique precision measurements sensitive to ‘new physics’ is preparing for an exciting extension. And there is even more! To keep all this going requires utmost resourcefulness – for the moment we are managing. With the LHC soon determining the future course of high energy physics and with all CERN’s other opportunities, it will surely remain ‘the place to be’ for many years to come.

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