

IN RICORDO DI

Wolfgang Sandner (1949-2015)



Wolfgang Sandner suddenly left on Dec. 5th 2015. With him the international laser community has missed a friend, a colleague, and a European leader in infrastructure policy.

Wolfgang Sandner was born in 1949 in Teisendorf (Germany). He studied physics at the University of Freiburg, where he received the PhD in 1979 and the habilitation six years later. He became Professor at the University of Freiburg in 1987 and then full Professor at the University of Tennessee (USA) in 1991. From 1993 to 2013 he became Director at Max Born Institute for Non-linear Optics and Short-Pulse Spectroscopy in Berlin with a professorship at the Berlin Technical University. Since 2013 he was Director General of the ELI Delivery Consortium International Association, regarding the establishment of the "Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI)", a pan-European research infrastructure in the laser field belonging to the roadmap of ESFRI (the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures).

Wolfgang Sandner was called into many national and international organizations of science and research policy, particularly at the European level. He was advisor of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and a member of scientific advisory boards of many research institutes. Wolfgang Sandner was "Fellow of the American Physical Society" (1994) and president of the German Physical Society from 2010 to 2012.

The research activity of Wolfgang Sandner was dealing with the interaction of atoms and plasmas with strong and ultra-strong laser fields and related nonlinear phenomena as well as the relativistic plasma dynamics.

Other research areas were the acceleration of particles with lasers, the development of UV and X-ray lasers (table-top systems) and lasers for ultrashort pulses of high intensity.

Wolfgang Sandner led the establishment of Laserlab-Europe in 2003, a network funded by the European Union, which successfully now brings together 26 of the most important laser research institutions in 16 European countries. Sandner coordinated Laserlab-Europe continuously until 2012. During this time and under his leadership, the consortium grew significantly, geographically as well as scientifically, and accommodated, in particular, partners in the new member states as the EU expanded.

He left Laserlab-Europe, after securing the continuation of this network, in order to take a very demanding task as Director General of the ELI Delivery Consortium International Association managing the establishment of the "Extreme Light Infrastructure" (ELI), the first pan-European Laser Infrastructure distributed among the three countries of Romania, Czech Republic and Hungary. Laserlab-Europe and ELI will strengthen the laser community in Europe by optimally complementing each other and Wolfgang certainly was deeply involved in this mission. He was all the time fully committed to promote the advancement of laser physics and the collaboration of scientists on a European scale.

I hope that all the laser community will contribute to fulfilling his high ambitions for laser science in Europe and worldwide.

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