

**EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY**

**SOLAR SYSTEM WORKING GROUP**

**Recommendation on BepiColombo**

At its extraordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2005 at ESA Headquarters, Paris, the Solar System Working Group (SSWG) was briefed by the BepiColombo Project Manager on the latest developments with regard to the mission scenario and by the Project Scientist on the status of the BepiColombo Payload.

The SSWG discussed 5 specific recommendations :

1. The SSWG re-iterates, as it has many times in the past, its support for the unique science to be performed by the BepiColombo/Solar Orbiter mission programme.
2. The option of joining the MMO and the MPO into one spacecraft is considered unacceptable because of
  - a) the delays that would be incurred in restructuring the mission
  - b) the major loss of scientific return expected from the probable payload descope.
3. The SSWG considers a 1 year delay (to 2013 launch) as being acceptable, if this leads to a more solid programmatic situation for the mission. However, the SSWG notes with concern that further delays may affect the launch date of Solar Orbiter, which may have negative scientific impacts on that mission.
4. MIXS (the UK proposed X-ray spectrometer experiment) is considered a vital part of the payload. The SSWG is generally not supportive of the concept of facility instruments but pragmatically sees no viable alternative in this case and recommends that the Executive seeks confirmation at higher levels. In view of the possible industrial participation in the development of the instrument, ESA should make sure that the overall cost will remain within acceptable levels.

Assuming that this is successful the Executive should make the appropriate changes to the Science Management Plan for review by the SSWG and present a management and cost structure for the procurement of the experiment.

5. The transfer of the PI position on MERMAG (from Prof. A. Balogh – Imperial College, UK - to Prof. K.-H. Glassmeier - Technical University of Braunschweig) was viewed as promising route for solving the problems of funding for this experiment. However, the SSWG would like to see, through presentation or written report, that the scientific objectives and basic hardware elements are not markedly different from that proposed by the MERMAG team in response to the AO before formally approving the change, also with a view to avoiding possible problems with competing proposals.