

## COMMISSION 31

## TIME

*L'HEURE*

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### TRIENNIAL REPORT 2009–2012

IAU Commission 31 “Time” is part of Division I of the IAU. It currently has 103 members, a net increase of about 15% over the triennium, and 9 Consultants. The Commission web page is: [www.atnf.csiro.au/iau-comm31/](http://www.atnf.csiro.au/iau-comm31/). It maintains a current membership list, with links to the IAU membership database, links to past and up-coming meetings related to Time and links to relevant websites and documents.

The Commission has participated in discussions on the reorganisation of the IAU Division/Commission structure, planning for the Joint Discussion “Space-time Reference Systems for Future Research” to be held at the 28th General Assembly in Beijing and various other small matters related to its Terms of Reference.

However, by far the most significant issue dealt with during the triennium was the International Telecommunications Union proposal (ITU-R TF.460-6) to redefine UTC, eliminating the occasional insertion of leap seconds to make UTC a uniform timescale. Following the request from the Study Group 7 (SG7) of ITU-R to the IAU for an opinion on this issue, Commission 31 members were polled. Although there were some dissenting views, the majority of Commission 31 members either supported the ITU proposal or had no opinion. This was reported to the General Secretary and became the basis of the IAU response in favour of the proposal. SG7 was unable to reach a consensus and the matter was referred to the Radiocommunications Assembly which takes place in Geneva 16–20 January, 2012. Member states of the ITU will vote at the Assembly and a 70% majority is needed to accept the proposal. The matter is now largely out of the hands of the IAU, although individual IAU members may seek to influence their country’s vote at the Assembly. Commission 31 has served as a useful focus for IAU discussions related to time, in particular for the leap-second debate. Timescales form part of the fundamental reference systems of astronomy and it is important that the IAU maintains expertise in this area. Astronomy is regaining a position of importance in time-keeping with pulsar timescales now a reality. For these reasons we recommend that the Commission be retained for the next Triennium.

*R N Manchester (on behalf of the OC)*  
*31 October, 2011*