



In the pipeline: the European Space Agency's Solar Orbiter is likely to be launched in 2007.

search for gravity waves, and the Next Generation Space Telescope. The Eddington mission to study stellar evolution and search for Earth-like planets orbiting other stars is being held in reserve in case the telescope or the planned Solar Orbiter stumble.

Finland takes the chair in EUROHORCs

Helsinki Reijo Vihko, president and director general of the Academy of Finland, has been elected to chair EUROHORCs (European Union Research Organisations Heads of Research Councils) for the next two years. The election took place during a plenary

meeting of the organization held in Inter-laken, Switzerland.

EUROHORCs, which was set up in 1992, currently brings together the heads of 33 research organizations from all EU member states. The research councils of Norway and Switzerland attend with associate member status. Vihko says that a major challenge facing the organization is how to develop further the collaboration of funding among its member organizations.

MRC launches scheme to boost scientific high-fliers

London Britain's Medical Research Council (MRC) is investing £1 million (US\$1.46 million) in a new predoctoral fellowship scheme intended to boost the number of talented students going into scientific research careers. Beginning in October 2001, 15 students a year will be accepted to study for PhDs for three years while working as salaried employees in MRC institutes and units.

Students on the scheme will receive around £17,000 per year, almost double a typical postgraduate annual grant. According to the MRC, they will also enjoy "greater entry-level research career opportunities". The scheme is one of a number that have recently been set up in the United Kingdom to stem the loss of high-

calibre science graduates into alternative, better-paid careers.

Biggest-ever rise for NSF budget next year

Washington The US Congress has approved the largest-ever budget increase for the National Science Foundation (NSF), increasing its budget for next year by \$526 million to more than \$4.4 billion. Although less than the 17% increase proposed by President Bill Clinton, the bill has thrilled agency supporters, who say that it puts the NSF on track to double its budget over five years.

Agreed by both houses of Congress last week, the appropriations bill for the agency provides money for some of the president's special projects at the NSF. It spends \$75 million on biocomplexity (see page 823), against a \$136 million request, \$150 million on nanotechnology (against \$217 million requested) and \$215 million on information technology (against \$327 million).

Correction A brief news item on the campaign promises of US presidential candidate George W. Bush (*Nature* **407**, 438; 2000) was mistakenly accompanied by a photograph of his father, George Bush, who was campaigning on his behalf in the same state on the same day. We apologize for the error.