



## French School System

### Primary School



- ◆ A large scale experimentation called *'La Main à la Pâte'* (Hands On) inspired new science curricula that are being implemented since 2002.
- ◆ Most primary teachers however feel uncomfortable teaching science.

### Lower Secondary School (*collège*)

- ◆ All pupils have the same science education (3 different teachers: Physics & Chemistry, Biology & Earth Sciences, Technology).
- ◆ Regarding Physics & Chemistry, guidelines advocate experimental activities, but they remain difficult to implement in the classroom (due to group sizes: 25 to 30 pupils).

### Upper Secondary School (*lycée*)

- ◆ 3 main types: professional, technological and general education. Our STA is mainly concerned with the last two types.
- ◆ Practicals (lab work) for all students (in smaller groups, in specially equipped classrooms, with lab technicians).

### Tertiary Education

- ◆ University and other non-university institutions.

## Who influences the French Education System?

- ◆ France is a centralised country. The Ministry of Education:
  - sets up the curricula
  - lays down the number of teaching hours per subject
  - organises the exams
  - manages the teachers' careers.
- ◆ There are independent advisory committees.
- ◆ Businesses take part in the definition of technological education.



## Our STA: UdPPC

(Union des Professeurs de Physique et de Chimie)

Formerly known as *'Union des Physiciens'*, it was founded in 1906 and is the oldest teachers' association in France. It became *'Union des Professeurs de Physique et de Chimie'* in 2003.



### Our STA

- ◆ is mostly concerned with:
  - physics and chemistry teaching in Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary and in the first semesters of university
  - all issues regarding teachers' training.
- ◆ is an organization that offers thoughts, discussion platforms and proposals:
  - among teachers
  - to the authorities.
- ◆ is co-founder or partner in several French or international competitions (Physics Olympiads, Chemistry Olympiads, Objectif Science...).
- ◆ publishes a monthly journal, dealing with scientific, pedagogic and didactic issues as well as news of the association. A CD-Rom database comprises all articles of the journal from its first 1907 issue.



## Our STA's strong points

- ◆ It brings together a significant number of physics and chemistry teachers.
- ◆ Its significant pedagogic and didactic expertise is widely acknowledged, specifically in the field of lab teaching (practicals).
- ◆ It is recognized by scientists and institutions.
- ◆ It has a strong regional field base.

## The limits of our action as an association

- ◆ We totally depend on the voluntary work of our members and representatives.
- ◆ We are not a trade union (unions have the greatest political influence in education issues).
- ◆ We are not taking part in the writing of new curricula; our advice is only sought for at the very end of the process.



## Why are we taking part in IMPRESS?

- To be aware of the European context.
- To discuss issues we are concerned with.
- To consider common achievements.
- To contemplate taking common stands and common actions

