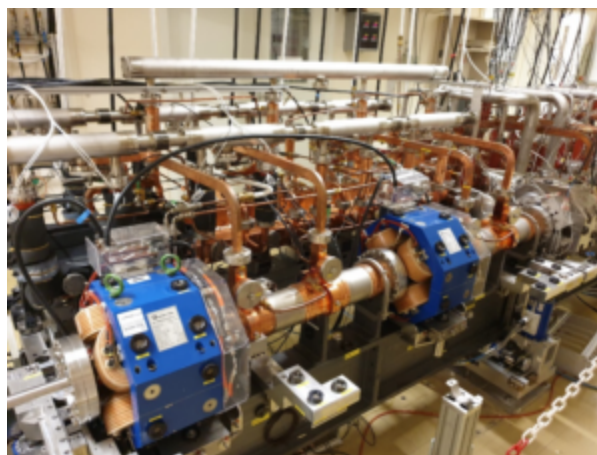


Want to find out what its like to participate in the Talent Programme? Have a read of this testimony written by 2022 Finalist and Winner Dr. Adriano Pilagatti

Hello everyone,

My name is Adriano Pilagatti, and I am from Italy. When I participated in the euspen Talent Programme in 2022, I was pursuing my PhD at Politecnico di Torino after completing a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, with a specialization in Additive Manufacturing. Before joining the Programme, I had gained valuable experience through two academic team projects: the Velante project at Politecnico di Bari and the Polito Sailing Team at Politecnico di Torino. The year 2022 represented a turning point for me, as I had the privilege of participating in the euspen Talent Programme. To be honest, when I first received the email, I was hesitant and almost disregarded it. However, thanks to the encouragement and support of my academic mentors, I decided to apply. I am very grateful that I did. The Programme was an excellent experience that helped me grow both professionally and personally. In particular, I had the opportunity to meet and work with my two teammates, Kevin and Elias.

During the virtual challenge, we designed an innovative prototype for the automated and highly precise alignment of components for the Compact Linear Collider project at CERN. Our team worked intensively for two weeks. Each day brought new information, insights, and possible solutions as we worked to develop our proposal. There were inevitable difficulties, as can be expected when working under pressure and within a demanding deadline. However, we did not step back from the challenge. We addressed each obstacle as a team, supported by the euspen organizers and CERN engineers, who provided valuable guidance during dedicated meetings. The experience tested our resilience, creativity, communication, and ability to collaborate effectively. Our work was ultimately rewarded when our team was selected as one of the three finalists. This gave us the remarkable opportunity to develop our ideas further in the CERN metrology laboratories. There, we saw our CAD drawings transformed into a tangible solution while working alongside CERN engineers, including Vivian Rude and H  l  ne Mainaud Durand. During the final stage of the Challenge, we had only three hours to understand the problem, develop a solution, and present our proposal for aligning components with micrometric precision using a laser tracking system. It was an intense and demanding experience, but also a dream come true.



The Challenge concluded with our team winning the competition. However, what remains most remarkable and memorable is the journey that brought us to that result. Success did not depend solely on technical expertise. It required effective teamwork, clear communication, efficient time management, constructive conflict resolution, and a genuine passion for learning. These elements made the experience truly unforgettable. Being part of the SPS Team was an extraordinary experience. It contributed to our professional development and created lasting relationships based on friendship and mutual respect. Our

different backgrounds as doctoral researchers in complementary fields further strengthened our ability to collaborate and created the potential for future joint projects.

As guests at the 22nd International Conference and Exhibition of euspen in Geneva, we also had the opportunity to attend several stimulating keynote presentations. These included “The James Webb Space Telescope: Testing on Ground to Ensure On Orbit Performance” by Dr Begoña Vila of NASA and “Present and Future CERN Projects and Their Associated Engineering Challenges” by Dr Rhodri Jones of CERN.



My relationship with the Talent Programme did not end with the 2022 Challenge. Since then, my involvement has continued to grow, allowing me to move from participant to an active role within the organizing committee. I first joined the committee with the support of Professor Enrico Savio from the University of Padova and Professor Liam Blunt from the University of Huddersfield, former euspen President, who both became important mentors to me. Over time, they entrusted me with increasing responsibilities and gave me genuine decision-making authority. Their confidence, guidance, and example played an important role in my professional and personal development. Their mentorship helped me understand how to contribute effectively to the organization of the Challenge while supporting the participants throughout this demanding experience. I later had the opportunity to remain involved thanks to Professor Matteo Calzon at the Technical University of Denmark and Professor Andreas Archenti at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, the current euspen President, who have also been important mentors to me. Their support enabled me to continue contributing to the Programme and to strengthen my relationship with the international community surrounding the Challenge.

Today, it is an honor to continue participating actively in the Talent Programme. Seeing young researchers engage with challenging technical problems, work under pressure, exchange ideas, and develop solutions is always inspiring. Their enthusiasm, determination, and creativity provide a constant source of motivation. Working closely with the euspen team, the organizing committee, and the Challenge judges has also strengthened my technical and professional knowledge. At the same time, it has significantly expanded my international network. Several collaborations have emerged from the relationships developed through the Programme, enriching me both as a researcher and as a person.

Looking back, the Talent Programme has had an impact on my career that extends far beyond participating in and winning the 2022 Challenge. It gave me the opportunity to progress from participant to organizer and to contribute to creating the same experience for a new generation of researchers. The Challenge is undoubtedly demanding and, at times, exhausting. It requires commitment, flexibility, teamwork, and the ability to make decisions under pressure. Nevertheless, the professional growth, personal relationships, international collaborations, and sense of achievement make the experience genuinely worthwhile.

I hope my experience encourages students and young researchers to seize this opportunity. Do not allow self-doubt to hold you back. Accepting a demanding challenge is often one of the most effective ways to grow, build meaningful relationships, and discover what you are capable of.

Good luck to everyone, and I hope to meet many future participants at the next euspen Talent Programme.

Best,

Adriano