Laurence Viennot has a distinguished international reputation in Physics Education (Didactics of Physics). She has been invited to lecture and give courses in the USA, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, North Africa and Russia as well as in most European countries. Her work is highly reputed for its integrity, careful attention to detail and its close relationship to practice as well as for its vision and for the depth of the underlying thought.

From the time when she presented the very first doctoral thesis in physics education in France, Laurence Viennot has played a leading role in establishing physics education research both in France and internationally. She has adopted a distinctive approach to the subject, in which links to the discipline of physics are kept strong and integral. Significantly, her work has commanded the respect of many physicists.

Nationally, Laurence Viennot played an important role in the formation of curriculum changes and the introduction of new courses. She was influential as a member of the Physics group of the National Committee of Programmes of the Ministry of Education, of the Commission of the French Physical Society, and as an expert for the Ministry of Research. Her insistence on basing proposals for reform on sound evidence, and on careful evaluation of the results, was central to these policy involvements.

Internationally, Laurence Viennot has a very strong reputation in a wide range of countries. Her influential books have been translated into English and Spanish. Her extensive publications in international journals have reached a wide and multilingual audience.

No less important has been her personal influence, on her own students and on many senior researchers in Physics Education worldwide. She has shown by example how to combine intellectual caution and modesty, never overstating results, with a wide ambition to address deep and important issues in the teaching and learning of Physics. The concreteness of the results is matched by the imaginative grasp that lies behind them. She has a very special talent for choosing a good problem: one that is both soluble and important. Over the years Laurence Viennot and the colleagues she has led and collaborated with, have helped build the reputation of Physics Education worldwide.

August 2003
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Juergen A. Sahm,
Chairman of ICPE