

Europlanet 2020: Fostering the collaboration between professional scientists and amateur astronomers

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Abstract

The Horizon 2020 advanced research infrastructure project *Europlanet 2020* aims to strengthen the collaboration in European planetary sciences. One of the major goals of the project's Work Package NA1 Task 12.5 "Coordination of ground-based observations" is to foster the cooperation between professional planetary scientists and amateur astronomers in Europe. This presentation will give an overview on Europlanet 2020 and will summarize the major activities of NA1-Task 12.5, focusing on how the project supports the activities of amateur astronomers and their collaboration with professional scientists in Europe. This will also include an overview on funding possibilities for amateur astronomers.

1. Introduction

Europlanet 2020 (<http://www.europlanet-2020-ri.eu/>) is an advanced research infrastructure project of the European Commission's funding scheme Horizon 2020. Its main goals are the provision of access to planetary field sites and European laboratories, the development of Virtual Observatories for planetary sciences, the support for scientific workshops and summer schools, as well as the provision of a high-quality Public Outreach Media Centre. As the follow-up project of two other highly-successful Europlanet-projects it started operation in September 2015 and will be active until August 2019. It is divided into several different Work Packages (WPs), of which one of them is *WP12: Networking Activity 1 (NA1) "Innovation through Science Networking"*. One of its tasks – *Task 12.5 "Coordination of ground-based observations"* – will be presented in more detail within this presentation. One of its major goals is to foster the collaboration between professional scientists and amateur astronomers.

2. NA1-Task 5: Collaboration between professionals and amateurs

NA1- Task 12.5 "Coordination of ground-based observations" is centered on three main goals: (i) the organization of scientific workshops for the coordination of observation campaigns, (ii) the organization of amateur training workshops and summer schools, and (iii) the establishment of an observatory database, in which amateurs can build up their own system to share their observational data with the scientific community.

During the first two years of the project several workshops with its focus on the coordination of amateur campaigns were funded and organized within the frame of NA1-Task 5. As an example, the "Workshop on Juno Ground-Based Support from Amateurs: Science and Public Impact", which took place from May 12-13, 2017, in Nice, France, marked one of the by now most successful amateur oriented workshops of the first project-half. In addition, NA1-Task 5 also is organizing amateur training workshops /summer schools, of which some of them are taking place on a yearly basis at the Moletai Observatory in Lithuania. Besides presenting some of those workshops and summer schools, the presentation will also give an insight on how you can apply for workshop support.

NA1-Task 5 is also upgrading the so-called "*NA1-Matrix of Ground-based Facilities and Space Missions*" (<http://iwf.oeaw.ac.at/matrix/>), which was already developed during the predecessor of Europlanet 2020, i.e. during Europlanet-RI (2009-2012). Within the new project it will be extended, so that amateur astronomers will be able to share their observational data with the community via the Virtual Observatory VESPA.

3. Summary and Conclusions

Via the funding of dedicated workshops for the coordination of amateur observation campaigns, as well as of dedicated amateur training workshops, Europlanet 2020 provides a strong tool for fostering the collaboration between professional scientists and amateur astronomers. Since amateur astronomers provide a strong benefit for the European community, this presentation wants not only to advertise the need of such collaboration, but also to invite the community to apply for workshop funding. Amateur astronomers often do not have the possibility to attend scientific workshops and to meet each other at conferences. Hence, NA1-Task 5 for the first time provides a scheme, which very much facilitates such collaborations and which funds the attendance of amateur astronomers at scientific workshops or even at conferences such as this year's EPSC.

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