

PREPARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY 2009 IN SERBIA

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Abstract. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 as a global celebration of astronomy marks the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. It aims to convey the excitement of personal discovery, the pleasure of sharing fundamental knowledge about the Universe and our place in it in the framework of eleven Cornerstone projects. The basic idea of this global project is to involve as many countries as possible and to be active on local levels. Serbia has also joined this project and has formed its National Node whose task is to coordinate activities concerning this celebration on the national level. The preparations, as well as some plans and ideas for activities in 2009, are described.

1. INTRODUCTION

In July 2003, at the International Astronomical Union (IAU) General Assembly in Sydney, Australia, the IAU voted unanimously in favour of a resolution asking the United Nations to declare the year 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy (IYA). In October 2005 UNESCO endorsed the IYA2009 and on 20 December 2007 the United Nations proclaimed 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy.

The International Year of Astronomy 2009 is a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture and marks the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. The aim of the Year is to stimulate worldwide interest, especially among young people, in astronomy and science under the central theme "The Universe, Yours to Discover". IYA2009 events and activities will promote a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of astronomy that embody an invaluable shared resource for all nations.

The IYA2009 activities are taking place at global and regional levels, and especially at the national and local levels. National Nodes in each country are running activities throughout the year, aimed at establishing collaborations between professional and amateur astronomers, science centers, educators, and science communicators. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 is supported by eleven Cornerstone projects which will be key elements in the success of IYA2009.



Figure 1: Official banner of the IYA in Serbia.

2. PREPARATIONS FOR IYA2009 IN SERBIA

The preparations for IYA2009 in Serbia have begun under the slogan "Na tebi je da otkriješ svemir" (Serbian translation of *The Universe, Yours to Discover*). The main organiser is the Society of Astronomers of Serbia and all activities are coordinated by the National Node of Serbia.

The members of the Serbian National Node or the National Organizing Committee for IYA in Serbia are:

- Dr Olga Atanacković (Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade), president of the National Committee for Astronomy,
- Dr Nadežda Pejović (Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade),
- Dr Gojko Djurašević (Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade),
- Dr Zorica Cvetković, (Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade), president of the Society of Astronomers of Serbia,
- Dr Ilija Savić (Faculty of Physics, Belgrade),
- Dr Zoran Knežević, director of the Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade,
- Dr Dejan Urošević (Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade), the head of Department of Astronomy,
- MSc Nataša Stanić (Astronomical Society "R. Bošković", Belgrade), vice president of the National Node (president till September 2008),
- Nikola Božić (Petnica Science Center, Valjevo), president of National Node and Single Point of Contact for IYA2009 (from September 2008).

The beginning of the activities concerning IYA2009 is due to the initiative of the first official SPoC for Serbia, Dr Milan M. Irković, at the Astronomical Observatory in Belgrade in March 2007. The development of popularisation of astronomy in Serbia was presented at the World Meeting devoted to the popularisation of astronomy (*Communicating Astronomy With The Public*), in Athens in October 2007. The new SPoC for Serbia, Nataša Stanić, presented the working programmes of professional and amateur astronomical organisations and societies in Serbia. In addition, she presented the activities planned within the framework of the preparations for IYA2009 in Serbia. Fifty copies of the IAU brochure IYA2009 (later translated into Serbian)

were obtained, as well as the copyrights for printing posters, and using official banners and symbols concerning IYA2009 (see figures 1 and 2).

The National Node involved all professional and amateur astronomical organisations in Serbia in the preparation and realisation of the Cornerstone projects and appointed a national coordinator for each of them. The Society of Astronomers of Serbia received finances from the Serbian Ministry of Science for preparation of the activities for IYA during 2008. Thanks to the UNESCO Participating Program finances were obtained for purchasing the first mobile planetarium in Serbia which will enable projections of the night sky and access to astronomical discoveries for a large number of sky admirers in Serbia. A project was made for protecting the most important astronomical sites in Serbia, the Astronomical Observatory and the Public Observatory with Planetarium, both in Belgrade. It was submitted to UNESCO's thematic initiative *Astronomy and World Heritage*.

Eleven Cornerstone projects and National coordinators for Serbia are:

- 100 Hours Of Astronomy - Janko Mravik (Astronomical Society "Universe", Bačka Palanka).
- The Galileoscope - Goran Pavičić (Astronomical Society "Rudjer Bošković", Belgrade).
- Cosmic Diary - Dr Milan Ćirković (Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade).
- The Portal to the Universe - Aleksandar Zorkić (Astronomical Magazine, Novi Sad).
- She is an Astronomer - Dr Tijana Prodanović (Faculty of Science, Novi Sad).
- Dark Skies Awareness - Nikola Božić (Petnica Science Center, Valjevo).
- Astronomy and World Heritage - Dr Zorica Cvetković (Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade).
- Ambassadors of Galileo - Dr Slobodan Ninković (Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade).
- Universe Awareness - MSc Nataša Stanić (Astronomical Society "Rudjer Bošković", Belgrade).
- From Earth to the Universe - Dr Dragana Ilić (Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade).
- Developing Astronomy Globally - Dr Olga Atanacković (Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade).

The brochure in Serbian has been completed and it is in press. It should be distributed to all primary and secondary schools and university departments throughout Serbia. In addition to the translation of the IAU brochure on IYA2009 it also contains texts describing the present astronomical situation in Serbia, lists of institutions in Serbia where this scientific discipline is studied, organisations in which the training and popularisation are performed, journals and magazines with scientific, technical



Figure 2: Official logo of IYA 2009 in Serbia.

and popular papers and discoveries of the most distinguished astronomers from Serbia and abroad. This is a concise presentation on astronomical activities in Serbia from the amateur level to professional engagement.

Our scientists have delivered a number of public lectures comprising all fields of astronomy at summer schools, during the XXVI Belgrade Astronomical Weekend, at Petnica Science Center, amateur astronomical societies, faculties and cultural centres. Talks on IYA2009 have taken place at some scientific meetings.

The public has been informed on IYA2009 through various media (press, radio, television and internet).

All kinds of activities concerning IYA2009 will be strengthened and continued.

The official web site of the International Year of Astronomy in Serbia is www.das.org.rs/mga. It contains the complete information on the activities and plans for IYA2009 in Serbia, but also it offers a possibility to suggest all good ideas to be realized.

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