

## PREFACE

Starting on 30 September and lasting until 2 October 2020, in the form of a virtual event, the first South East Europe Space conference - SEE Universe 2020 was held. This multidisciplinary conference was organized by the Serbian Office for Space Science, Research and Development (SERBSPACE), a non-governmental organization founded in Belgrade in 2016. Originally scheduled for 2 and 3 April 2020, the Conference was planned to be held in the Science Technology Park Belgrade but was postponed due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. By changing the format, the Conference was held online and was divided into three parts, i.e., three days. The first day was reserved for representatives of the academia and science, the second day for speakers from industry, and the third day for presentations from the societies sector. The conference brought together 50 speakers from over 20 countries. The participants of the Conference had the opportunity to attend the presentation of the keynote speaker of the Conference, Dr. Andreas Mogensen, an astronaut of the European Space Agency.

The conference was opened by Milan Mijović, President and Founder of the Office, who presented the history and projects of SERBSPACE as well as the Conference program. Dr. Saša Lazović, Assistant Minister for Technological Development, Technology Transfer and Innovation System of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development addressed the attendees, followed by Dr. Christian Feichtinger, Executive Director of the International Astronautical Federation, who shared the news that SERBSPACE has become the new and only member from Serbia in this organization, which since 1951 brings together all leading space agencies, universities, companies and organizations from over 70 countries. The opening ceremony continued with a presentation by a representative of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Luc St-Pierre and their projects, and ended with an address by H. E. Ruth Stewart, Ambassador of Australia in Belgrade and H. E. Susanne Shine, Ambassador of Denmark in Belgrade. The conference was also led by Dr. Milan Stojanović from the Belgrade Astronomical Observatory and Jacqueline Myrrhe from the magazine GoTaikonauts!

Elaborating about the multidisciplinary nature of Space sciences, the first day of the Conference continued with presentations of scientific papers by domestic and

foreign speakers, including topics in space law and politics, astrophysics, medicine, materials and structures, GIS Systems, meteorology, and solar sailing. Also, the first Panel of the Conference was held, where participants exchanged their views on the potentials of space sciences and projects. The Panel was led by Dr. Milan Stojanović from the Belgrade Astronomical Observatory, who discussed the importance and possibilities of space sciences with the Panel participants from the point of view of the non-governmental sector, scientific institutions, and faculties. The discussion showed that many projects are already being implemented in Serbia, but there are still opportunities in the form of international scientific cooperation.

Living in the technology and innovation driven world, the second day of the Conference was reserved for representatives of industry and economy. Participants were able to hear lectures on entrepreneurship, the space industry, ways of financing, start-up companies and already successful companies engaged in the production of satellite equipment. This was followed by Panel Industry 4.0, moderated by Prof. Dr. Radivoje Mitrović, Dean of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade. The aim of the panel was to discuss Industry 4.0 and its application in academia and industry.

Looking and listening to the firsthand Space experience, a special part of the Conference was dedicated to Dr. Andreas Mogensen, an active astronaut of the European Space Agency, who in his one-hour presentation spoke about his mission on the International Space Station and the experiments in which he participated.

At last, the final day of the Conference was marked by many lectures and presentations in the field of social and humanistic segment. Opening the third day of the Conference, a representative of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs gave an overview of the Office's activities and projects, focusing on the main idea: that space activities are available to all countries, organizations, and individuals. Other presentations included presentations of space activities in Australia, Germany and China, presentations of Mars analogue locations and Horizon Europe projects. This was followed by a Panel that brought together the non-governmental sector in Serbia, where participants could exchange their ideas but also suggest steps for the future. The conference ended with a Poster session when participants from six countries were able to present their scientific research.

Taking into the account the significant number of speakers and a large number of listeners, the Conference gave a concrete picture of Serbia's capacity in the space sector, and connected domestic and foreign participants, all with the aim of improving knowledge, international cooperation, industry development and innovation and general positioning of Serbia in the global space arena. SERBSPACE highly appreciates the recognition of the SEE Universe 2020 Conference by domestic and foreign stakeholders, the United Nations, and the International Astronautical Federation.

Internationally and nationally, the conference was supported by, *inter alia*, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Astronomical Observatory Belgrade, GoTaikonauts! magazine, Raumfahrt Concret magazine, the International Astronautical Federation, the European Space Agency, the embassies of Australia, Denmark, Israel, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as by many scientific institutions and companies. The Office plans to make the SEE Universe Space Conference a regular event and with the aim of creating a national, regional, and international platform that will enable the exchange of knowledge and experience of representatives of the space sector. Also, SERBSPACE believes that this Conference will become an important part of the space strategy in Serbia that the Office is developing.

Milan Mijović  
President of SERBSPACE