

Europlanet NA1 Expert Program Report Form

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Home Institute: DCU, Ireland

Host Institute: UCL, UK

Expert Program Report

In the context of the expert exchange project in the department of Physics & Astronomy at UCL, I met a number of researchers from the Astrophysics group, and discussed about their research interests and science communication.

I wrote two articles on the topic of past and upcoming space missions, with the aim of bringing their scientific value and results closer to the public. These reports were the outcome of interviews that I conducted with scientists from different groups to better understand their research fields. For the first article, I interviewed Prof. Nick Afcilleos and Dr. Patrick Guio from the Planetary Plasma Physics group. The main topic discussed was the research on the giant planets of our Solar System, Saturn and Jupiter, by placing emphasis on space missions. Recently, the Cassini mission (a dedicated spacecraft to explore Saturn) reached an end and the JUICE mission is the future dedicated mission to Jupiter. I also interviewed Prof. Giovanna Tinetti from the Exoplanets group at UCL and the guest lecturer Prof. Dimitar Sasselov from Harvard University. The interviews were focused on the field of exoplanets and the upcoming missions which will further study them. Given the above topics, it is vital to communicate the science behind space missions and their significance for science and the society to the public. You can find a brief description about my visit at UCL and the main articles in the following links:

- <http://www.europlanet-eu.org/europlanet-expert-exchange-anastasia-kokori-visits-ucl/>
- <http://www.europlanet-eu.org/weve-said-goodbye-to-cassini-what-comes-next/>
- <http://www.europlanet-eu.org/space-missions-looking-at-worlds-beyond-the-earth/>

These articles will be published in other sources as well. In addition, I wrote these articles in Greek and they will be published in Greek media (websites and magazines), such as the magazine “Uranus” which is the only magazine about space and astronomy written in Greek.

I also visited the UCLO (University College London Observatory) where I met the co-ordinators who gave me a tour of the main features and telescopes of the observatory. More specifically, I met the outreach co-ordinator, Mark Fuller, and we discussed about strategies to

improve the observatory's outreach activities. We also set the foundations for a fruitful future discussion on public engagement and astronomy outreach.

Finally, I had a meeting with the team of UCL that works on the space mission "Twinkle". In the context of this project, high school students get involved in real research and they analyse exoplanet data. In my country, Greece, I have been co-ordinating a similar project where amateur astronomers work with professional astronomers. The main aim of this project is to both produce scientific results on the field of transiting exoplanets and also improve the relationship between amateur communities and professional scientists. Recently, I proposed a citizen science project in which not only amateur astronomers but also the general public can participate in real research. For this reason, I collaborate with professional astronomers in order to develop user friendly tools that can attract participants and increase the participation of people from the general public. At UCL, I discussed all these ideas with people who are considering applying a similar idea.