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Summary of the conference titled
Workshop on Mars – Connecting Planetary Scientists in Europe (MPSE)
05-07 June 2012, Budapest, Hungary

In the summer of 2012 the first Mars related conference was organized in the East European region. The meeting was organized to help promote ESA's planetary missions (Mars Express in particular) among scientists in the region, get to know what the scientific activities of their respective communities are, and to facilitate their integration into European planetary science teams by using scientific data especially from ESA Mars missions, and also to enhance the international cooperation. The meeting was particularly addressed to scientists from countries that have recently joined ESA (Czech Republic, Romania) or have signed cooperation agreements with ESA (Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia etc). Besides researchers, university students attended welcomed at the meeting.



The poster of the conference: the Chain Bridge of Budapest on the Martian surface

At the conference 122 participants from 16 countries gave 42 oral and 29 poster presentations altogether. Great overview talks were given in the morning sessions with 60 min. duration, while other participants gave 15 min. length short presentations on their work in the afternoon. The meeting was covered by the media, with TV and radio interviews as well as newspaper and online articles. The call of the conference was included in the MEPAG newsletter, indicated on the JPL Space Calendar, LPI meeting list and other websites beforehand.

The first day of the conference was held in the main building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and opened by the vice-president of the academy. Beside the lectures a conference dinner was organized at the end of the first day, a trip to the Polaris Observatory to watch the Venus transit was realized on the second day early morning, and a poster session took place at the afternoon of the second day, accompanied with a planetary map exhibition and three model planetary probe demonstrations.



Part of the audience on the first day



Ernst Hauber gives interview

Based on the feedbacks from participants by personal discussions and during the last two lectures that turned to opened discussions, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- planetary researchers in the region has deep knowledge in some specific topics,
- participants think such specific meeting are useful for them and they would like to continue,
- the small meeting with their family-like atmosphere is better for researchers in the region than large conferences, and they could also exchange their personal experience more effectively here than at large conferences like European Planetary Science Congress (EPSC),
- the 60 min. long great overview talks given by the PIs are very useful for the community to have a deep insight into certain topics, and this topics should be general like geology, mineralogy, atmospheric,
- many small presentations are also good, especially as they give insight into the ongoing work in the region,
- presentations on the logistics of research projects are strongly welcomed that give overview from the shaping the idea of a project, through the submission of proposals till the realization and run of active research work, such presentations should include ESA administrative aspects on working together with the agency,
- solar system mission related technical development is important in the region as it helps the scientists to connect their work to missions,
- meetings similar to this are welcomed in the future, and they must avoid to duplicate EPSC and EGU like meetings.

The participants were among the leaders of researchers in this topic in Central and Eastern-Europe and they expressed their interest in the continuation of the meeting. Based on their view, to get the most out of similar meetings in the future the organizers should focus on the above mentioned points: the realization of a mixture of summer-school like overviews (long talks given by experts of the field with wide knowledge), short personal presentations of researchers and their groups' work (ongoing works and near future planned project), and also help to organize and start research projects. Among the possible options, a meeting in every second year, and possibly at different locations in the Central- and Eastern European region is foreseen.

The support from the European Space Agency, and especially from the Division of Solar System Missions is acknowledged. The conference was also supported by the work of the Conference Organizing Committee: Augustin Chicarro, Peter Abraham, Attila Demeny, Akos Kereszturi and Olivier Witasse. More information and images on the meeting can be found at the conference website: www.konkoly.hu/MPSE.

The conference was sponsored by the European Space Agency and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the realization was supported by the Institute for Geological and Geochemical Research and the Konkoly Astronomical Institute. Beside the main organizers, the meeting was also supported by the International Cartographic Association Commission on Planetary Cartography, the Nagy Karoly Astronomical Foundation, and the Carl Zeiss Technika Kft. Beyond the organizers and sponsors, the following persons helped during the conference: Amanda Király, Attila Mizser, Csilla Orgel, Dezsőné Látos, József Fekete, Ferenc Horvai, Léda Koppány, Milán Mankovics, Péter Ábrahám.

Selected images of the meeting



Coffee break



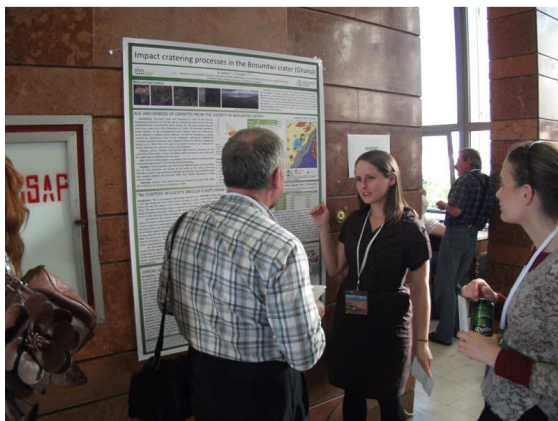
Talk on cyanobacteria and astrobiology



During the observation of Venus transit



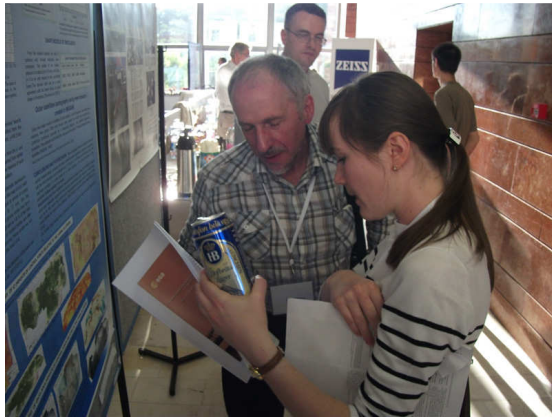
Lunch together



Poster session



Poster session



Poster session



Closing discussion with Hungarian wine tasting

More information can be found at the website of the conference: <http://www.konkoly.hu/MPSE>