

Proposal for Establishing an IAA Program Committee

Title of IAA Conference: Searching for Life Signatures

Proposer(s): Claudio Maccone

Primary IAA Commission Preference: Commission 1 Space Physical Sciences
Secondary IAA Commission Interests: Commission 6 Space & Society, Culture & Education

Proposed Members of Program Committee:

(Int'l Astronautical Congress Sessions, stand alone Conferences, or any others). Please list below names of Session Coordinator (eventually), Session Chair(s), Conference Chair(s), Rapporteur(s), Members:

Contant Jean-Michel, Maccone Claudio, Raulin Francois, Shostak Seth, Tarter Jill, Vakoch Doug, Colom Pierre, Labeque Alain, Prantzios Nikos, Schneider Jean.

Short Description of Scope and Relevance to Existing or Proposed Studies:

SETI (the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) has been pursued since 1960 by several countries (USA, Russia, France, Italy, Japan, Australia, Argentina, etc.). This was just passive SETI, i.e. trying to pick up an alien signal and understand its meaning. In recent years, however, the SETI debate has enlarged to active SETI also, i.e. whether it is suitable that humans send messages to aliens living on planets around nearby stars – We just don't know whether aliens must be friendly to us or not. On the other hand, it is impossible to stop anyone on Earth from sending radio messages around. And so it is just impossible to prevent active SETI to become a reality.

In addition, since 1995 more than 200 extra-solar planets have been discovered and this can only increase the probability that we will discover an inhabited planet sooner or later.

Finally, space scientific missions are under study:

- 1) SIM (Space Interferometry Mission) at JPL, USA.
- 2) TPF (Terrestrial Planet Finder) at NASA, USA.
- 3) Kepler (USA)
- 4) Corot (France/ESA) already in orbit to detect big exoplanets (hot Jupiters), but not Earth-sized planets.
- 5) DARWIN (ESA) to detect Earth-sized planets, etc.

In conclusion, the first conference run by the SETI Permanent Study Group of the IAA would be an ideal meeting place for all scientists interested to the Search for Life Signatures.

Meeting(s), for which the Session is proposed

(International Astronautical Congress, COSPAR congress, etc. Please indicate tentative dates)

Venue:

22 September (Monday) through 26 September (Friday) 2008.
4 days at UNESCO, Paris and the whole last day, Friday 26 September will be devoted to a visit to Nancay Radio Telescope.

Appropriate Timing:

9 am to 5 pm every day.

Anticipated Size of Audience:

100 or more.

Target Community:

Scientific space mission scientists, exoplanet astronomers, radio and SETI astronomers, astrobiologists, social scientists, philosophers.

Support Needed:

Logistic support in general, including leaflet printout.
General coordination in Paris.
Final publication of the conference proceedings in a dedicated issue of Acta Astronautica.
Covering the expenses for invited speakers.

Potential Co-Sponsors:

Alain Labeque asked for a 10.000 Euros contribution already.

To be returned to IAA Secretariat Paris fax: 33 1 47 23 82 16 email: sgeneral@iaaweb.org

Date: 12 December 2007

Signature: Claudio Maccone

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