

Reviving astronomy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

O.Panić, M.Muminović

We present the motivation and recent efforts to form the Astronomical Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to reconstruct the Observatory of Sarajevo, as the heart of all future progress in promoting astronomy and astrophysics in the country.



CURRENT STATUS

The access to the knowledge about the Universe, in Bosnia and Herzegovina is limited to occasional documentaries on television. Astronomy is not taught in schools, and there are only a few courses available to the undergraduate students in Physics in Sarajevo and Banjaluka. Besides a few textbooks in local language(s) the astronomy literature is almost impossible to find.

The war (1992-1995) and the subsequent difficult economic situation have caused a major brain-drain from the region, making it very hard for universities to keep pace with modern advances of science, new technologies and teaching methodology.

However, many students choose to pursue higher education in Natural Sciences and interest in Astronomy amongst students exists (Andic, 2007).

THE INITIATIVE

The initiative is started by M.Muminovic, who was the Director of Sarajevo Observatory from 1974 until its destruction in 1992. Joined by a small group of enthusiasts and with the support of a few Bosnian astronomers currently working abroad, he is working of the project of reconstruction of the observatory. The new observatory would be:

- a focal point for popularisation of astronomy in the country,
- an invaluable resource for hands-on experience for local students,
- a facility for lectures, summerschools and scientific meetings
- made available to the community for scientific projects.

Long-term objectives:

Hopefully the Astronomical Society and the Observatory would bring together people from different universities in the country and help build cooperation in the field of astronomy, strengthening the role of astronomy in their faculties of Natural Sciences. Along with it the support from the Ministry of Education and Science.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

The Bosnian astronomers abroad are unaware of each other and there must be many more than we currently know. If you help distribute the information about our efforts, this would help us build a network of dedicated professionals.

Bosnian students interested in astronomy and astrophysics should have a chance to experience astronomy, in spite of the hard economic situation. If your institute/university offers financial support for participation at a summer school or an opportunity to have practice at observing facilities, please let us know.

We are here for any advice or idea you may have that can help us revive astronomy in Bosnia. So do not hesitate to talk to a representative or send an e.mail.

One of the first activities to organise this year would be a series of astronomy lectures. Maybe you would be interested to come to Bosnia and Herzegovina to give a lecture?



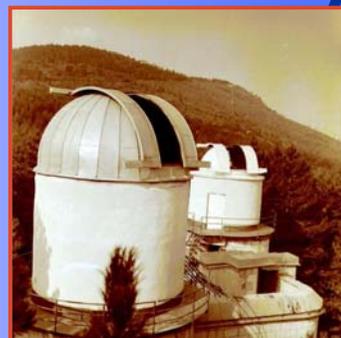
1992:

Sarajevo Observatory was completely destroyed. The University Astronomical Society, founded in 1963, ceases to exist as the war began.



1975-1982:

A new building and an 8 meter dome were built for the 62cm reflector telescope. It was mainly used for photometry of Be stars.



1970s:

The 4.5 and 3 meter dome with an astrograph and a 30cm reflector telescope.

1969-1972:

Construction of Sarajevo Observatory. Two domes were built on the reconstructed Austro-Hungarian fortress (Colina Kapa peak, mount Trebevic, 1000m).



CONTACT:

olja@strw.leidenuniv.nl
muhamed_muminovic@yahoo.co.uk

This poster was realised with the support of Leiden Observatory (Leiden University, The Netherlands)