



The International Association of Physics Students

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To,

The Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency

Unit A3

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Ref: Open letter of support for the continuation of the AstroMundus programme

It has come to the attention of the International Association of Physics Students (IAPS) that the AstroMundus programme is being discontinued. The AstroMundus programme is undoubtedly a great opportunity for students from all over the world to learn in an excellent international environment and foster the intercultural dialogue and exchanges between students from all over the world.

AstroMundus has been a 2-years ERASMUS+: Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree programme in Astronomy and Astrophysics (120 ECTS). The programme was initiated in 2009 as an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course and has been continuing within the framework of the new Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The Masters Course was offered by a consortium of four partner universities in Austria, Italy, Germany, and Serbia, with the participation of four research institutions as associated partners in Italy, Serbia, and Germany.

Physics is without a doubt an *“exciting intellectual adventure that inspires young people and expands the frontiers of our knowledge about Nature.”* (Statement by IUPAP, March 1999). Physics graduates are the pillar to the world’s economy. The fundamental discoveries made by Physics graduates and students are the building blocks to the technological advancements, that will help drive the economy forward and improve the overall quality of life of the whole human civilization. Physics is an essential part of the educational system and of an advanced society and this can only be achieved through support of physics education and research in all countries throughout the world.

AstroMundus students currently carry out their master studies in at least two and up to four of these countries (Austria, Italy, Germany, and Serbia), in a stimulating and scientifically excellent international environment with a four-semester sequence. A limited number of scholarships for the course that will be starting in September 2017 is expected to be funded through the Erasmus+: Erasmus Mundus Joint Master

Degree programme of the European Commission and the AstroMundus Consortium. The main objective of the programme has always been to provide top-ranked students with an excellent background in Astrophysics, introduce them to the world of modern astrophysical research, and foster their future career in this field. At the same time, in the spirit of the Erasmus Mundus programmes, it aims to promote cultural exchanges between non-European and European students and academics. This is unprecedented in traditional single-country university studies and a continuation of the programme would lead to a further strengthening of international connections. Thus, the programmes like AstroMundus should be continued with even higher capacities and facilities than that in present so that the deserving and capable young minds could be supported.

Owing to the great success and importance of this programme, we hereby declare this open letter of support to the AstroMundus programme.

WHO ARE WE ?

IAPS is an international, student-run educational association. It comprises students enrolled in a University or similar institution on a physics or physics related course, as well as up to twelve months after receiving a degree from a university or similar institution. We are an association of physics students and student societies from around the globe working to promote peaceful collaboration amongst them. Our members are represented by national and local committees, who meet regularly to ensure the relevance of our activities. We currently have 15 National Committees and 15 Local Committees across the globe along with over 100 individual members from different parts of the world.

The aims of the association are:

- ❖ To encourage physics students in their academic and professional work in an international context;
- ❖ To promote peaceful relations among physics students around the world;
- ❖ To introduce physics students to the international community, help them to build professional relations and foster a collaborative attitude amongst young physicists across the globe.
- ❖ To organise international conferences and events run by physics students for physics students.


We envision IAPS as an international association of many members, who share activities both large and small, and their knowledge and experience with each other on a regular basis; who form a real community through their common interests and needs, and who actively take part in forming their environment.

Through this open letter of support to the AstroMundus programme, IAPS anticipates that the programme will be continued and reach as many students worldwide as possible.

On behalf of the International Association of Physics Students,


Henrik Siboni
IAPS President




Anton Saressalo
IAPS Vice President

