



NEWSLETTER

OPTICON-
RADIONET PILOT



NEWSLETTER #6

Latest updates for the ORP Consortium

Dear ORP Consortium members,

I am very happy and honoured to write these few lines as the new ORP Coordinator.

ORP has just celebrated its very first anniversary and this is an important milestone as we have the first report to submit to the European Commission this summer. The ORP executive management team will of course be fully dedicated to this task and it will be an opportunity for us to show the first results and progress of the Pilot. At the same time, we are continuing to work very actively on the implementation of activities to bring ORP even more alive and we will announce them to you in the upcoming newsletters.

Finally, on behalf of the ORP consortium, I would like to sincerely thank Jean-Gabriel Cuby who coordinated the project during its first year. But this is only a goodbye, not a farewell, as he will now take over the direction of the CFHT and as such will always be linked to us. We wish him much success in his new functions, especially in the development of MSE.

Stéphane Basa
ORP Coordinator

Current ORP TNA Opportunities Open

ORP Transnational Access opportunities presently open:

- [Effelsberg](#)
- [European ARC Network](#)
- [European VLBI Network](#)
- [e-MERLIN](#)

Dr. Stéphane Basa appointed as new Coordinator of ORP



Dr. Stéphane Basa has been appointed by the ORP Board as the new ORP Coordinator. Dr. Basa is currently Research Director at the Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Marseille (LAM/AMU/CNRS/CNES) and CoPI of the SVOM space mission. He has already taken up his duties and can be reached at stephane.basa@lam.fr

This change of Coordinators follows [the appointment of the former coordinator Jean-Gabriel Cuby as Executive Director of the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope \(CFHT\)](#). Read more [here](#).

The European Council condemned Russia's military aggression against Ukraine

"The European Council on 24 February 2022 condemned Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The Council of the European Union adopted subsequently far-reaching restrictive measures in response to this aggression. In particular, no access to Research Infrastructures shall be provided to Russian researchers included in the sanctions list, to researchers that are affiliated to Russian legal entities referred in the sanctions list and researchers that are affiliated to Russian public entities."

ORP Optical Transnational Access - CTAC Report

The 2022B common call for the optical element of the Trans-National Access programme within the ORP opened in early February 2022 and closed at 23:59 UT on 28 February 2022. The call was published [here](#). Fifty-one (51) proposals were submitted. This was similar to the 2022A call (52 proposals). One (1) proposal was not discussed as they did not qualify on nationality grounds and had subsequently withdrawn. The remaining fifty (50) were all evaluated, discussed, and ranked.

As per usual, the demand for telescopes was not evenly spread. In contrast with previous semesters every telescope was asked for. In total, seven (7) telescopes were oversubscribed (out of the 13 telescopes participating), but none of them by more than a factor of 1.8. As per usual, the TNG, the NOT, and the AAT were oversubscribed. New oversubscribed telescopes were SALT and OHP. There were proposals in every science topic, however we were not able to grant time for at least 1 proposal in each science topic (one science topic saw no proposals granted).

The oversubscription, calculated in terms of funds, was about a factor of 2.5. This pressure factor is slightly lower than earlier semesters, but on-par with 2022A. There is a large spread between the different individual proposals in terms of the resources they are asking for which is fully expected and was within expectations.

Time could eventually be allocated for 26/50 proposals. The ranking cut-off was at a reasonable level and motivated by funding availability. The cutoff was clear in both the absolute and reweighted scores of the full CTAC panel with scores enough apart to clearly draw the line. The average score of the CTAC panel overall agreed with the average score of the external reviewers.

The CTAC wanted to make sure that the ratio of the approved and non-approved proposals for CEE and non-CEE countries was comparable without compromising the quality of the accepted proposals. This was now a lot better than previous semesters, however, a divide between the two sets of proposals remains present. The CTAC ensures detailed feedback is given to improve proposals.

Read the full CTAC report [here](#).

Upcoming Reporting (01/03/2021-31/05/2022)

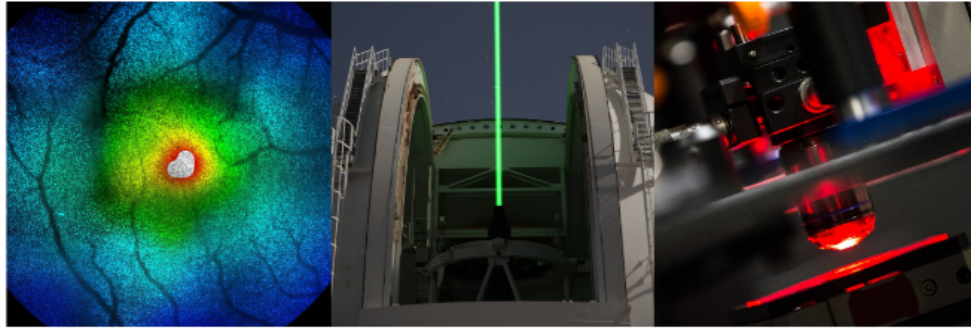
The first implementing period of ORP is coming to its end and the reporting process is settling down. The upcoming report will be submitted by 30 July 2022 and will cover the period from 1 March 2021 to 31 May 2022. Contributions from Work Package Leaders and partners will be coordinated by Gudrun Pebody (University of Cambridge) for the optical community and Izabela Rottmann (Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy) for the radio community. During the Extraordinary Board Meeting that took place on 2 May 2022, the Chair of the Board, Agnieszka Słowikowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University) and the new Coordinator, Stéphane Basa, stressed that no delays will be accepted by the European Commission. The report will be followed by an external review organised by the European Commission. For more information about the process and the partners' involvement please read [here](#).

Gaia and ORP



On 13 June 2022, Gaia will release its third full data set (DR3). The synergy between the ORP project and Gaia is far-reaching. The network of telescopes coordinated by the ORP Time Domain Astronomy team plays an important role in providing follow-up observations of Gaia alerts. Moreover, ORP's BHTOM plays a key role in collecting crucial observations, which will be used together with the next Gaia data releases. Read more [here](#).

Adaptive Optics European Summer School



Registration is open for the 2022 European Adaptive Optics Summer School, which will be held virtually and aligned to European time zones. School's topics will cover the basics of adaptive optics across applications in vision science, ophthalmology, astronomy, microscopy, free space optics and beyond. The programme includes live lectures and demonstrations, lab tours, and a live demo from the Very Large Telescope in Chile. The course will be delivered via Zoom by experts from across the different application areas of AO. The summer school will take place on 13-17 June 2022. Read more [here](#).

ALMA Science Archive School



EUROPEAN ARC
ALMA Regional Centre

The European ALMA Regional Centre Network organises an ALMA Science Archive School at the Italian ARC node headquarters Area della Ricerca Campus, Bologna, Italy, 5-7 October 2022. The school is co-funded by ORP. Deadline for registration is 15 July 2022. Read more [here](#).

ORP Activities

During the period 15 March 2022 - 15 May 2022 the following activities have been organised:

BHTOM-PL astronomical workshop | 08 April 2022 - On 8 April 2022 in the Institute of Astronomy of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Piwnice near Toru , Poland, the one-day astronomical workshop on the BHTOM tool took place. The workshop was co-organised by astronomers from the Nicolaus

JA2.2 Time-Domain Multi-Facility & Multi-Frequency access to Research Infrastructures | 13 April 2022 - On 13 April 2022, the JA2.2a Time-Domain Multi-Facility & Multi-Frequency access to Research Infrastructures met online. P. Zieliński gave an update on BHTOM activities. The usability of the BHTOM has been extended: new features were developed and added. Over the last six months the number of users was doubled, the number of targets in the database increased from 129 to 182 and the number of FITS files in the system grew to more than 10,000 - an increase of more than a factor of 10. In the area of support/training a BHTOM-PL Astronomical Workshop was organised in Poland in April. A prototype TOM module for the EVN and a backend server to handle requests were developed, and a local TOM installation was set up with the prototype EVN module installed. A dummy target has been created to do testing. B. Eldering presented the current status and showed how the process of “scheduling observations” could work with the TOM module.

The group worked on a plan to draw a workplan for the next 10 months, to develop dedicated AEON protocols for new optical and radio facilities to enable integration to the automated scheduling in the TDA-CCS. In February 2023 ,ORP has to have at least a few research infrastructures connected to the AEON protocol. The already remotely operated REM infrared telescope is the best candidate to start work on connecting to the AEON network. As the current AEON protocol likely is not suited for describing or executing radio observations, discussions with Las Cumbres Observatory/the AEON network will be initiated with the goal of investigating what possibilities exist to extend the protocol and network with radio support.

JA1.5 Preserving the skies | 28 April 2022 - The JA1.5 Preserving the skies group met online on 28 April 2022. The aim of the meeting was to update the group on news and recent activities. A special focus of the meeting was on the recently opened and inaugurated IAU Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky from Satellite Constellation Interference (CPS), in particular the CPS Policy Hub, the CPS Community Engagement Hub and the question in which way JA1.5 could contribute to the CPS. The group decided that JA1.5 will develop a position paper for lobbying and a generic presentation on Dark and Quiet Sky (D&QS) to be used in astronomical schools. The group also created [a poll to gather information about activities and organisations engaging in or relevant for the protection of the dark and quiet skies](#), which will contribute to the definition of intervention strategies of the ORP in the D&QS context. Any ORP member is kindly requested to complete the poll. Please also distribute it among your international colleagues.



Last but not least, c Further interventions to create awareness for the importance of the D&QS are under discussion.

Image: Logo of the newly funded *IAU Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky from Satellite Constellation Interference*. ORP will contribute to the CPS.

Conference The Sharpest Eyes on the Sky | 25-29 April 2022 The 'Sharpest Eyes on the Sky' conference took place on 25-29 April 2022, with more than 40 participants attending in person at the University of Exeter (UK), and more than twice that number joining online. It included the 2022 VLTI Community Day and the CHARA Annual Science Meeting, marking the first time that these events were joint, with the goal of bringing the EU- and US-focused interferometry communities together and to encourage cross-facility collaboration. The 85 presentations included talks on protoplanetary discs, stellar astrophysics, exoplanets, and AGNs, as well as a public talk on the exploration of the Galactic Centre delivered by Dr Frank Eisenhauer. Another focus was to provide interferometry newcomers with an

overview about available tools, instruments, and the support structure provided through the VLTI Expertise Centre nodes. The meeting received financial support from the University of Exeter, the European Research Council, and the ORP network activity. Presentations and recordings will be made available through the [conference website](#). The SOC and LOC dedicated the meeting to the scientific life of Dr. Matt Willson, a member of our community who passed away prematurely and will be deeply missed by colleagues and friends. Read more [here](#).

Management - Extraordinary Board Meeting | 2 May 2022 - An Extraordinary Board Meeting took place on 2 May 2022. It gave the opportunity to the Board members to meet with the new ORP Coordinator, Stéphane Basa, who shared his vision and priorities for the project. The Board members also discussed and agreed on the reporting planning and approval process after hearing the expectations and next steps from the European Commission point of view. The final part of the meeting focused on the next key actions of JA1 "Toward a strategy" and of the Executive Management Team.

JA4 Training | 4 May 2022 - A brief meeting of the JA4 Radio Training group took place on 4 May 2022. The aim of the meeting was to inform the group on the 1st reporting period of the ORP project and to give an update on the pending action items from the meeting before: A guide for organisers has been put on the redmine and the group was informed that no reimbursement of costs or participation in activities paid from the H2020 Grant are allowed for researchers/students with affiliations in a country listed in the EU Sanctions Map, where also Russia is listed; the possibility of including sessions on Dark & Quiet Skies has been communicated to H. Korhonen, overall leader of JA4 and responsible the optical part of Training. The option was very positively received. A discussion on a potential platform for school material will happen at the next group meeting.

JA2.5 Preserving the sky for future generations | 9 May 2022 - The Preserving the skies group met online on 9 May 2022. JA2.5 aims at supporting hard- and software development to mitigate the effects of interference of unwanted radio- or optical emission with astronomical observations (electromagnetic interference, EMI). The first thing to do was getting an overview of what is already available and who would be willing to collaborate on corresponding projects. At the JA 2.5 meeting in January 2022, we therefore decided to create [a questionnaire about the capabilities of ORP stations to measure EMI](#), which can still be completed by any interested observatory. 19 institutions have replied so far. Also based on the results of the survey, JA2.5 is discussing further possible actions, among which are contributions to initiatives to streamline RFI detection by the Committee on Radio Astronomy Frequencies (CRAF) and the development of strategies on how to localise LEO satellites by tracking their radio carrier signals. As a next step JA2.5 will acquire information about existing software tools to identify and mitigate EMI in observations.

ORP Outputs

D2.1- Inventory of access modalities provided by the research infrastructures (available [here](#))

D3.2- Report on user support across facilities in Europe (available [here](#))

Upcoming ORP-related Activities & Events

- [Adaptive Optics European Summer School](#) | 13-17 June 2022, Online
- [European Astronomical Society \(EAS\) Annual Meeting](#) | 27 June–1 July 2022, Valencia, Spain

- [15th European VLBI Network \(EVN\) Symposium and EVN Users Meeting](#) | 11-15 July 2022, Cork, Ireland
- [GA2022: XXXI IAU General Assembly](#) | 2-11 August 2022, Busan, Republic of Korea
- [European Radio Interferometry School \(ERIS 2022\)](#) | 19-23 September 2022, Dwingeloo, Netherlands



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