

Welcome letters from the Local Organizing Committee

Victor Sadovnichy (Rector of M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University)



Victor Sadovnichy (Photo: MSU)

The milestone 40th Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) will be held in Moscow in August 2014. It is the major international meeting called to stimulate progress in scientific research in the fields of astrophysics, astronomy, space physics, space biology, and medicine. The Assembly will contribute greatly to the development of international scientific cooperation and to the improvement of educational standards in the field of space sciences.

COSPAR 2014 is organized by M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University and the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow University is the oldest Russian university. It was founded in 1755 owing to the great contribution of an outstanding Russian scientist-polymath, the first Russian academician Mikhail Lomonosov. The preamble of the decree founding the University stated that it was established "for general education of commoners". This democratic approach to university faculty and student admission remains a specific feature of MSU and one of the main reasons why progressive scientific and social ideas have always circulated among students and professors.

Nowadays Moscow University is one of the most renowned scientific and educational establishments in the world and one of the basic institutions to provide for Russian leadership in scientific research and technology. Within the framework of the Moscow University Development Program ten priority guidelines are emphasized. Among these

priorities, matter and space studies and space technologies application are major objectives.

Space research started in Moscow University with the launch of the second artificial Earth satellite in 1957. Academician Sergey Vernov and his research team placed the first scientific instrument for cosmic ray studies onboard this spacecraft.

Scientific equipment developed by the researchers of Moscow University and placed onboard various satellites was used to study radiation processes in the near-Earth and interplanetary space, cosmic rays and electromagnetic phenomena in the Earth's upper atmosphere, including transient luminescence. Now scientists of Moscow University carry out space research using university spacecraft.

Moscow University scientists have developed equipment for radiation monitoring of near-Earth space for the International Space Station, several GLONASS navigation and hydrometeorological satellites. Their involvement in these projects grows regularly.

Moscow University also is involved in space material science. This domain includes studies of the behaviour of various materials in the space environment, methods of protecting them against space hazards, and development of new materials for space engineering, including nano materials.

The scientists of Moscow University are involved in astrobiology and space biotechnology, remote sensing of the Earth, satellite tomography of the atmosphere and near-Earth space, and high-energy radiation of the Universe.

Moscow University also continues to expand its activity in the fields of informational and software development for the enhancement of the performance of complicated space systems, for studies of prolonged space flight safety, and for development of a system for environment radiation monitoring.

Plans also exist for a 2.5-meter automated optical telescope to be put into operation in the Caucasian mountain observatory of P.K. Sternberg Astronomical Institute of M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University. In addition, an Astronomical Center will be established on the base of the Institute and at Kislovodsk mountain astronomical station of the Main (Pulkovo) Astronomical Observatory of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The astronomers of Moscow University are also taking part in the development of the new space telescope Lira-B to be installed onboard ISS in 2015. This instrument will collect data for a new catalogue which is expected to include about 300 million stars and other objects. The Lira-B

telescope will become the first Russian space-born instrument in the visible range and the first optical telescope onboard ISS.

Moscow University considers space sciences as a top priority focus of its activity. We invite all scientists and specialists in the field of space sciences to visit Moscow University in August 2014 and to take part in the 40th COSPAR Scientific Assembly!