

Dear friends of Astronomy,

The Rozhen National Astronomical Observatory (NAO) is the greatest astronomical complex in South-East Europe. There are 3 telescopes made by Carl-Zeiss, Jena: a 2-m reflector, one of the largest in Europe; a 60-cm Cassegrain; a 50/70-cm Schmidt telescope, and a 15-cm Solar coronagraph of Lyot type, which was designed and assembled in Bulgaria.

Rozhen NAO places Bulgaria among the nations with their own facilities for space exploration. NAO telescopes are used for observations of a wide variety of astronomical objects: Solar system bodies (comets, planets, asteroids), stars, nebulae, and galaxies. Astronomers, students, PhD students, and their lecturers use the entire infrastructure of the Observatory for research and training.

The results of this research are published in prestigious international specialized journals. Regarding scientific indicators, Bulgaria ranks 43rd in the *Physics and Astronomy* area and 40th in the *Astronomy and Astrophysics* category among about 200 countries in the period 1996-2013 (according to *Scimago Journal & Country Rank* www.scimagojr.com/index.php). This is due to the high professionalism of the Bulgarian astronomers and to the availability of good astronomical infrastructure, such as Rozhen NAO!

To function normally, the telescopes of Rozhen NAO need permanent technical care, since the maintenance of the telescopes and their equipment is an integral part of the scientific process and, therefore, requires adequate and regular funding.

Unfortunately, the scientific funding in Bulgaria in general and for astronomy in particular is far from the expected one for an EU member state; the average rate of GDP allocated for science in Europe is 2%, whereas the corresponding value in Bulgaria is as low as 0.5%. As a result of the insufficient funds for normal operation, the telescopes of Rozhen NAO have been under the risk of shutting down in the past few years.

That is why, pressed again by the adverse financial conditions, we, the astronomers of the Institute of Astronomy and National Astronomical Observatory – Rozhen, as well as of the other astronomical centres in Bulgaria, are forced to address all who are concerned that NAO proceeds to fulfill its mission as a research and education centre. Yes, it concerns the equipments of the NATIONAL Astronomical Observatory and NOT the scientists themselves.

All donations (regardless of their size) that would be credited to Rozhen NAO will be used SOLELY for the Observatory. These are resources necessary for the operation of the telescopes and for the purchase of imminent supplies for the scientific equipment. Each year an individual report on the funds received and their detailed expenditure will be worked out. The report will remain public and everyone will be able to access it on the website of NAO – www.nao-rozhen.org

Donations to the Rozhen National Astronomical Observatory are welcome to the following

Bank account:

Societe Generale Expressbank
56 Bulgaria Blvd., 4700 Smolyan, Bulgaria
IBAN: BG94TTBB94003120017759; BIC: TTBBBG22
Institute of Astronomy, NAO-Rozhen

Sincerely Yours: _____



(Prof. Dr. Tanyu Bonev,
Director of IA and NAO)