SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Interactive Presentations (IP)

Author: Mrs. Tatiana Tischenko
State Space Corporation ROSCOSMOS, Russian Federation

INTERNATIONAL COSMONAUTIC DAY'S ADVANTAGES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN SPACE

Abstract

The world's first artificial satellite launched by the USSR in 1957 was a pioneering human achievement. Three years later, legendary space dogs Belka and Strelka became the first animals to enter space and return alive and then the first human space flight carried out by Yuri Gagarin in 1961 became a milestone in human history. Those achievements paved the way for the soviet leadership in space. The country was the first to send a female astronaut to space and to organize space walks. It was also the pioneer in launching automatic spacecraft to the Moon, Mars and Venus. Those great achievements promoted a wide public interest in space-related activities. The penetration of the space theme into all social spheres, including culture, was the main consequence of that social phenomenon. One can easily notice the profound influence of the space theme on the soviet literature, arts, architecture and cinematography of the middle of the XX century. However, the public interest in space-related activities has been steadily dropping since the USSR collapse. As a consequence, collective memory of space victories has been slowly erasing. Nowadays there are few children dreaming of becoming astronauts and not so many of them are eager to devote their lives to the outer space exploration when they grow up. It would be worth mentioning, that in order to revive public interest we do need some revolutionary events equated to the first human space flight, for example a man-crafted expedition to the Mars. However, in order to reach such an ambitious target the country needs people who would be passionate about space. It is obvious, that the country should engage all the possible social resources in order to popularize space-related activities. Undoubtedly, single one-off events such as thematic exhibitions, conferences, new film and book releases might reinvigorate public interest. However, that effect is temporary. In order to get long-term consequences we need a series of space events that would be targeted at different social and demographic groups. International Space Day might be a perfect solution. This calendar year is marked by the 55th anniversary of the first human flight in outer space, and a series of activities supported by "Roscosmos" will be undertaken. Interview researching and social media investigations will reveal the effect of the activities on the public opinion and the amount of the graduates who will choose to get "space-related" university degrees in 2016.