

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

Author: Ms. Mirta Medanić
Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC), Croatia, mirta.medanic@spacegeneration.org

COMMUNICATING SPACE IN A NON-SPACE FARING NATION: A CASE STUDY ON THE
REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Abstract

This interactive presentation aims to share practical experience in communicating space in the Republic of Croatia between June 2017 to February 2021 with the international community. This campaign was coordinated by a Croatian young space professionals' community supported by the Space Generation Advisory Council. The two targeted audiences were governmental institutions and young professionals.

In this presentation, a non-space faring nation is a country without independent access to space that does not own satellites or is able to launch humans into space, such as the Republic of Croatia. In November 2017, the Government of the Republic of Croatia signed a Cooperation Agreement with the European Space Agency. However, a proposal for the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030, made available for public comments from November to December 2020, did not include space science and technology among its strategic goals. Therefore, the author of this presentation, a former Space Generation Advisory Council's National Point of Contact in Croatia, prepared and submitted a public statement, proposing space science and technology to be included among the country's strategic goals until 2030. This was co-signed by 23 Croatian professionals and university students in STEM fields.

The young professionals mentioned are university students and university graduates between 18 and 35 years of age. Three iterations of space outreach were performed to increase interest and motivate youth to pursue space studies and careers in space. The three campaigns showed different results. The mass-media campaign in 2017 and 2018 raised awareness about space amongst the general public but resulted in less interest from young professionals. The public events held in 2018 and 2019 gathered motivated individuals but had a limited reach. The direct contact made with young professionals with potential to become future space leaders proved to be the campaign with highest impact potential. These individuals easily became part of the young space professionals' cohort and ambassadors of outer space in their communities.

Based on the above findings, this interactive presentation will share the lessons learnt from the Croatian space outreach campaign experience and discuss how they can be adapted and implemented for other non-space faring nations to make space accessible to youth and for all.