

For the public

Although our main focus may be to popularize the observational approach in Astronomy, it is **crucial to host outreach activities for the general public in order to raise awareness** (Voutyras et al. 2013).

Since the foundation of the HAAA in 2003, we have organized and contributed to numerous such events. An integral part of our approach is to **accompany general talks with observations through our telescopes** (targeting either the Sun or various interesting objects such as the planets). We think that this process helps to increase the public's interest and trigger potential observers.

One characteristic example of our work is a series of outreach activities dedicated to the "International Year of Astronomy 2009" project by the International Astronomical Union. **Our contribution has been actually the main representation for Greece**, as reported in the final report of the project (*Russo and Lindberg Christensen* 2010). In many cases the outreach activities coincide with [courses and workshops](#).

The HAAA has also **organized twice the Panhellenic Meeting of Amateur Astronomers**, which is the second most important event for amateurs in Greece after the Panhellenic Conference. These meetings take place in mountains so that the participants have the opportunity to observe with other fellows under pristine night sky, as well as to get involved in other actions such as talks, hands-on workshops, and other social activities. Along with the [Trekking Club of Piraeus](#) we organized the 3rd Panhellenic Meeting of Amateur Astronomers in 2009 at their

mountain refuge, while in 2014 in collaboration with Hackerspace.gr and the [Hellenic Mountain Club of Kiriaki](#) we hosted the 8th meeting, which has attracted more participants than any similar astronomical event in Europe (~1000 people).

Along with Hackerspace.gr the HAAA has been a co-organizer of the [NASA International Space Apps Challenge 2013](#) in Greece, a major event focusing on space problems that attracts thousands of participants around the globe. One of the teams ([Popey on Mars](#)) actually managed to win the first prize (Best Mission Concept).

References

- Russo P. and Lindberg Christensen L. 2010, “International year of Astronomy 2009 – Final Report”, International Astronomical Union, p. 640, ISBN: 978-3-923524-65-5
https://www.astronomy2009.org/resources/documents/detail/iya2009_final_report/
- Voutyras O., Maravelias G., Bellias I., Kardasis E. 2013 : □ “10 Years of Developing Outreach Techniques and Best Practice by the Hellenic Amateur Astronomy Association”, European Planetary Science Congress 2013, London, UK, 8-13 Sept., id.EPSC2013-798, [2013EPSC...8..798V](#)