Sofia Sky-Archive Data Center: Photographic Plate Collections for Developing Countries

Milcho. K. Tsvetkov et al., Institute of Astronomy, 72 Tsarigradsko Blvd, BG 1784 Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Sofia Sky Archive Data Center (SSADC) was developed on the base of the Wide-Field Plate Database (WFPDB - http://www.skyarchive.org) as a project of the Working Group on Sky Surveys, Commission 9 of the IAU, and is dedicated to saving plate collections. The center manages 12 PCs connected in a local computer network and a PDS 1010 microdensitometer donated by the European Southern Observatory. The main field of operation is the WFPDB development, plate digitization and image processing for different astronomical tasks in South- and East Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, etc.), and as a regional coordinator especially for the neighbour countries - Romania, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Greece and Turkey. The main problem in the way of the WFPDB development is the creation of the computer-readable plate catalogues of the original logbooks because the speed of converting the logbooks in a computer-readable form is very low. The message is: we have to find the way to accelerate this important part of the project where the role of the developing countries in this direction should be very important. (Co-authors are: K. Tsvetkova, K. Stavrev V. Popov, H. Lukarski, A. Borisova, M-E. S. Michailov and G. Borisov of Sofia, Bulgaria, and S. Christov, Bulgarian South-West University).

CCD Observations with Small Telescopes of Moving Bodies

Oleg P.Bykov, Pulkovo Astronomical Observatory, St Petersburg, Russia.

Astronomy for developing countries must be simple, cheap and attractive. Advanced amateurs with small astronomical CCD instruments could be its base in these regions. Together with the astronomical community and professional astronomers of other countries, amateurs can solve a lot of practical tasks connected with the CCD observations of moving celestial bodies.

The author has analyzed the CCD observations of numbered and unnumbered Minor Planets made in 1998-1999 by amateur astronomers around the world and published in the MPC. The accuracy of their observations is sufficiently high and their contribution to the MPC database is considerable. Amateurs are discovering unknown celestial objects and have a right to name the discovered minor planets.

Pulkovo observatory could take part in Astronomical education and Software creation for the professional astronomers and amateurs from Developing Countries.

Astronomy in Uzbekistan

Sabit P. Ilyasov et al., Ulugh Beg Astronomical Institute, Uzbek Academy of Sciences, Astronomicheskaya Ul 33, Tashkent 700052, Uzbekistan

Ulugh Beg Astronomical Institute (UBAI) of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences is one of the oldest scientific institutions not only in Uzbekistan, but in the whole of Central Asia as well. There are five departments in the institute. The main directions of research are solar physics, young non-stationary and close

binary stars in star formation regions, satellite geodynamics, non-linear and non-stationary evolution of galaxies. Helioseismology studies carried out in the frame of the IRIS (International Research on the Interior of the Sun) and TON (Taiwan Oscillation Network) projects. Astrophysical programmes such as a search for periodicity in star-formation regions, study of close binary stars in the same regions, as well as in open clusters, CCD photometry of extra-galactic objects as gravitation lenses have been made at the Maidanak Observatory, which is located in the south-east of Uzbekistan. Monitoring of the seeing at Mt. Maidanak from 1996 to 1999, using ESO Differential Image Motion Monitor, showed that its atmospheric conditions are comparable with the best international observatories. The present status of the main fields of research and prospects are discussed. (Co-author is Shurat A. Ehgamberdiev, Uzbekistan.)

Astronomy in the Republic of Macedonia

Mijat Mijatovic, Institue of Physics, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Astronomy in the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia has a century-long history. This history is presented in the essay, begining with M. Trpković's suggestions to reform the orthodox calendar in 1900s, through the foundation of the first faculty of Macedonian language in Skopje in 1946, until today's situation in astronomy.

In second half of the twentieth century, the development of astronomy in the Republic of Macedonia is divided in two different periods: before and after the big earthquake in Skopje in 1963. The first period is characterized by hope and enthusiasm, and a little observatory was started to be built, but it was destroyed in the earthquake. The last ten years a new upsurge is seen in Astronomy in the Republic of Macedonia, which is founded on Balkan and international collaboration.

Astronomy without Astronomers?

Magdalena Stavinschi, Astronomical Institute, Romanian Academy of Sciences, Cutitul de Argint 5, RO 75212 Bucharest, Romania

Astronomy in Romania has an old tradition. After half a century of privations and isolation from the rest of the world, we believed that the changes undergone by our country in 1989 (and by the neighbour countries, as well) will be benefit for the Romanian astronomy, too. Indeed, it was, but for a very short period. The young people left the country, one by one, and others cannot accept the low salary offered by a research institute. The economy doesn't allow us to enrich the astronomical endowment. Of course, we cannot close the observatories. We have to find other ways to save the astronomy in this part of Europe, especially in the epoch of the space astronomy.