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Europlanet Annual Report

2024

10 September 2024

Europlanet AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif - 0800.634.634) is hosted by the Department of Planetary Atmospheres of the Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy (BIRA-IASB), Avenue Circulaire 3, B-1180 Brussels, Belgium.

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1. Executive Summary

Europlanet was established through a series of projects funded by the European Commission between 2005 and 2024, to create infrastructure and networks to support the planetary science community in Europe and around the world. Over the past 20 years, Europlanet has grown into a substantial resource for the community, coordinating the world's largest collection of planetary simulation and analysis facilities, embedding planetary data in the Virtual Observatory and building a global network of institutions and facilities that, through collaboration and exchange of expertise, deliver measurable scientific, technological, educational and socioeconomic impacts. In 2018, the Europlanet Society was launched to support the sustainability of networking programmes through a model of individual subscriptions, as well as the income from the annual Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC).

The past 18 months have been a transformational and challenging time for Europlanet. The establishment of the Europlanet Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif (AISBL), hosted by the Planetary Atmospheres Group of the Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy (BIRA-IASB), has provided a secure legal structure for the sustainability of Europlanet's activities. Eight new or re-elected members of the Executive Board (the governing body of both Europlanet AISBL and the Europlanet Society) were announced on 10 November 2023 and started their four-year term. The structures of the Europlanet Society, including its Regional Hubs and Europlanet Early Career (EPEC) Network, have also been undergoing transition, with many new Chairs and volunteers taking on roles. A Europlanet Sustainability Working Group was established after the first Europlanet Research Infrastructure Meeting (ERIM 2023) in Bratislava, Slovakia to oversee sustainability planning for the Society.

The most recent EC-funded project, the €10 million Europlanet 2024 Research Infrastructure (RI), came to an end on 31 July 2024. In September 2024, the Europlanet membership has been asked to approve a new category of organisational membership to ensure the continuity of the most impactful services developed and optimised during twenty years of EC-funded Europlanet projects. The introduction of the proposed model for organisational subscriptions, alongside existing revenue sources, will enable Europlanet to maintain its core mobility and access programmes, community services, training and career development programmes. These programmes have benefited tens of thousands of researchers, at all career stages and across every continent, over the past 20 years and have led to avenues of research that, as the evaluation shows, would not have come about without Europlanet's support.

2. Aims

The purpose of Europlanet is to promote planetary sciences, planetary exploration and any other related field for the benefit of the community, by encouraging the creation of new knowledge, by promoting education, by stimulating innovation and by enhancing accessibility and transparency.

The aims of Europlanet are:

- to allow the community of Europlanet stakeholders to speak with one voice to defend and represent its interests;
- to promote coherence between policy and the research priorities of the European Union and the activities coordinated by the association.

3. Objectives

Europlanet works to achieve its goal by pursuing a series of activities, including:

- Supporting the planetary science community through the activities of the Europlanet Society and its structures, including the Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC);
- Establishing strategic collaborations to support planetary science;
- Developing and maintaining infrastructures to support planetary sciences.

The Europlanet Association International Sans But Lucratif (AISBL) provides the legal structure for the sustainability of Europlanet activities, including the Europlanet Society, and gives Europlanet a framework in which to:

- Provide clear ownership of the Europlanet brand and assets, including EPSC;
- Directly participate as a beneficiary in EU-funded projects;
- Join organisations as an independent entity;
- Sign contracts with service providers;
- Sign memoranda of understanding with other organisations;
- Act as a stakeholder in ventures.

4. Organisational Framework

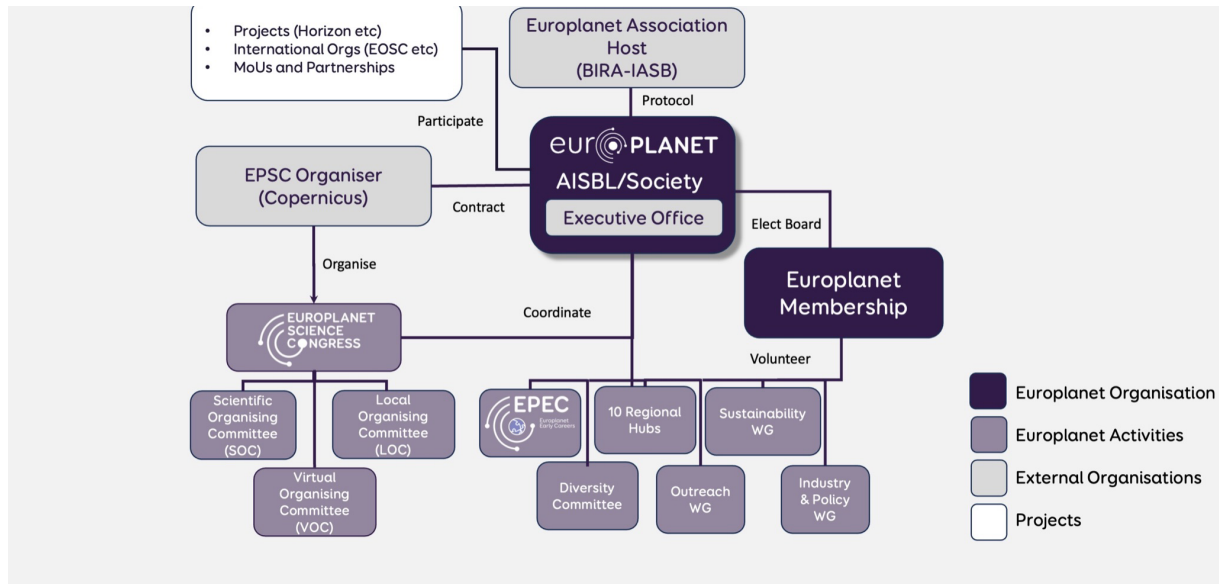


Figure 1: Organisational Structure of Europlanet

4.1. Europlanet Governance

The membership of the Europlanet Society elects the Europlanet Executive Board. As the governing body of Europlanet, the Executive Board members are responsible for directing and controlling the affairs and property of the Europlanet Society, including EPSC.

The Executive Board consists of the five officers (the President, two Vice-Presidents, the Secretary and the Treasurer) and six other members who are elected for four years. In 2023, the Secretary role was elected as a job-share.

The membership of the current Executive Board is as follows:

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|
| President | Ann Carine Vandaele | Belgium | (2023-2027) |
| Vice-President | Angelo Pio Rossi | Germany | (2019-2024) |
| Vice-President | Stavro Ivanovski | Italy | (2023-2027) |
| Treasurer | Didier Moreau | Belgium | (2021-2025) |
| Secretary | Federica Duras | Italy | (2023-2027) |
| Secretary | Edita Stonkute | Lithuania | (2023-2027) |
| Board Member | Julia de Leon | Spain | (2023-2027) |
| Board Member | Leigh Fletcher | UK | (2023-2027) |
| Board Member | Livia Giacomini | Italy | (2023-2027) |
| Board Member | Luca Montabone | France | (2023-2027) |
| Board Member | Melissa Mirino | Italy | (2023-2027) |

In 2024, Angelo Pio Rossi completed his term and elections were opened for one Vice-President officer position on the Europlanet Executive Board. The call for nominations was opened for potential candidates from the Europlanet Society Membership and closed on 09 August 2024. Members were invited to vote in the ballot from 28 August to 09 September 2024. The results of the election for the new Vice-President will be announced during the General Assembly at the hybrid Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC) 2024 in Berlin/online on Tuesday, 10 September 2024.

The five Officers of the Europlanet Executive Board have the additional legal responsibility of acting as the governing body of the AISBL:

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| President | Ann Carine Vandaele | (elected 2023) |
| Vice-President | Angelo Pio Rossi/Anita Heward | (elected 2019/2024) |
| Vice-President | Stavro Ivanovski | (elected 2023) |
| Treasurer | Didier Moreau | (elected 2021) |
| Secretary | Edita Stonkute | (elected 2023) |

The Europlanet AISBL is hosted by the Department of Planetary Atmospheres of the Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy (BIRA-IASB). The relationship and arrangements to facilitate and optimise the hosting and operation of the Europlanet Association by BIRA-IASB are set out in an administrative protocol.

The next elections for Executive Board positions will be:

- Treasurer (2025)
- President-Elect (2026)

4.2. Europlanet Executive Office

The Europlanet Executive Board is supported by the Europlanet Executive Office, which conducts the day-to-day activities, overall administration and financial management of the Europlanet Society and EPSC. The Executive Office carries out its responsibilities under the overall direction of the Executive Board.

The Executive Office was hosted by the European Science Foundation (ESF) from November 2018 until July 2024. From 1 August 2024, an interim Executive Office is being led by the University of Kent, UK, with technical support provided by Arkadia, Italy, and financial management led by the Treasurer at IASB-BIRA. Costs for the Executive Office Coordinator are being supported by the University of Kent, from 1

August 2024 until 31 October 2025, at no cost to Europlanet. A call to host the Executive Office on a sustainable basis will be issued in 2025.

5. Membership

Members of Europlanet must:

- Pay the annual membership fee;
- Abide by the Constitution, Code of Conduct and decisions made by the governing bodies of the organisation;
- Notify the Secretary of any changes concerning their status that affect the conditions of their admission.

5.1. Full Members

The Officers elected by the General Assembly serve as Full Members and are responsible for supervising and providing a point of connection to the activities and structures of Europlanet.

The Founders of the Europlanet AISBL and Full Members to November 2023 were:

- Nigel Mason
- Ann Carine Vandaele
- Angelo Pio Rossi
- Anita Heward
- Didier Moreau

The current Full Members to September 2024 are:

- Ann Carine Vandaele
- Angelo Pio Rossi
- Stavro Ivanovski
- Edita Stonkute
- Didier Moreau

5.2. Associate Members

Associate Members of the Europlanet AISBL, joining as Members of the Europlanet Society, include the following categories:

- Individual Members
- Student Members
- Organisational Members

As of 20 August 2024, the Europlanet Society has 492 individual members and 9 individual membership packages paid by institutions.

A new organisational membership category will be introduced in September 2024 (see [Section 8, Future Planning](#))

6. Activities

6.1. Activities of Europlanet AISBL

Since its creation, Europlanet AISBL has established a registered office at BIRA-IASB, a webpage and a bank account, in line with its obligations as set out in the statutes of the AISBL. Moreover, following the Belgian Royal Decree (Arrêté royal portant exécution de l'article 423 de la loi-programme (I) du 24 décembre 2002), Europlanet AISBL has signed an agreement to be officially affiliated (agrégation in French) to BIRA-IASB.

6.2. Activities of the Europlanet Society

6.2.1. Activities of the Executive Office

The Europlanet Executive Office, which was hosted by the European Science Foundation (ESF) from November 2018 until 31 July 2024, is currently in transition. From 1 August 2024, an interim Executive Office is being led by the University of Kent, UK, with technical support provided by Arkadia, Italy, and financial management led by the Treasurer at IASB-BIRA. A call to host the Executive Office on a sustainable basis will be issued in 2025.

The Executive Office has conducted day-to-day activities relating to the management and administration of Europlanet an EPSC, including:

Society Management:

- Organisation and minutes for the monthly Europlanet Executive Board meetings
- Organisation of the nomination and election process for the Executive Board
- Organisation of the Europlanet Society General Assembly meetings (at EPSC in September)
- Coordination of funding programmes to support the Europlanet Society membership (EPSC bursaries)

- Support for the Europlanet AISBL, including meetings with BIRA-IASB and the University of Kent about the transfer of the Executive Office.

EPSC Management:

- Organisation and minutes for the regular EPSC meetings
- Supporting the organisation of the EPSC 2024 meeting with Copernicus and setting up EPSC 2024 committees

Administration:

- Membership and general queries
- Administrative and logistic support for the Europlanet Society committees & working groups (10 regional hubs, EPEC, diversity, industry, policy and outreach) and the 4 EPSC committees (EPSC executive committee, SOC, LOC and VOC).
- Administration of the Europlanet SharePoint document library
- Administration of the Europlanet committee email groups
- Follow-up on funded Europlanet committee projects
- Follow-up on EPSC prizes

Finances:

- Invoice control, processing, and payments
- Managing annual budgets for the Europlanet committees and funded activities, following up on expenses and processing EPSC bursaries
- Collection of membership fees
- Trimestral Financial reporting to the Executive Board Treasurer

Communication:

- Monthly newsletter composition and distribution
- Composition and distribution of individual mailers
- Supplying content for social media and website posts

Technical support:

- [Website](#) (main website and membership website) maintenance
- Maintenance and moderation of the [Europlanet Discord server](#)
- [Membership website](#): maintenance and moderation of the contact management system (CiviCRM) and associated communication and membership tools.

6.2.2. Activities of the Europlanet Committees

The activities of Europlanet are organised through a series of Committees and Working Groups. These include:

- 10 Regional Hub Committees
- EPSC Executive Committee, Scientific Organising Committee (SOC), Local Organising Committee (LOC) and Virtual Organising Committee (VOC)
- Europlanet Diversity Committee
- EPEC Committee and Working Groups
- Industry, Policy, Sustainability and Outreach Working Groups

Progress has been made over the past year to regenerate some committees and working groups that had lost membership during the pandemic. However, this remains an ongoing process, with several positions still vacant in some bodies.

All members of the Europlanet Society have the right to nominate themselves or be nominated to take on a vacant role in a committee or working group. The relevant committee or working group can appoint or elect the candidate accordingly. The appointment of Chairs of committees and working groups is formally approved by the Executive Board on the recommendation of the relevant committee or working group.

The chairs of the committees:

Benelux Hub - Séverine Robert (BIRA-IASB)
Central Europe - Andrea Opitz (Wigner RCP)
France - Susan Conway (CNRS LPG Nantes)
Germany - Carlos Brandt
Ireland and UK - Steve Miller (UCL)
Italy Hub - Stavro Ivanovski (INAF)
Northern Hub - Harri Haukka (FMI)
Southeast Europe Hub - Nick Sergis (Hellenic Space Center)
Spain-Portugal Hub - Alejandro Cardesín Moinelo (ESA-ESAC)
Switzerland Hub - Sascha Quanz (ETH Zurich)

The chairs of working groups:

Diversity Committee - Arianna Piccialli (BIRA-IASB)
EPEC - Melissa Mirino (INAF) and Jessie Horgan (Open University)

Industry and Policy - Luca Montabone (Paneureka), Didier Moreau (BIRA-IASB)
Outreach - Federica Duras (INAF)
Sustainability - Anita Heward (Uni of Kent)

6.2.3. Summary of the Europlanet Society Activities

6.2.3.1. Benelux Hub

The Benelux Hub has been actively engaged in various organisational and community-building efforts throughout the reporting period. Key milestones include:

Committee Renewal: In March 2024, the Hub successfully held elections, welcoming a new committee officially taking office on 21 March. This transition marks an important step toward reinforcing the Hub's leadership and setting the course for future activities.

Monthly Committee Meetings: To maintain effective communication and coordination, the Hub Committee has been meeting monthly on Discord, providing a consistent platform for planning and strategy discussions.

Member Engagement Initiatives: An effort was made to connect with Hub members via Discord on 28 May 2024. While the initiative did not achieve the desired outcome, the experience will inform future engagement strategies.

[New Benelux Hub Website:](#) The launch of a new dedicated website marks a significant digital milestone, offering members and stakeholders an accessible platform for updates and resources.

Funding Initiatives: Two funding requests have been approved, totalling €1,000:

- €250 for Soapbox Science, led by A. Piccialli, scheduled for June 2024.
- €750 for Switch to Space #4, led by A.C. Vandaele, planned for October 2024.

Industry and Policy Committee Revitalisation: the Benelux Hub has taken proactive steps to revitalise the Industry/Policy Committee. This work is ongoing, with plans to optimise the committee's efficiency in the coming months.

EPSC Preparation: The Hub is also preparing for participation in the upcoming Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC), furthering its commitment to science and industry collaboration.

6.2.3.2. Central Europe Hub

The Central Europe Hub (CEH) has made significant strides in organising workshops and securing project funding throughout the reporting period.

Tatra Workshop: The Europlanet Central Europe Hub's Tatra workshop, held on 19-20 June 2024 at the Astronomical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Tatranská Lomnica, Slovakia, brought together experts and early careers in planetary and space science from across Europe for two days of presentations and discussions. Organised by Andrea Opitz, Mate Tomasik and Zuzana Kanuchova, the workshop held a round table on the first day to introduce participants to, and engage them in, the wider Central European planetary science community. This was followed by scientific presentations on the second day, covering topics from planetary research at Konkoly Observatory to the role of tardigrades in space protection.

Funding Success: In 2023, two CEH projects received support through the Europlanet Society Committee Funding Scheme, further advancing scientific initiatives within the region.

ERIM Conference Engagement: The Hub also organised a workshop and social event during the [ERIM conference](#) held in Bratislava, Slovakia, from June 19-23, 2023, providing opportunities for networking and knowledge-sharing among participants.

6.2.3.3. France Hub

The France Hub has been actively engaged in organisational and scientific activities throughout the reporting period, with a focus on the French Planetary Science Congress.

Executive Meetings: The Hub held two executive meetings on 23 January and 16 April to plan and coordinate activities for the year.

French Planetary Science Congress: The Hub organised the [PlanetoExoBio conference](#) in Nantes (1-5 July 2024). This event brought together planetary scientists from across the region.

Support for Early Careers: As part of this conference, the Hub organised workshops aimed at early-career researchers. Six industry speakers and six travel grants have been awarded using Europlanet grant funding to support participation.

Committee Restructuring: Efforts are underway to replace inactive members of the Hub committee, ensuring continued leadership and engagement.

6.2.3.4. Ireland & UK Hub

The Ireland & UK Hub has been active in promoting planetary science and expanding its community through key meetings and events.

Committee Meeting at BPSC: The Hub Committee met in person at the British Planetary Science Congress (BPSC) in June 2024. Discussions focused on refining the Hub's mission statement, reviewing the composition of the committee, and recruiting for open positions. A key priority is the recruitment of more Irish representatives to ensure balanced representation within the Hub.

British Planetary Science Congress (BPSC) 2024: The BPSC 2024 was held at Space Park Leicester (SPL) and the adjacent National Space Centre from June 18-21, 2024. The event began with a one-day workshop for early-career researchers, where experienced engineers and project managers from SPL showcased the process of developing space instruments and missions. The main three-day conference featured oral and poster sessions, highlighting the latest advancements in planetary and space science across the UK.

Europlanet Sponsorship and Participation: The Ireland & UK Hub, with support from Europlanet, sponsored the BPSC event. The Europlanet Management Team from the University of Kent actively participated, hosting a stand and contributing to the community consultation day, strengthening ties within the planetary science community.

6.2.3.5. Italy Hub

The Italy Hub has been highly active in both organisational and outreach efforts, contributing significantly to the Europlanet and the planetary science communities.

Active Participation in Europlanet Initiatives: Italian Hub members have participated in most Europlanet initiatives and virtual meetings, showcasing their deep involvement in the organisation and planning of EPSC2024. Notably, the Hub Chair, S. Ivanovski, also serves as SOC co-chair for EPSC2024 and was elected as Europlanet's new Vice-President at the end of 2023.

Leadership Roles: In addition to Ivanovski's leadership, Federica Duras and Livia Giacomini have been elected to the Executive Board, continuing their impactful work in outreach and press office activities. Duras leads the Outreach Working Group and coordinates numerous outreach activities, including newsletters and initiatives for EPSC2024.

Early Career Involvement: The Italian Early Career Hub Officer, G. Munaretto, played a key role in organising the 6th EPEC Annual Week meeting held in Padua in September 2024, where both Giacomini and Ivanovski delivered presentations.

Industry and Diversity Initiatives: Conversations are ongoing regarding filling the vacant positions for Industry and Diversity Officers within the Hub. Discussions are in progress to assign the Industry Officer role to a collaborator from the Italian Space Agency, which will bolster the Hub's activities within Italy's space exploration industry.

Contributions to National Space Initiatives: Italy Hub members, including Ivanovski and Vice-Chair A. Lucchetti, are active participants in the preparation of the 10-year Roadmap and Future Topics for the "Sun and Solar System" of the Italian Space Agency. This roadmap, expected to be published in 2025, is a key effort in shaping Italy's future in planetary science.

Outreach and Education: The Hub has been involved in significant outreach efforts, including organising events such as "Planets in a Room" and Researchers' Night 2023 in Rome. Additionally, the Hub facilitated Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per l'Orientamento (PCTO) programs in Lazio and contributed to the organisation of the Farinella Award and other public initiatives. The Hub also contributes to the bi-monthly outreach newsletter and translations of new educational resources on Jupiter and icy moons.

National Presence: The Hub was represented with a dedicated poster at the National Italian Planetary Congress in Bormio in February 2024, where discussions

focused on strengthening collaboration with the Italian Society of Planetary Science.

Improvement of Funding Communication: While most funding requests from Italy were submitted directly to Europlanet rather than through the Hub, efforts are being made to improve communication about funding opportunities and to engage more Italian planetary scientists in Hub activities.

6.2.3.6. Northern Europe Hub

The Northern Europe Hub activities focused on collaboration and community building across the region.

Virtual Participation and Collaboration: Hub members have consistently participated in virtual meetings and contributed to the organisation of Europlanet meetings and workshops in cooperation with other Hubs and local organisers. This collaborative approach ensures the Hub's involvement in wider Europlanet activities.

Kick-off Meeting at ERIM 2023: The Hub held a kick-off meeting during the ERIM 2023 conference in Bratislava, Slovakia, where key issues were discussed, and future actions for 2023-2024 were outlined. Although the Hub reserved some general funding for this activity, it was instead used to promote an amateur workshop.

Leadership: The Hub is currently chaired by Harri Haukka (Finnish Meteorological Institute), with Grazina Tautvaisiene (Vilnius University) serving as Vice-Chair. Both will hold their positions through 2024, with elections planned for during or shortly after EPSC 2024 in Berlin.

6.2.3.7. Spain & Portugal Hub

The Spain & Portugal Hub has been actively involved in various initiatives, fostering collaboration, and supporting both professional and amateur contributions to planetary science.

Early Careers

Iberian Europlanet Prize: The committee successfully organised the 1st Iberian Europlanet Prize for the Best Thesis in Planetary Sciences, recognizing outstanding contributions from early-career researchers.

Ibero-American Collaboration

Strategic Partnerships: The Iberian Hub initiated discussions with the Spanish Aerospace Platform, leading to a significant contract with the *Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos*. This collaboration resulted in the formation of the *Red Iberoamericana de Agencias Aeroespaciales*, which now oversees high-level coordination among Ibero-American space agencies.

Science Collaboration and Outreach: The committee organised and participated in several high-profile events promoting science collaboration and outreach:

- 1st Europlanet Latin America Planetary Science Workshop: Held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from October to November 2023.
- *XII Taller de Ciencias Planetarias*: Taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 26 February to 1 March 2024.

Amateur Astronomy

Workshops and Conferences: The committee has promoted and organised various workshops and conferences for amateur astronomers:

Pro-Am Spanish Congress: Held in San Sebastián, Spain, from March 1-3, 2024.

Jornadas Hispano-Portuguesas de Astronomía + RETA 2024: The III Reunión Europea de Telescopios took place in Moimenta da Beira, Portugal, from 10-12 May 2024.

Recognition: Awarded a recognition diploma to the amateur discoverers of comet Camarasa-Duszanowicz.

Organised Events

- **Symposium and Meetings:** Spanish Astronomy Society Congress: Organised a symposium and meeting in Granada, Spain, on 24 July 2024.
- **Planetary Science Session:** Conducted at the Spanish Geology Congress in Ávila, Spain, from 2-6 July 2024.
- **Space Debates:** Promoted space-related debates in collaboration with the *Etica Espacial* web portal.
- **Social Event:** Coordinated a Spanish/Portuguese social event, including drinks and dinner, during EPSC 2024 in Berlin, Germany.

Hub and Iberian Community

Webpage Update: Major update of the Iberian Hub webpage.

<https://spainportugal-eps.org/>

Community Engagement: Regular updates of the Iberian planetary science community and re-organisation of the Iberian Hub structure with regular meetings involving new members.

6.2.3.8. Diversity Committee

The Diversity Committee has been actively working to promote inclusivity and diversity within the planetary sciences community, with a strong focus on preparations for EPSC24. Key activities include:

Leadership Transition: The committee held its first meeting of 2024 on 23 May, during which Arianna Piccialli (BIRA-IASB) was appointed Interim Chair until EPSC2024. Regular monthly meetings are being held to ensure thorough preparation for the upcoming conference.

Upcoming Open Positions: Several leadership roles, including Chair and Secretary, will be advertised and opened during or after EPSC2024. Efforts are also ongoing to recruit representatives from the EPEC, as well as the German, Ireland and UK, and Switzerland Hubs.

EPSC24 Preparations: The committee is deeply involved in organizing multiple diversity-related activities for EPSC2024:

- ODAA4 Diversity and Inclusiveness in Planetary Sciences Session: This session has attracted 13 abstracts, comprising 7 oral presentations and 6 posters.
- Diversity Abstract: Solmaz Adeli submitted an abstract on behalf of the Diversity Committee, highlighting the diversity initiatives being offered.
- Diversity Keynote and Roundtable: A keynote talk and roundtable discussion on diversity are being organised, providing a platform for dialogue and awareness.
- Bystander Training: A bystander intervention training session is also being arranged to promote a safer and more inclusive conference environment.

Supportive Measures at EPSC24:

- Organising childcare in collaboration with the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).
- Ensuring venue accessibility for all attendees.
- Reviewing gender-neutral toilets and identifying a silent room for those who need a quiet space.

Planetary Wiki Edit-a-Thon: The Planetary Wiki edit-a-thon project is being re-organised, with plans for a potential splinter meeting during EPSC24, accompanied by a poster presentation.

6.2.3.9. Europlanet Early Career Network

In October 2023, the Europlanet Early Career Network (EPEC) welcomed new chairs, marking the beginning of a transition period and a restructuring phase guided by community feedback. This transition aims to enhance the effectiveness of the network, with the new structure set to be evaluated and used for the next couple of years.

Transition and Documentation: To facilitate the chair transition and ensure continuity in this community-led organisation, a comprehensive manual has been developed. This document outlines the structural components and organisational details of EPEC activities, available upon request.

Involvement in Joint DPS-EPSC Meeting: EPEC played a significant role in the joint DPS-EPSC meeting in Texas, which featured a Mentoring Scheme. This initiative attracted 43 participants, including PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and bachelor and master students. The event also included a targeted early career networking reception and a mental health course attended by around 45 participants. The EPEC General Assembly promoted the idea of establishing a similar network in the USA.

Preparation for EPSC 2024: Planning for EPSC 2024 is progressing well, with EPEC organising a joint symposium-workshop event with AbGradE (Astrobiology Graduates in Europe) on the first day of the conference. Throughout the week, EPEC will host a series of workshops and interactive sessions designed to connect early-career professionals and foster community engagement at this major international conference.

Europlanet Society Webinar Series: EPEC contributed to the successful Europlanet Society Webinar Series with presentations on career development. These sessions, part of the Early Career Spotlight and Summer/Winter Schools, facilitated discussions on leveraging Europlanet and the broader field for career advancement.

EPEC Annual Week: The 6th Annual Week meeting, held from June 25-28, 2024, at the University of Padua, Italy, was organised as a hybrid event to maximise

participation. This year's programme, which covered diverse topics related to early career opportunities in planetary science in Italy, included both in-person and remote local contributions. The event was attended by 23 in-person and 30 online attendees.

6.2.3.10. Outreach Working Group

The Outreach Working Group has been actively coordinating and promoting outreach initiatives within the Europlanet Society, focusing particularly on EPSC 2024 preparations and ongoing educational projects.

Monthly Meetings: The Outreach Working Group holds regular monthly meetings with members to coordinate activities and ensure smooth collaboration.

EPSC 2024 Outreach Activities: The team is currently organising a suite of outreach activities for EPSC 2024, aiming to engage the broader community in planetary science. This includes the #InspiredByOtherWorlds arts contest, which invites schools and space enthusiasts of all ages to get creative and share their artworks and performances inspired by other worlds in a contest called #InspiredByOtherWorlds. The theme this year is 'Returning to Earth'. Entries for #InspiredByOtherWorlds will be showcased during EPSC2024 in Berlin. All artworks submitted will be judged by a panel of planetary scientists and artists. The winning artworks or performances will be shared via the Europlanet website, newsletters and social media and will be used to inspire young people in future Europlanet outreach activities.

Outreach Newsletter: An outreach newsletter is distributed every 3-4 months to members of the Outreach mailing list, providing updates on activities, opportunities, and resources.

Outreach Prize and Funding: The working group has decided to postpone the call for the Outreach Prize and funding until the autumn of 2024. This timing aligns with EPSC 2024, where the initiative will be actively promoted.

Planets In A Room (PIAR): The Planets In A Room project continues to be a success in Italy, where it is being implemented in two schools. The project includes a 30-hour educational program culminating in a final presentation by students, which will be open to the entire school community.

6.2.3.11. Policy and Industry Working Group

The Policy and Industry Working Group is undergoing significant restructuring as part of Europlanet's broader transition to a new legal structure, aimed at ensuring the Society's long-term sustainability.

Membership Renewal: The official renewal of members across various hubs and committees took place a few months ago, marking a key step in the Society's restructuring efforts.

New Executive Board and Leadership: With a new Executive Board now in place, newly appointed industry and policy officers are set to revitalise the Industry and Policy Working Group over the coming months. This renewed leadership aims to enhance the committee's effectiveness and drive its strategic direction forward.

Europlanet Space Innovation Night (E-SPIN): The Europlanet Space Innovation Night (E-SPIN) at EPSC 2024 in Berlin. This new thematic event, scheduled for Tuesday, 10 September, from 18:30 to 21:30 CEST, is designed to bring together academics, industry professionals, policymakers, and communicators across the Europlanet community.

Event Highlights:

- **Moderated Panel Discussion.** Engage with a panel of diverse experts discussing this year's theme, "*SmallSat vs Large-Scale Missions: Exploring Opportunities Across the Europlanet Community.*" Participate in a Q&A session to explore insights and opportunities.
- **Networking Reception:** Enjoy finger food and drinks while networking with peers. This reception provides an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and build valuable connections across various career levels.

6.3. Europlanet Science Congress 2024

The Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC, formerly the European Planetary Science Congress) is the annual meeting place of the Europlanet Society. First held in Berlin in 2006 and regularly attracting more than 1,000 participants, EPSC is the largest planetary science meeting in Europe. It covers the entire range of planetary sciences with an extensive mix of talks, workshops and poster sessions while providing a unique space for networking and exchange of experiences.

Aims & scope

The intention of [EPSC2024](#) is to cover a broad area of science topics related to planetary science and planetary missions. The programme of the congress will contain oral and poster sessions, as well as workshops and panel discussions and provide ample opportunities for interaction between the participants.

The Scientific Organizing Committee (SOC) of EPSC invites all planetary scientists to participate in the future congress, submit contributions to the topical sessions and share their research with their colleagues.

This year, after the first meeting held in Berlin in 2006, EPSC2024 is back to Berlin. EPSC2024 is organised as a fully hybrid meeting and will allow virtual access to all oral and poster sessions and take place at the Henry Ford Building of Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, from 8-13 September 2024.

The ethos for EPSC2024 is to create a simple, flexible, and inclusive meeting that provides multiple opportunities for interaction, scientific discussion, and networking.

Future meetings: EPSC and EPSC-DPS

Next year the EPSC-DPS 2025 Joint Meeting will be in Helsinki, Finland. For the future of EPSC-DPS joint meetings and collaborations, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by Europlanet and the Division of the American Astronomical Society (DPS).

The selection of EPSC2026 and EPSC2027 hosts will be announced at EPSC2024 in Berlin.

Calls for hosting future EPSC meetings (2028 and 2029) will be released beginning of 2026. Interested parties should contact the EPSC Executive Committee Chair.

6.4. Prizes

Europlanet will be exploring new ways to organise prizes across the Society.

6.4.1. 14th “Paolo Farinella” Prize, 2024

To honor the memory and the outstanding figure of Paolo Farinella (1953-2000), an extraordinary scientist and person, a prize has been established in recognition of significant contributions in the fields of interest of Paolo, which spanned from planetary sciences to space geodesy, fundamental physics, science popularisation, security in space, weapon control and disarmament.

The call for nominations for the 14th edition is now closed. The 14th Paolo Farinella Prize is awarded to Ravit Helled for her outstanding contributions in the field of planetary science concerning “*Internal structure of planetary bodies: clues on formation processes of the Solar System*”, including theoretical, modelling, experimental and observational work on the internal structure of solar system bodies, namely planets, satellites, and small bodies. The award winner will be honored during the Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC) 2024 in Berlin (Germany).

6.4.2. EPSC Outstanding Poster Contest (OPC)

The EPSC Outstanding Poster Contest is open to all BSc or MSc students, PhD candidates, as well as scientists that obtained their last degree after 1 January 2024. Posters will be judged during the week of EPSC2024 by conference participants based on the relevance of the study, 2) the scientific accuracy, as well as 3) the clarity of presentation. As a prize, each awardee will receive a registration waiver that can be used for the upcoming EPSC-DPS2025.

6.4.3. Europlanet Outreach Prize

The Europlanet Outreach Prize is awarded annually at EPSC. As there was no opportunity to award the prize at the DPS-EPSC Joint Meeting 2023, the decision was made to hold the presentation and prize lectures for the 2023 winners at EPSC2024 and delay the launch of the call for the 2024 prize until after EPSC2024.

6.5. Webinars

The Europlanet Society runs a series of webinars for members. Over the past reporting period, it has provided webinars on the following topics:

- 23 January 2024 | *Meet the Europlanet Society Board.*

- 20 February 2024 | *To Bennu and Back: What asteroids can tell us about the Solar System*. Ashley King (Natural History Museum)
- 19 March 2024 | *Early Career Spotlight*. Derek Polowyj (Eden Scott), Joanne Oliver (SpaceCareers.UK) and Ross Crosby (Innoforge)
- 12 April 2024 | *JUICE - One Year After Launch: News and Outlook*. Olivier Witasse (ESA), Juice Operation Scientist Claire Vallet (ESA)
- 30 April 2024 | *Summer and Winter Schools*. Grazina Tautvasiene (Europlanet Summer Schools), Carys Herbert (IAYC), Silvana Pinna (AbGradE), Riccardo Pozzobon (GMAP Winter School) and speakers from EPEC (EPEC Annual Week)
- 21 May 2024 | *JWST - A New Voyager for the Outer Solar System*. Leigh Fletcher (University of Leicester)
- 14 June 2024 | *Induced Magnetic Fields or How to Peek Below the Surface of the Earth and Jupiter's Moons*. Jakub Velímský (Charles University, Prague) and Adam Masters (Imperial College, London).
- 30 July 2024 | *Evaluating our Impact on Planetary Science*. Dr Jen DeWitt

Upcoming webinars:

- 24 September 2024: "It's alive!" Astrobiology and Planetary Science in Science Fiction (Julie Novakova & Emma Puranen)
- 27 September 2024: The Juice Lunar Earth Flyby: Perspectives From Navigation, Science and Radiation (Angela Dietz, Marco Pinto, Claire Vallat).

6.6. Europlanet Discord

Members are invited to join the [Europlanet Discord](#) server to connect with other members of Europlanet and keep up to date with community news, events, job opportunities. The server is designed with a variety of channels to facilitate discussions and interactions, including text channels, discussion forums and voice channels.

On joining Discord, members can select roles to tailor their experience and access specific channels that match their involvement in Europlanet. They can also join weekly Friday lunchtime get-togethers on the 'lo' voice channel for informal chat and topical discussions.

6.7. Europlanet Magazine

The Europlanet Magazine (first issue published in June 2021) aims to highlight the range of activities by Europlanet, the Europlanet Early Careers Network, academic and industrial partners, and the wider planetary community. In 2024, two issues have been published ([Issue 6](#) and [Issue 7](#)) as well as a [special issue](#) that compiles articles about the Europlanet 2024 RI project. See the [latest issue](#).

All issues of the Europlanet Magazine are available online as an e-magazine, with some issues printed for distribution at EPSC. For more information, [contact us](#).

7. Europlanet 2024 Research Infrastructure

31 July 2024 marked the end of the Europlanet 2024 Research Infrastructure (RI) and, with it, the completion of a series of EC-funded projects over the course of some twenty years. Europlanet 2024 RI was built upon a rich heritage of Transnational Access programmes, Virtual Access services (most notably the VESPA and SPIDER platforms) and networking activities, but has advanced the field and community still further with:

- The initiation of the Europlanet Telescope Network.
- The inclusion of geological mapping and machine learning tools and services.
- Extended international collaborations with partners in Africa, South America and Korea.
- Strategic investment in upgrades to facilities to better simulate and understand diverse and extreme planetary environments.

The achievements of Europlanet 2024 RI:

- Free Transnational Access (TA) programme to 24 laboratories in Europe and six field sites, as well as additional facilities in South Korea and China. A total

of 197 projects and 293 researchers were supported in their visits and research.

- Virtual Access to over 100 services and tools.
- Networking activities to support the community, develop links with industry, support early career professionals and researchers in under-represented nation-states, and engage with research communities around the world, as well as citizens and policymakers.
- A telescope network to provide rapid response observations to support planetary missions, supporting over 250 observation nights.
- 230 publications to date, with many more to come.

Access to the Europlanet Research Infrastructure (RI) was supported through the Europlanet 2024 RI project, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 871149.

8. Financial Report

The Europlanet AISBL is a not-for-profit enterprise that is financed through:

Community subscriptions:

- Individual memberships
- Institutional packages of individual memberships
- New organisational membership programme

EPSC settlement:

- Fees
- Exhibition and sponsorship

Figure 2 shows the actual income and expenditure for Europlanet (with separate accounts for the Europlanet Society (left) and EPSC (right)) during 2023 when the finances and bank accounts were hosted and managed by the ESF. It should be noted that the statutes and tax framework for the ESF required that non-profit and for-profit activities be treated separately, with separate bank accounts.

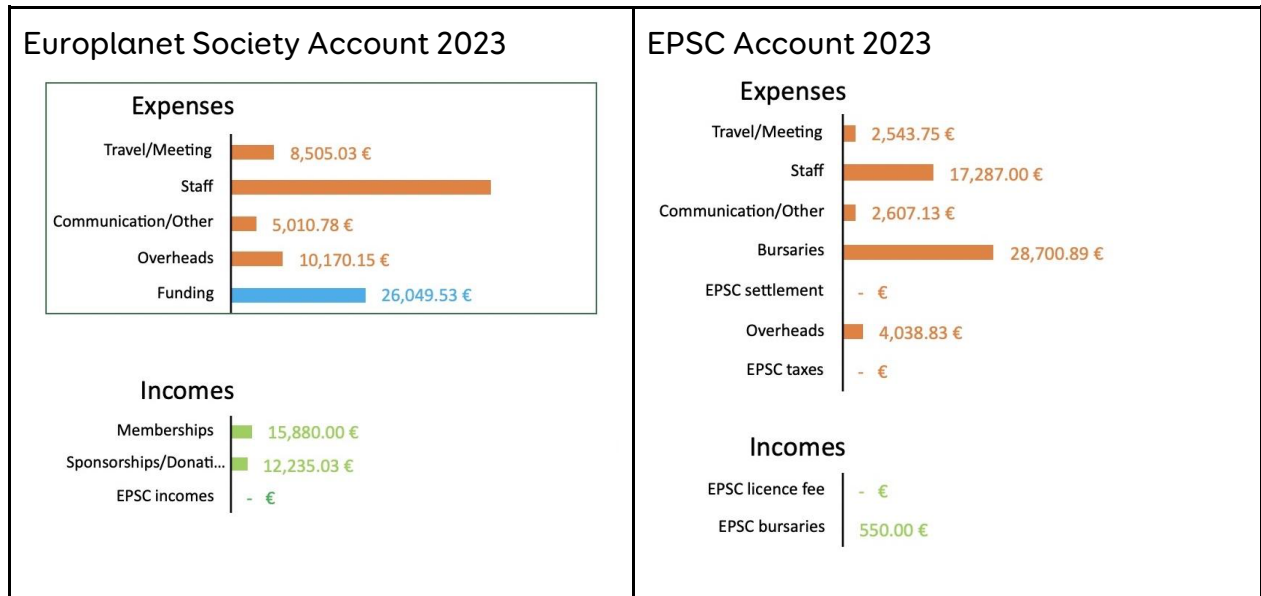


Figure 2: The actual income and expenditure for the Europlanet Society and EPSC accounts during 2023.

From 1 August 2024, the management of the finances was transferred to Europlanet AISBL. Going forward, under the Belgian law and tax framework, all financial activity for Europlanet can now be handled in a single bank account.

The balance from the bank accounts remaining at ESF is due to be transferred to the AISBL bank account on 6 September 2024.

The forecast in Figure 3 includes as income for 2024 an estimation of the settlement for EPSC2024, the balance received from the ESF and the growth in memberships as per Table 2. Individual memberships are forecast to rise from 400 to 600 during the period from 2024-2029. Funding for the community (bursaries, Europlanet Society funding programmes etc) are, provisionally, in line with 2023 outgoings.

The forecast also includes the need to rebuild a reserve of €80-100,000 to set against any losses related to future EPSC meetings (e.g. last-minute cancellations due to floods, fire, terrorism etc).

The introduction of the proposed model for organisational subscriptions, alongside existing revenue sources, will enable Europlanet to maintain its core mobility and

access programmes, community services, training and career development programmes.

Table 1: Proposed fee scale for Europlanet Organisational Memberships

| Category | Description | Cost |
|------------|--|------------|
| Tier 1 | Large-scale Organisations (European and regional organisation) | €10,000.00 |
| Tier 2 | Institution | €2,500.00 |
| Tier 2 URS | Institution in Under-Represented State (URS) | €1,250.00 |
| Tier 3 | Amateur Society | €500.00 |

Table 2: Organisational Membership Growth 2024-2029

| Tier | Cost | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | No. | No. | No. | No. |
| Tier 1 | € 10K | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Tier 2 | € 2.5K | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |
| Tier 2 | € 1.25K | 5 | 7 | 10 | 12 |
| Tier 3 | € 0.5K | 2 | 5 | 7 | 10 |

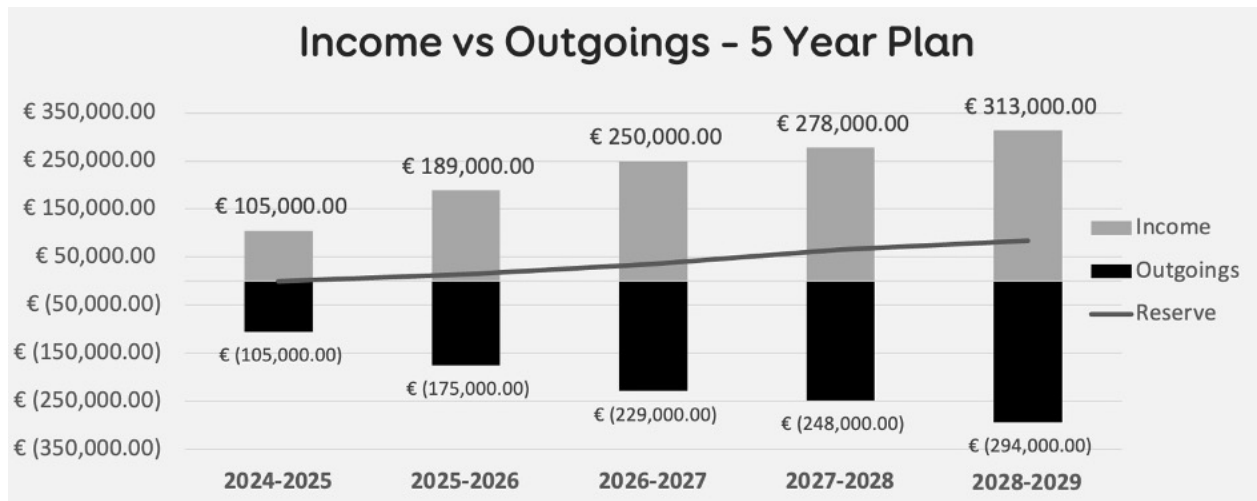


Figure 3: Chart showing a forecast of income vs outgoings for first 5 years of organisational membership, based on growth in numbers from Table 2. The line shows the carry-over of profit, which is needed to rebuild a reserve of €80K-100K to set against the risk of any losses related to EPSC.

9. Future Planning

9.1. What is Europlanet offering to the community?

Europlanet was established through a series of projects funded by the European Commission between 2005 and 2024, to create infrastructure and networks to support the planetary science community in Europe and around the world.

Over the past decade, work has been ongoing to create a sustainability plan that will enable Europlanet to continue its activities, independent of EC-Funding.

The first step, in 2018, was the launch of the Europlanet Society to support the sustainability of networking programmes. The second step, in 2023, was the foundation of the Europlanet Association Sans But Lucratif (AISBL), which provides Europlanet with a sustainable legal entity.

Historically, the ecosystem of multiple Europlanet organisations ('Europlanet AISBL', 'Europlanet Society', 'Europlanet RI') has played a significant role in the development and founding of the current Europlanet - the non-profit organisation Europlanet AISBL.

In 2024, the next step is to launch a new organisational membership programme that will provide a solid foundation for a Europlanet research infrastructure in decades to come and ensure the voice of the planetary science community is heard in important strategic fora in Europe and internationally.

Mobility & Access

- TA visits (10 funded per year initially)
- Virtual TA Access/Telescope Network (5 funded per year initially)
- Expert Exchange visits (travel, accommodation and sustenance for 5 per year)

Community Services

- Stakeholder Engagement (Policy, Industry, Media, Public)
- Community Funding Schemes
- Bursaries
- Prizes
- 'Europlanet Sandbox' proposal brainstorming sessions

Training and Career Development

- Mentoring
- Summer and Winter Schools
- EPEC Annual Week

From 2024, participants must be a member of Europlanet, either as an individual or through their organisation, to participate in the above community activities.

The new organisational membership packages will be launched in September 2024 at the Europlanet General Assembly on 10 September.

Core activities for the AISBL will be run through a paid Executive Office, with most community programs implemented by voluntary committees and working groups. Financial oversight is provided by the Treasurer and the Executive Board, with advice on strategic planning provided by the Europlanet Sustainability Committee.

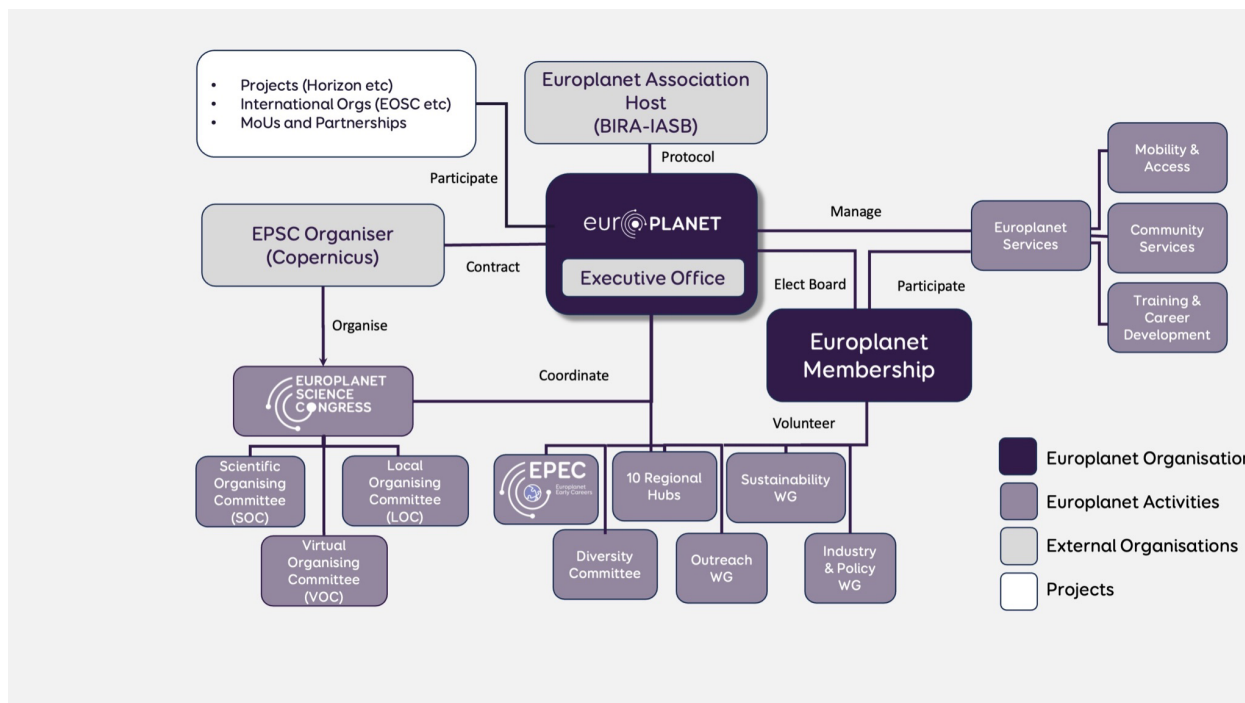


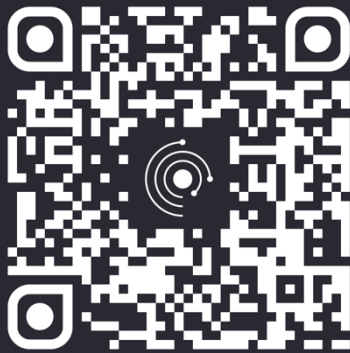
Figure 4: Organisational Structure, including additional services supported through new organisational memberships of Europlanet.

Key reasons for organisations joining Europlanet include:

1. Europlanet has 20 years of experience in catalysing high-impact science, new collaborations and infrastructure developments. Organisations supporting Europlanet will help it to keep doing this and enable their staff to take part in Europlanet programmes.
2. Independent evaluation shows that access to facilities and expertise through Europlanet mobility programmes, expert exchanges and networking activities leads to science that would not otherwise have taken place.
3. More than 200 peer-reviewed publications have cited Europlanet in the last four years alone.
4. Europlanet has been developed *by* planetary scientists *for* planetary scientists. It is a grass-roots organisation offering state-of-the-art facilities and services that have been specifically developed and tailored for the community's needs with over 25 million Euros in funding from the European Commission.
5. Europlanet accelerates career development for early-stage researchers, providing training, mentoring, summer/winter schools, opportunities to carry out research projects, and activities to develop professional networks. The Europlanet Early Career (EPEC) Network supports early

career professionals through thematic programmes, short courses, and events, including the EPEC Annual Week.

6. Europlanet is an international network that brings together researchers and infrastructure from five continents (Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America) to make new connections and research collaborations. Its Regional Hubs build stronger networks of academics and industry related to planetary science and exploration at regional and national levels. Its active Discord community fosters discussion, highlights jobs and other opportunities and provides multiple ways to engage with peers.
7. Europlanet provides services and tools to support interdisciplinary research related to all aspects of planetary science, from planetary space weather to geological mapping.
8. Europlanet is an effective platform for finding partners and forming consortia for funding bids. As a sustainable, legal entity, Europlanet can also participate as a partner in Horizon bids, including co-funding calls, ensuring opportunities for ongoing support and infrastructure development for the planetary community.
9. Europlanet provides a platform to shape policy relevant to planetary science, with a track record of effective input to ESFRI and EC consultations. Input from the Regional Hubs enables Europlanet to consider regional and national views in its responses.
10. Europlanet has well-developed dissemination, media and communications channels, reaching over 2000 professionals working in the field and related communities, and thousands of members of the public. The Europlanet Science Congress (EPSC) is Europe's largest annual meeting on planetary science and is an international showcase for the community. Join EPSC in Berlin from 8-14 September 2024 and in Helsinki from 7-13 September 2025, when Europlanet will be holding a joint meeting with its sister organisation, the American Astronomical Society's Division of Planetary Science.



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