

# Ariel Consortium Meeting in Budapest

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## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The consortium meeting of ESA's exoplanet atmosphere characterizing Ariel mission attracted 300 participants. The meeting was held in Budapest between 24-27 October 2023. One of the main organizers was Konkoly Observatory.

The Astronomical Institute organized one of the most successful Ariel Consortium Meetings of all time between 24-27 October 2023 in the Hotel Mercure Budapest Castle Hill. [Ariel \(https://arielmission.space/\)](https://arielmission.space/) is the M4 mission of the European Space Agency, with the primary goal of investigating the atmosphere of more than 1000 exoplanets. During these meetings engineers and scientists discuss the most important tasks in designing, manufacturing, assembling, operating and data analysis of the space telescope to be launched in 2029. Ariel Consortium has more than 600 individual members from 16 European countries. USA, Canada, and Japan also joined the mission recently. More than 150 participants attended the most recent event in Hungary, while another 150 followed the talks and discussions online. It is worth noting that we have already organized such a meeting in 2020, but because of the covid pandemic that one had to be held online – via zoom. The main organizers of the 2023 October event were: [Konkoly Observatory \(http://konkoly.hu\)](http://konkoly.hu) of the HUN-REN Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences and the [ELTE Gothard Astrophysical Observatory \(https://www.gothard.hu/\)](https://www.gothard.hu/). We worked closely with the [Diamond Congress Ltd \(https://www.diamond-congress.hu/index.html\)](https://www.diamond-congress.hu/index.html) event organizer company.





*Group photo of the 2023 Budapest Ariel Consortium Meeting. Credit: Tamás Thaler.*

As a premiere, we organized an Ariel press conference on the first day of the meeting to present the importance of the Hungarian contribution in the mission to the general public. On the press event Orsolya Ferencz, Ministerial Commissioner of space research highlighted the Hungarian space industry and space research breakout points and presented the space strategy of the country. László L. Kiss, CSFK Director General delivered a welcome speech. We were honored to have Jean-Christophe Salvignol (ESA, ESTEC, Ariel Project Manager) who represented ESA and painted the big picture of European space research in the context of Ariel. Giovanna Tinetti (UCL, Ariel PI) and Paul Eccleston (UK, RAL Space, Ariel Consortium Manager) talked about the scientific and engineering challenges of this endeavor. Last, but not least, Tamás Bárczy (Admatis Ltd.) presented the Hungarian Ariel hardware contribution, while Róbert Szabó, director of the Konkoly Observatory and the Hungarian Ariel Co-I showed a few slides about the Hungarian scientific contribution. Several media outlets were represented at the event evidenced by the dozens of articles, tv and radio reports, and media coverages throughout the week. The photos of the press conference and the consortium meeting can be found via the following link: <https://ariel2023-budapest.hu/gallery-press/> (<https://ariel2023-budapest.hu/gallery-press/>).



*Ariel press conference at the Mercure Budapest Castle Hill hotel on the 24th of October. Photo credit: Tamás Thaler.*

The first two days of the meeting were dominated by engineers' discussions, while the second half consisted primarily of scientific sessions. On Wednesday we heard about the latest updates on the mission status in a plenary session. During the rest of the meeting, we organized three splinter sessions in parallel. The conference was crowned by a Budapest sightseeing, as well as a river cruise trip on the Danube preceded by the conference dinner. Our sponsors and partners were the Eötvös Loránd University, the ELTE Gothard Astrophysical Observatory (Szombathely), the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Physics Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Admatis Ltd. (Miskolc) and the Diamond Congress Ltd. Ten percent of the registrants were Hungarian. A large delegation represented the Astronomical Institute, as well. Among them many early career scientists were present and had local organizational duties.



Konkoly

*researchers: Marco Pignatari (left) and Csaba Kiss (right)  
speaking at the Ariel Consortium Meeting. Credit: Tamás Thaler.*