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ARMENIAN  
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# ArAS Newsletter



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## LOCAL NEWS

### “From School to Space” School Lectures Program 2025

The Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory (BAO) and the Armenian Astronomical Society (ArAS) in partnership with the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) announced the call for “From School to Space 2025” program.

The program aims at revealing talented children especially in remote regions of Armenia to unlock their potential in science.

ArAS School Lectures program was initiated by the ArAS Co-Presidents Areg Mickaelian and Prof. Yervant Terzian (Cornell University, N.Y., USA) to promote astronomy in the Armenian schools and facilitate interaction with professional astronomers. Once a year, professional astronomers visit 30 schools and deliver lectures on hot topics of astronomy, achievements of the Armenian astronomy, activities of the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory and beyond.



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### IAU Office of Astronomy for Development Quarterly Meeting

On January 22, an online meeting of the International Astronomical Union regional centers took place.

Among the participants of the meeting were the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD), the IAU Office of Astronomy for Education (OAE), and 11 regional centers.

Areg Mickaelian, director of the IAU South West and Central Asia Regional Office, also took part in the meeting. He shared updates from the IAU SWCA ROAD, detailing the office's contributions to local astronomy outreach programs and educational workshops.

The meeting focused on reviewing the ongoing projects and initiatives aimed at advancing astronomy education and development across various regions. The discussions highlighted the importance of collaboration between the different regional offices, fostering innovation in educational approaches, and ensuring that the benefits of astronomical knowledge reach a broader global community.





## EAS Meeting 2025

On January 22-23, 2025, the annual meeting of the European Astronomical Society (EAS) and national astronomical societies of Europe took place at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The meeting was attended by EAS Council members, led by President Sara Lucatello (Italy), and presidents or representatives of 32 national astronomical societies. From Armenia, Gayane Baleyan, a board member of the Armenian Astronomical Society (ArAS), participated in the meeting. Participants discussed EAS activities, projects, and future plans. Additionally, national astronomical society representatives presented reports highlighting ongoing key events and upcoming programs.

Here you can find key achievements of ArAS in 2024:

- 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Interdisciplinary Conference (May 2024),
- 9<sup>th</sup> Byurakan International Summer School (September 2024),
- 10<sup>th</sup> Byurakan Science Camp (June 2024),
- School Lecture Program (April 2024),
- Astronomy Teacher Training Programs (July & October 2024),
- Scientific Journalism Competition (2024).

The list of upcoming major events includes the International Conference on Astronomical Surveys & Big Data, UNESCO-supported Conference on Middle Eastern Astronomical Heritage, Communicating Astronomy with the Public (CAP-2026) International Conference, Annual Armenian-Georgian Astronomical Colloquium, 4th Regional Astronomy Summer School (4RASS).



## OTHER NEWS

### NASA Administrator Bill Nelson Steps Down, Urges Continuity Under New Leadership

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson officially stepped down on January 20, 2025, following nearly four years of leadership under former President Joe Biden.

His resignation came as President Donald Trump was inaugurated for a second term, and with it, Nelson offered a message of continuity for the future of the space agency. In a letter to his successor, likely to be Jared Isaacman, the CEO of Shift4 and a close ally of SpaceX, Nelson emphasized the importance of

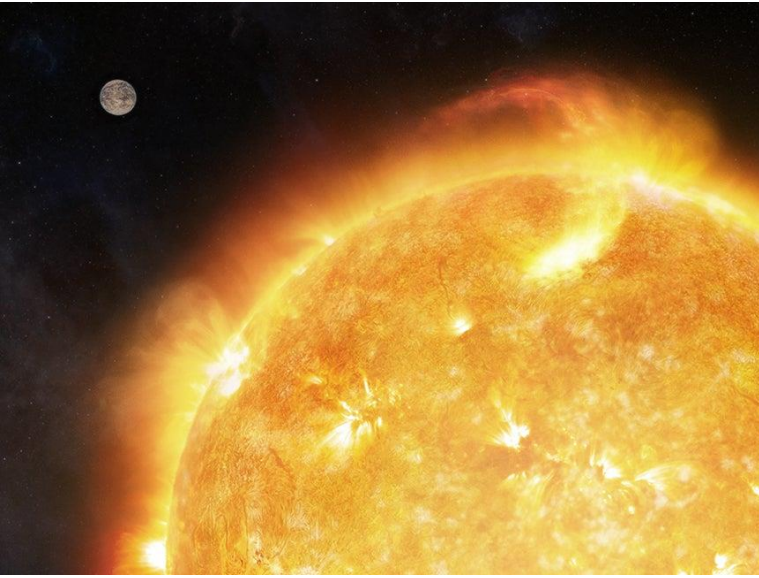
maintaining NASA's momentum in its ambitious space exploration programs.

Nelson reflected on the accomplishments of his tenure, particularly NASA's Artemis program, a series of missions designed to return humans to the Moon and pave the way for future Mars exploration. Under his leadership, Artemis 1, the uncrewed test flight, was successfully launched, and preparations for the next phases of the program were set, including a scheduled return to the Moon in 2027.



Bill Nelson

## Could Planets Orbiting Red Dwarfs Host Life?



Red dwarf stars, the smallest and most common stars in the universe, present an intriguing question for astronomers: can planets orbiting them support life? This [Astronomy Magazine](#) paper discusses this at length.

While these stars are abundant — making up about 70% of the stars in our galaxy — red dwarfs can also be highly volatile, emitting powerful radiation that might pose challenges to planetary habitability.

At the 245<sup>th</sup> meeting of the American Astronomical Society, Scott Wolk from the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory presented findings from his research on Wolf 359, a red dwarf star just 8 light-years away. Despite being only about 11% the size of our Sun, Wolf 359 produces intense flares and X-rays, which can strip away a planet's atmosphere, jeopardizing the potential for life.

In his research, Wolk observed data from the XMM-Newton mission to assess the survivability of planets orbiting Wolf 359. He focused on two planetary candidates: one near the inner edge of the habitable zone (where conditions are too hot for life) and another at the outer edge (which could be too cold). The habitable zone is the region around a star where liquid water can exist on a planet's surface, considered a key ingredient for life.

*ArAS News* is the electronic newsletter of the Armenian Astronomical Society. It was distributed to all ArAS members from the beginning of 2002, 4 times a year, typically at the end of each trimester. In 2009-2014, 8 issues annually and since 2015, 12 issues annually have been released.

ArASNews publishes information materials on ArAS, Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory and the Armenian astronomy in general, reports on ArAS Annual Meetings and participation of the Armenian astronomers in important international meetings, articles on occasion of anniversaries of famous Armenian astronomers and ArAS members, acceptance of new ArAS members, achievements of the Armenian astronomers, astronomical education in Armenia, Armenian archaeoastronomy, as well as science articles (reviews) on important studies.

So, if you want to share your studies with the scientific community, send us your articles to [melin.asryan@gmail.com](mailto:melin.asryan@gmail.com). They will be reviewed for the publication in ArAS Newsletters next issues.

[ArAS Newsletter issues](#) are available online.