



Launch of Asteroids2029: a Global Effort to Support The UN International Year for Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence

Luxembourg, 30 June 2026 — The launch of Asteroids2029 marks the beginning of a worldwide initiative supporting the UN International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence. Inspired by the exceptionally close passage of asteroid Apophis in April 2029, over 70 experts and professionals from space agencies, scientific institutions, educational organisations, and communication networks have come together to host events and activities to raise global awareness of asteroids, promote planetary defence, and celebrate international collaboration in understanding and protecting our shared planet.

Asteroids2029 builds toward a rare and historic celestial event: on 13 April 2029, the asteroid (99942) Apophis will skim closer to Earth than some satellites — close enough for billions of people to potentially see it in the night sky. The fly-by of asteroid Apophis poses no impact threat to Earth, yet its close approach offers an unprecedented opportunity to unite the world around asteroid science and planetary defence [1].

Under the tagline **Observe. Explore. Safeguard.**, [Asteroids2029](#) mobilises a global network of partners, including governments, space agencies, scientific institutions, educators, and communicators, to raise awareness of asteroids as both scientific treasures and potential hazards,



and to highlight the international collaboration already underway to monitor and mitigate asteroid impact risks.

Sir Brian May, co-founder of the global [Asteroid Day](#) (and legendary guitarist in the band Queen) said: *“The powerful message of Asteroids2029 is that we all share the same Earth and the same Sky. For the sake of the future of all life on this planet, we have an urgent need to understand our situation. Our close encounter with Apophis in 2029 is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to inspire people around the world to appreciate the beauty of science, and understand the importance of planetary defence.”*

The initiative places strong emphasis on public engagement, encouraging people everywhere to observe the sky, participate in citizen science, and explore the science and stories of asteroids. Activities are planned to take place worldwide — from public observing events and educational programmes to global communication campaigns and international collaborations — including coordinated events around the Apophis close approach in April 2029.

“Asteroids2029 is first and foremost an initiative for the citizens of Earth,” said Alex Karl, Chair of the Interim Steering Committee. *“It is about sharing knowledge, inspiring curiosity, and working together — across borders and cultures — to better understand asteroids and safeguard our home planet. We are looking to unite people around the world through thousands of events. Join the events coming to your city or host your own!”*

The initiative aims not only to raise awareness, but also to leave a lasting legacy by strengthening international collaboration, enhancing public understanding, and inspiring future generations to engage with science and planetary defence.

“Events like Apophis’s extraordinary close approach to Earth offer rare moments of unity, when all of humanity — regardless of borders or differences — can come together to simultaneously witness the same celestial spectacle. In these moments, we are reminded that, on the scale of our small blue planet, we are all one. And with several space missions involving different space agencies set to visit this asteroid, we have a unique opportunity to showcase international cooperation at its finest”, commented Patrick Michel, Research Director at Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) & European Space Agency Project Scientist.

Asteroids2029 will unfold through 2029 through a coordinated international programme, including:

- The establishment of National and Organisational nodes to drive local and regional activities
- The development of Cornerstone global projects
- Creation of a forum for global dialogue on the safety of our planet
- A worldwide communication and storytelling campaign
- Educational and capacity-building initiatives
- Opportunities for global participation in asteroid observations

As part of the launch, Asteroids2029 today introduces its international website: www.asteroids2029.org. The website will serve as the central hub for the International Year, providing information about events, asteroids, planetary defence and international collaboration.



The platform will continue to expand as partners, resources and activities are added in the lead-up to 2029 and will include dedicated information by region and language.

Everyone is invited to be a part of Asteroids2029 by following the initiative's journey on our social media, helping in planning, attending events, or spreading the word. Keep an eye on asteroids2029.org or use the Contact pages to get involved.

Notes

[1] Planetary defence is the coordinated international effort to detect, track, characterise, and, if necessary, prevent asteroids or comets from impacting Earth. It combines astronomy, space science, engineering, emergency planning, and international cooperation to reduce the impact risk posed by near-Earth objects (NEOs). Planetary defence is unique among natural hazards because it is the only one that humanity can potentially predict decades in advance and, with sufficient warning time, actively prevent.

About Asteroids2029

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2029 the [International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence](https://www.un.org/en/observances/asteroid-awareness-year) to take advantage of the close approach of asteroid Apophis. Asteroids2029 is a global peer-led initiative to amplify the scope and reach of the UN-declared International Year. The initiative is composed of experts from and supported by a broad network of organisations spanning aerospace, science and education, bringing together institutions, scientists, educators, communicators, and citizens to promote asteroid awareness, planetary defence and international collaboration in safeguarding our shared planet.

Contacts

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Links

- Asteroids2029 Website: <http://asteroids2029.org>
- Official UN Website: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/asteroid-awareness-year>