Kraków, 24.06.2024 r.

# **Top notch space engineers head to Poland this September. European Rover Challenge finals ahead.**

**27 student teams from 12 countries will be coming to Poland in September to compete in the finals of the world's most prestigious Martian robot competition, the European Rover Challenge. The rovers built by the participants will compete in 5 tasks on 900 square meters of simulated Martian surface inspired by Valles Marineris – one of the largest canyons in the Solar System.**

**Krakow will host the best student engineering talents**

To qualify, the finalists had to advance from a group of 69 participating teams representing both Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia. Only those teams whose technical documentation of the rover was rated the highest will meet at the AGH University of Krakow. Ultimately, in the finals of the international competition we will see representatives from as many as 12 countries, including teams from Spain, Denmark, Great Britain, Serbia, Switzerland and Greece.

**A simulated Martian Surface will be formed**

During the tenth edition of the European Rover Challenge, competitors will engage in five tasks testing their skills in navigation, surface sampling, as well as testing the technological prowess of the rovers. Their arena of struggle will be a Marsyard created exclusively for the venue, with an area of about 900 square meters, modeled on a fragment of the Red Planet's surface called Valles Marineris – one of the largest canyons in the Solar System.

*Steep cliffs, a complex to navigate labyrinth of isthmuses and numerous traps associated with landslides, glacial formations and even small volcanoes will await competitors* – mentions Dr. Anna Losiak, a planetary geologist and lead designer of the ERC's Marsyard.

**Robot competition won’t be the only highlight of the event**

The Mars rover competition is one of the many features awaiting visitors at the September event in Krakow. A scientific conference will be held concurrently with the competition in which visitors will have the opportunity to meet specialists from global space agencies and companies who, among other things, will discuss the future of space exploration, plans for settlement on Mars and the Moon, and demonstrate how space technologies affect everyday life on Earth. Speakers to be featured on the main stage include:

* **Shelli Brunswick** – futurist, author of numerous articles and a respected speaker, with experience ranging from senior positions in the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Foundation;
* **Joe Cassady** – Director of Civil Space Programs at L3Harris with more than four U.S. patents for electric propulsion (EP) technology. Vice President of the Electric Rocket Propulsion Society, and a member of many NASA advisory groups;
* **Janet Ivey-Duensing** – CEO of Janet's Planet Inc, director of education at Explore Mars and member of the advisory board of the Cosmic Girls Foundation. She is a respected figure in space education, committed to inspiring the next generation of space explorers and women in science.

**Space technology for businesses and startups**

The event will also be a networking venue for business representatives and investors interested in the space industry. Thanks to a partnership with the European Space Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA), one of eight CASSINI Matchmaking meetings in Europe will be held during the ERC. As a result, early-stage startups will receive support in their preparation for meetings with investors and corporations, enhancing their ability to attract equity funding and establish partnerships.

A STEM Exhibit, available free of charge, will also await all those who visit the AGH grounds during the September competition.

This year's tenth edition of the European Rover Challenge will be held on September 6-8 at the AGH University of Krakow. Thanks to the live broadcast in social media and on the event's website, the teams' rivalry and the lectures of the speakers will be available for audiences from all over the world.

The agenda for the event and the broadcast are available on the organizer's website: <https://roverchallenge.eu/conference-and-livestream/>

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The prime organizer of the event is the European Space Foundation - a non-profit organization supporting initiatives that prioritize the future of the new generation, based on STEAM sciences and space technologies. The event is co-organized and hosted by the AGH University of Krakow. The event is under the honorary patronage of the Minister of Education in Poland, the European Space Agency (ESA), the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), the Deputy Marshal of the Małopolska Region and the Polish Space Industry Association. The project is financed with government budget funds granted by the Minister of Education and Science under the "Social Responsibility of Science II" Program (Poland). This project is supported with funding from the Malopolska Voivodeship.

The Partners include: CASSINI Matchmaking, the U.S. Consulate General in Krakow, Mars Society Poland, the Polish Space Professionals Association (PSPA), MathWorks, JoinThe.Space, 3Dconnexion, Pyramid Games, Pokojowy Patrol, the Spaceship Foundation and the Business in Malopolska Center. Media patrons of the project: RMF, My Company Polska, Space24.pl, LoveKrakow.pl, Kosmonauta.net, Astrofaza, Urania: Postepy Astronomii, Polish Science Fiction Foundation.

For more information about the event and participating teams, please refer to the official website at: <https://roverchallenge.eu/>