

## Walloon Space Days

### Claus Madsen (ESO)

On 28–29 March, the Cluster Wallonie Espace, mainly a partnership of companies in the Walloon ‘Space Valley’, organised the first so-called ‘W Space Days’ at the Colonster Castle, located on the premises of the University of Liège. The primary aim of these days is to encourage meetings between professionals in the sector and to identify new scientific and technological opportunities. They should also help to raise awareness of the activities of the space sector amongst the general public and young people in particular. Indeed the event successfully brought together scientists, industrialists, funding agencies and policymakers. On the first day, some 210 representatives of research centres, industries and organisations from 13 countries in Europe participated in the professional event, while the next day was a ‘public day’. The first morning’s programme comprised a series of talks, including ELT presentations by Roberto Gilmozzi and Philippe Dierickx.

The event coincided with the completion of the fourth VLTI Auxiliary Telescope and the programme thus included a celebration and a press conference at the AMOS factory, located in the nearby Liège Science Park. The afternoon offered opportunities for company consultations and the day finished with a well-attended public lecture by Philippe Dierickx. On the following day, university students had a chance to see the Auxiliary Telescope at AMOS. As an extension to the programme, AMOS opened its doors again to the public on 1 April, with more than 450 visitors learning about the VLTI ATs.

W Space Days will be organised again in 2008, providing an interesting forum for discussion of current and future programmes in astronomy, astrophysics, and astronautics, for the members of the Cluster Wallonie Espace, but – with broad European participation – also extending far beyond this region.



Photos: H. H. Heyer, ESO

Jean-Pierre Swings (University of Liège), Roberto Gilmozzi and Philippe Dierickx (ESO) taking questions from the floor.



Marie-Dominique Simonet, Minister for Science, New Technologies and External Relations for the Walloon regional government was the guest of honour at the demonstration of the fourth VLT Auxiliary Telescope in the AMOS assembly hall.



From the AT4 Ceremony at AMOS.