

June 12, 2009

DOUBLE ITALIAN SCHOOL CONTACT SUCCESSFUL WITH FRANK DE WINNE

On Friday June 12th 2009 at 06:53 UTC, i.e. 08:53 local time, the Liceo "A. Bafile", located in L'Aquila, established a radio contact with ESA astronaut Frank De Winne, ON1DWN, onboard the International Space Station. A second contact between the school-tent and De Winne took place during the following pass, at 08:29 UTC, i.e. 10:29 local time. Due to the recent earthquake, the station was set up in a tent located in the ITIS "Amedeo d'Aosta" school garden. The students involved in the contact were from several schools from L'Aquila, including "Amedeo D'Aosta" high school and "Duca Degli Abruzzi" primary school.

In the early morning of the 6th of April 2009 L'Aquila and its schools suffered a devastating earthquake, reaching amplitude of 6.7 on Richter's scale. Major damage to the city and many casualties have restrained activity. The historic and artistic treasures underwent extensive and in some cases permanent damage. The quake killed about 300 people, with at least 70.000 left homeless. Istituto tecnico Industriale Statale "Amedeo Di Savoia Duca D'Aosta" is currently operating under a school-tent at "Colle Sapone" site, together with other secondary schools of L'Aquila. Currently more than 500 students, aged 13 to 18, are attending courses under tents provided by the Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR).

Piero Tognolatti, IOKPT was the contact coordinator for the ISS contact in L'Aquila. The operator of the contact was ARISS mentor Francesco De Paolis, IK0WGF. The questions were read by the students. The audience in the shack-tent was about 200 persons, guests and media operators. There were also ESA and ASI representatives, and a new member of the European Astronauts Corps, Samantha Cristoforetti who did some presentations about ISS missions and ESA/ASI activities. Before the contact, ARISS mentor Francesco De Paolis, IK0WGF introduced the event with an ARISS presentation.

At 06:53 UTC contact with OR4ISS was established and Frank De Winne answered 13 questions.

At 08:29 UTC a second contact with Frank De Winne was established and the astronaut answered 7 more questions, completing the sequence. Samantha Cristoforetti introduced and closed the second contact. The signals and audio from the ISS were excellent.

Many TV stations, including CANALE 5 and SKY, radio stations and newspapers covered the event. Internet Video Streaming counted more than 6.500 connections.

Congratulations to the ARISS team in L'Aquila! Congratulation to Samantha, new HAM astronaut!

Photos will be appended to this Bulletin, archived at www.ariss-eu.org/archive.htm

73

Francesco De Paolis, IK0WGF
ARISS mentor