

V. THE AFTERMATH – PRESS COVERAGE RESULTS

V. 1. How much, what, where and when

Because we aimed at an international coverage, it was quite hard to keep track of all the news published or aired in the different countries. Bearing in mind that the vast majority of printed publications around the world now have on line versions, we opted for using the Google News Alert service and use the articles we were able to pick up on the internet to measure the results of the work of the Press Office. We are aware that some news may have escaped this “search net” (namely on the radio), but we are confident that the results presented are a true representation of the reality.

As search key words, we used “*Planetary Sciences Congress*”, to ensure that all the news collected would be directly linked to the EuroPlaNet event (In the case of the Portuguese version of the Hands-on Universe press release we used the words “*Rosa Doran*” as key words for the search).

The clippings were collected over a period of 25 days, between the first day of the Congress (19th of August) and the 12th of September 2007. During this period we collected 189 articles directly derived from our press releases and 14 others not directly related, but that still mentioned the Congress, in a total of **203** news (a comprehensive list of all the clippings can be found in Appendix E).

As mentioned before we used online news for the media clippings, and this means that in principal any of these news could have been read, see or heard in any part of the world. However, for the sake of a clear analyses and view of the media coverage results, we will consider the country of origin of the online publication as the country where the story was published or aired.

These articles were originated in publications from 19 different countries, as shown in the following list:

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF ARTICLES
USA	88
GERMANY	23
UK	21
INDIA	19
AUSTRALIA	18
PORTUGAL	10
FRANCE	6
BULGARIA	3
CANADA	3
MALAYSIA	2
AUSTRIA	2
ITALY	1
DENMARK	1
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	1
PAKISTAN	1
CHINA	1
SOUTH AFRICA	1
NEW ZELAND	1
BRUNEI	1
TOTAL	203

The next list allows us to see how many articles each of the press releases originated and in which countries they were published or aired:

Issue date	Title of Press Release	N.	Countries where it was published
16.8.07	EXOMARS EXHIBITS SELF-CONTROL IN SAMPLING MARS TERRAIN	6	UK, GERMANY, USA
16.8.07	LUMPY, BUMPY, FLUFFY AND LAYERED: A PICTURE OF ROSETTA'S TARGET COMET BUILDS UP	5	GERMANY, USA
17.8.07	JUPITER: FRIEND OR FOE?	15	UK, USA, GERMANY, BULGARIA, INDIA, AUSTRIA
17.8.07	THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF MARTIAN WATER VAPOUR	3	USA, GERMANY
17.8.07	COULD ENCELADUS'S ICY PLUMES POSE A HAZARD TO CASSINI?	24	UK, USA, CANADA, INDIA, AUSTRALIA, FRANCE, BULGARIA
18.8.07	FLARES FROM THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN MAY AFFECT SPACE WEATHER OF INNER PLANETS	8	USA, GERMANY
18.8.07	ASTRONOMERS BAFFLED BY BASALT IN THE OUTER ASTEROID BELT	7	USA, GERMANY, DENMARK
18.8.07	SATURN'S SKEWED RING CURRENT	5	USA, GERMANY
18.8.07	WILL TITAN LOSE ITS VEIL?	9	GERMANY, USA, MALAYSIA, INDIA
18.8.07	CALCULATING THE BIOMASS OF MARTIAN SOIL	52	UK, USA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, AUSTRALIA, PAKISTAN, INDIA, MALAYSIA, CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, GERMANY, FRANCE, BRUNEI, BULGARIA
20.8.07	SMART-1 DIAGNOSES WRINKLES AND EXCESS WEIGHT IN HUMORUM AND PROCELLARUM BASINS	3	USA
20.8.07	LUNAR MISSION "MADE IN GERMANY" TO GIVE UNIQUE VIEW OF MOON	9	GERMANY, AUSTRIA
21.8.07	HANDS-ON UNIVERSE GOES GLOBAL	0	
21.8.07	HANDS-ON UNIVERSE GOES GLOBAL (PORTUGUESE VERSION)	10	PORTUGAL
23.8.07	THE CHANGING RINGS OF URANUS	30	UK, GERMANY, USA, AUSTRALIA, INDIA, ITALY
24.8.07	PRO-AM COLLABORATION TO UNVEIL THE ATMOSPHERE OF VENUS	3	USA, BULGARIA
	OTHERS*	14	
TOTAL		203	

* news not directly derived from our press releases

The most popular press release, the one that originated a larger number of articles was “*Calculating the biomass of Martian soil*” (please see appendix C). This brings us back to the results of the questionnaire to science journalists regarding what they consider important in a press release – “*subject*”. The subject of the possibility of life outside the Earth, in particular in Mars, was bound to be popular and get the attention of the media, both for its news value and for its scientific relevance. The good results were, somehow, expected.

In second place comes “*The changing rings of Uranus*” (please see appendix D), the press release that accompanied the divulgation of the Press Conference held during the Congress, where the results of the observations of Uranus rings were first presented. Its popularity can easily be explained by the “novelty” of the subject and also by the fact that these scientific discoveries were being published by *Nature*, the prestigious scientific journal. Another important factor was that this release was done in close collaboration with the University of Berkley. This, again, reminds us of what we learned from the questionnaire to journalists: “*credibility*” is on the top list of priorities when it comes to choosing a press release to work on.

If we look at where the press coverage of this event was present, it is interesting to notice that, clearly, and although this was an European scientific event, the majority of news were publish or aired in American media (43.1%) while only 33.2% originated in European media. For a more detailed analysis of the distribution of the press coverage of the European Planetary Science Congress by countries, please see the following chart:

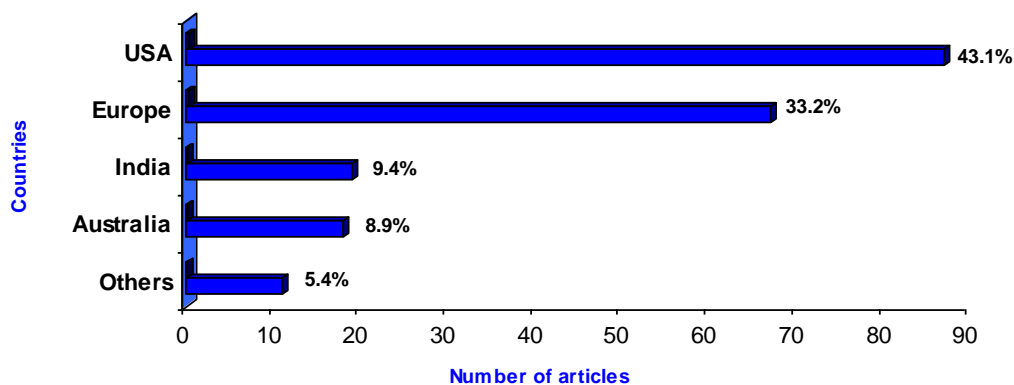


Figure 7: DIVISION OF MEDIA COVERAGE BY COUNTRIES

By analysing the number of news published or aired each day, we can see that the two most intense days regarding coverage were the 23rd and 24th, each with 61 articles. These days correspond respectively to the days when the embargoes for the two most popular press releases - “*The changing rings of Uranus*” and “*Calculating the biomass of Martian soil*” were lifted.

This fact is likely to explain the numbers we can see in the list on the right hand side.

DAY OF PUBLICATION	NUMBER OF ARTICLES
20/8/07	8
21/8/07	3
22/8/07	19
23/8/07	61
24/8/07	61
25/8/07	10
26/8/07	7
27/8/07	12
28/8/07	4
29/8/07	1
31/8/07	5
1/9/07	3
2/9/07	2
3/9/07	5
4/9/07	1
12/9/07	1
TOTAL	203

The press coverage of the II Planetary Science Congress reached many different publications, TVs, blogs, science websites and radio stations. After carefully analysing the clippings we concluded that this coverage was present in a total of 110 different media.

An analysis of all the clipping gathered shows us that only 25% of the news maintained the original headline of the pres release, and only 32% maintained integrally the original text. This may indicate that the press release was “worked” by the journalists or editors of the different publications. Some of them used other sources to complete the story, which could mean that the press release was interesting enough to be worthy of a deeper research.

Of the 203 news analysed, only 32% used the images provided by the Press Office to illustrate the story. Most of the others didn’t use any images or used other sources to get them.

All the media that published or aired news about the European Planetary Science Congress were important for the mission of the Press Office. Yet, we would like to point out some publications that for their journalist importance and prestige assume special significance for our work. Such are the cases of Nature (UK), Sky & Telescope (USA), New Scientist (UK), National Geographic News (USA), The Times (UK), BBC Online (UK), CNN (USA), Scientific American (USA) and Le Monde (FR).

A complete list of the publications and their countries of origin can be found in the list below:

Media	N. of Articles	Media	N. of Articles	Media	N. of Articles
USA		GERMANY		AUSTRALIA	
Aero-News.net	1	Berliner Kurier	1	Brisbane Times	2
Astrobiology Magazine	3	Deutschandfunk	13	Courier Mail	1
Astrobiology News	1	Innovations Report	1	Daily Telegraph	1
Astrobiology.com	1	N24	1	Gizmag	1
BBS News	6	NETZEITUNG	1	iT News	1
CCN News Magazine	2	PR-inside.com	1	IT Wire	1
CNN	1	Rraumfahrer.net	1	Melbourne Herald Sun	1
Current Argus	13	SAT+ Kabel	1	PC Authority	1
DentalPlans.com	1	Scienceticker.info	1	Perth Now	1
Denver Post	1	sueddeutsche.de	1	Perth Now	1
Eureka Alert	1	Wissenschaft.de	1	Sydney Morning Herald	1
Fox News	1	UK		The Adelaide Advertiser	2
Honolulu Star-Bulletin	1	BBC Online	1	The Adelaide Advertiser	1
Houston Chronicle	3	IT Week	1	The Age	1
HULIQ	1	ITV Wales	1	The Australian	1
L A Times	3	Nature	1	The West Australian	1
LiveScience	1	New Scientist	2	PORTUGAL	
Mars Daily	3	Personal Computer World	1	astroPT	1
Mars Today	4	Planetary Society Weblog	1	Ciencia Hoje	1
MSNBC	1	Reuters	2	Diario Digital	1
National Geographic News	1	scenta	2	EMM News Brief	1
NeoSeeker	2	Sunday Telegraph	1	i-gov	1
PhysOrg.com	1	The Daily Mail	1	Jornal de Noticias	1
San Francisco Chronicle	13	The Daily Telegraph	1	O Primeiro de Janeiro	1
Science Daily	1	The Metro	1	Radio Renascença	1
Science Now	2	The Register	1	Radio Televisao Portuguesa	1
Scientific American	1	The Scotsman	2	Sol	1
Sky&Telescope.com	1	The Times	1	INDIA	
Slashdot	2	What PC?	1	Daily India	4
Space Daily	6	FRANCE		Daily News and Analysis	1
Space Ref	5	Referencement Internet-Web	1	Indian Muslims	1
Space.com	1	Le Monde	1	Mathaba.net	1
The News Tribune	1	L'Express	1	NewKerala.com	3
University of Berkley	1	Capital	1	RXPG News	2
YubaNet.com	1	le Point	1	The Hindu	2
BULGARIA		Challenges	1	The Times of India	1
Science Centric	1	CANADA		Zee News	4
ITALY		Regina Leader Post	1	SOUTH AFRICA	
Exduco.net	1	Canada.com	1	Independent	
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES		Montreal Gazette	1	CHINA	
Khaleej Times	1	PAKISTAN		People's Daily Online	1
AUSTRIA		The International News	1		
Der Standard	1	BRUNEI			
ORF.at	1	Brunei Times	1		