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To: Dr. W. Baan
Chairman, EVN Consortium Board of Directors
Director, ASTRON Radio Observatory

Dear Dr. Baan,

Your letter, which was a complete surprise, was carefully reviewed by the leaders of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Federal Space Agency. We quite understand your concerns due to the reiterated changes and delays of the launch date of the Radioastron mission -- the spacecraft with the on-board radio telescope that will form the Space-to-Earth interferometer with ground-based radio telescope networks having the highest angular resolution up to microseconds of arc. We all know from experience that it is not uncommon for delays in projects of this nature, and that quite a number of other space missions have required longer time delays to complete their preparations. In our case, the delay of the Radioastron launch date is related to some financial problems that we have had in Russia. However, despite the financial difficulties, work and research on the project was never stopped. As a matter of fact, in 2002 the Russian Academy of Science together with the Federal Space Agency gave the Radioastron Mission their highest priority. As a result, the annual budget for the Radioastron Mission was increased, and this allowed us to proceed with the multitude of project preparations with a greater degree of intensity. But simultaneous with that, the duration of the Mission will be extended from 3 to 5 years, in order to extend a program of the investigations needed for the success of this project. All issues and concerns dealing with the various Radioastron Mission parameters and coordination can be discussed with the Mission leadership.

In view of the above, I suggest that you consider a possibility of a new Memorandum of Agreement so as to extend the period of collaboration with the Radioastron project according to the new timetable.

With my best regards,



Academician A.F. Andreev
Vice-president of RAS
Space Council of RAS, Chairman

Cc: ESA Headquarters (by email)
NASA Headquarters (by email)
RISC distribution (by email)