

=====
RadioAstron Newsletter
Number 1
January 1, 2010
=====

1. Introduction

This is the first issue of the established RadioAstron Newsletter. We plan to issue it regularly to update the community on the status and progress of the Russian-lead international Space-VLBI project RadioAstron.

The first issue is distributed mainly through the VLBI email exploder managed by the NRAO. If you are interested to receive future issues of the RadioAstron Newsletter, please visit the web site <http://www.asc.rssi.ru/radioastron/newsletter/index.html> and subscribe to the Newsletter.

2. RadioAstron Status

The RadioAstron spacecraft is undergoing the final assembly and tests in the Lavochkin Association. The launch is preliminary planned to happen in June 2010 from Baikonur (Kazakhstan). The Zenit-2 rocket and Fregat-SB booster will be used.

Building of the tracking station in Pushchino on the basis of the 22-meter antennae is finished, tests are undergoing.

The hard disc based RadioAstron data recording (RDR) system and the RadioAstron software correlator located in Astro Space Center are built and tested successfully -- interferometric fringes are found. Ground-based VLBI tests with RadioAstron observing modes involving RDR and RadioAstron software correlator will continue.

Meanwhile international teams of scientists led by the Mission are preparing the fringe search and early science programs. Documents describing these programs as well as announcements of opportunities for observing with the RadioAstron spacecraft are to be announced at a later point.

3. RadioAstron User HandBook

Version 1.0 of the RadioAstron user handbook is made available to the at <http://www.asc.rssi.ru/radioastron/documents/rauh/en/rauh.pdf> This Handbook establishes the design guidelines and the constraints that govern the use of all systems of the RadioAstron mission. It provides description of the spacecraft systems and the access to the mission for scientific use. This Handbook serves primarily as an observer aid on technical and operational issues related to generating an observing proposal. The Handbook will be updated as needed. We encourage all readers and users to provide comments.

We wish you a wonderful New Year!
Nikolai Kardashev (nkardash@asc.rssi.ru)
Yuri Kovalev (yyk@asc.rssi.ru)