



The Virtual Telescope Project

Enjoy the Universe from your Desktop

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Dear Tim and Colleagues of the IAWN Steering Committee,

As the founder, owner and scientific director of the Virtual Telescope Project (VTP), Italy, I'm very pleased to express my intention to join the International Asteroid Warning Network.

I've been involved in asteroid astrometry and photometry since 1997, since I was an amateur astronomer, later becoming a professional astrophysicist. Over the years, because of severe light pollution at my original observing site (MPC code: 470 Ceccano) impacting on my scientific activities, I managed to mainly perform science communication and public outreach on the asteroid and NEO topics. My images and contributions were featured by the most important media and space agencies in the world, offering to the international community the opportunity to look in real-time to asteroids coming close to us and learn about them, online.

Since 2016 I joined Asteroid Day, serving as National Coordinator for Italy since 2016.

Earlier this year I managed to install one of the robotic units (a 0.36m-f/8 telescope + CCD part of the VTP) under very dark skies here in Italy and I could resume my scientific activities (new MPC code: M50 Virtual Telescope Project, Manciano). In 8 weeks, I could contribute to about 20 MPECs, mainly NEOCP objects. Right now, I'm installing there a large field-of-view 0.25m-f/4.4 astrograph and a powerful 0.43m-f/6.8 reflector, going to regularly perform many asteroid observations.

I understand the roles and responsibilities of IAWN members according to the Statement of Intent.

Rome, 19 June 2023.

Dr. Gianluca Masi, PhD