



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Dr Amaury H.M.J. Triaud

School of Physics & Astronomy

A.Triaud@bham.ac.uk

www.amaurytriaud.net

+44 121 414 4588

Letter in support of *The School of Science*

06 August 2018

To whom it may concern,

The School of Science takes place in a small town of rural Croatia, called Požega. Its programmes are aimed at teenagers between 15 and 18 years old, separated in two cohorts of about 20, selected for their high motivation and English proficiency. Each group is further arranged into four to five research projects that are supervised by PhD students and postdoctoral researchers.

My involvement was rather simple. I was asked to come and give a one-hour lecture, which related the discovery of the TRAPPIST-1 system and its cortege of seven Earth-like worlds. We also brushed upon methods to remotely detect the presence of active biology at the surface of another world. The lecture was attended by the participants, and some local citizens, raising many questions, and leading to a couple of interesting debates.

At the time I gave the lecture, the participants had only just started on their research projects, but the scope of their ambition astonished me. This is something that I wish I could have done when their age. They are also well mentored by a team of enthusiast early-career scientists with whom I had many an interesting discussion. Another point of interest was their diverse origins, with participants hailing from 17 different nations. What a way to show how collaboration remains possible despite different languages and cultures!

Overall, I only have positive things in mind about the school. The organisers planned my trip really well, and welcomed me with opened arms, showed me around the city and always ensured that I was content. They are of nice company!

The school is teaching that curiosity is important, and crucially, how the scientific method proceeds. This is creating a generation of scientifically literate individuals, something I can only support and applaud. I sincerely hope the school carries on for many more years!

Warm regards,
Amaury Triaud