**Esploracosmo**

Esploracosmo is the interactive computer laboratory in operation at the Observational Branch of Basovizza.

Esploracosmo can host 25 students and has an educational network TeachNet that connects the PCs equipped with software expressly developed for schools. Projection systems and TV monitors complete the equipment of Esploracosmo. Thanks to the data access, coming from both the OATs archives and the archives of the major professional telescopes of the world, and the possibility to perform remote observations with educational telescopes available in the world, Esploracosmo allows the exploration of the Solar System, stars, nebulae and galaxies, as well as the study of the gravitational laws, one of the building blocks of the structure and evolution of the Universe.

Esploracosmo allows to perform in the Observational Branch of Basovizza the observations with the telescopes of the project "Le Stelle Vanno a Scuola -SVAS" and the activities of the "Virtual Observatory AIDA/WP5 -VO" (see below). The activity proposed in Esploracosmo is managed by an astronomer and lasts about 90 minutes.

To whom who desire to match astronomy with a tour in a research institute, Esploracosmo offers the emotion of the scientific research in contact to the instruments and, thanks to the joint between real and virtual observations, assures educational activities also under a cloudy sky.

EuroVO-AIDA/WP5 is dedicated to teachers interested in teaching astronomy to their students. AIDA/WP5 offers examples, pedagogical units and a dedicated interface, designed specifically for an effective presentation of astronomy in the classroom.

EuroVO-AIDA is part of the European Virtual Observatory project. EuroVO aims at simplifying the access of astronomers to the huge amount of data stored in the archives of professional observatories all around the world. EuroVO-AIDA/WP5 extends to the public, in particular to students and teachers, the benefits of the professional Virtual Observatory (VO).

EuroVO-AIDA/WP5 offers a software to visualize the sky (Stellarium) and a software to access VO data (Aladin). Both software come from a professional version and have been modified to be used by everybody. Several use cases and pedagogical units are available, each one focused on a specific astrophysical problem. These examples include user guides on how to use the software and have been developed with the help of teachers and students.

Software, use cases and documentation can be free downloaded form the AIDA/WP5 web site:

[wwwas.oats.inaf.it/aidawp5](wwwas.oats.inaf.it/aidawp5)

EuroVO-AIDA/WP5 activities can be performed at school or at home, after having downloaded software and documentation. Use cases are mainly designed for 13-18 yr old students, each unit needing about 90 minutes of work. Astronomers of the OATs are available to support teachers who may want to try EuroVO-AIDA/WP5 activities.