

Press Release

## ACe Consortium Signs Contract for the Largest Optical Ground-Based Telescope ever, E-ELT will be a Made in Italy project.

Garching, Germany – May 25, 2016

*Today at ESO's headquarters in Garching Bei Munchen, after four months of negotiations, ACe Consortium signed a contract worth 400M euros, for the construction of the E-ELT (European Extremely Large Telescope).*

*Present at the signature ceremony: Tim De Zeeuw (ESO Director General), the Italian Ministry for public education Stefania Giannini, the Italian Ambassador in Munchen, Renato Cianfarani, the President of the Italian National Institute for Astrophysics **Nichi D'Amico** and the representatives of the Italian industries involved: Mr. Paolo Astaldi (Astaldi), Mr. Luigi Cimolai (Cimolai) and Mr. Gianpietro Marchiori (EIE).*

Last February 5, ESO's Financial Committee awarded the bid for the design, manufacturing, assembly and on-site erection of the world's largest telescope ever, to the Italian ACe Consortium - guided by Astaldi SpA, specialized in the design and the construction of large civil and structural projects, in partnership with Cimolai SpA, leader in the design and construction of large steel structures and EIE GROUP, since 25 years international leader in the management, design and realization of large facilities in the field of Astronomy, Astrophysics and Big Science.

**E-ELT** will be the largest optical telescope ever built: it will be 65 meters high with a weight of 3500 tons and a 39 meter segmented primary mirror diameter. It will be installed in Chile, over Cerro Armazones, in the central part of the Atacama desert 130 km south to the city of Antofagasta and at an altitude of 3000 m above sea level.

**Minister Giannini** says: *"There is no innovation without research and technology transfer. Study and research must go at the same pace with the great work of industry to achieve a real growth and Italy is moving along this direction".*

**Gianpietro Marchiori**, President and CEO of EIE GROUP states with pleasure: *"Today a fundamental step: a 25-years-old path, made of efforts in terms of technological advancement and innovation, is closing and another one, that will bring us to the realization of the largest telescope in the world, is opening. A point well underlined by the Minister is the pair science-industry, which is placed at the center of this path. These results can only be achieved after many years of preparation, where creativity, talent and technology make the difference. It will be a wide-ranging challenge, both scientific and technological, with the Italian industry playing in a leading role".*

The activities on the E-ELT project dated since 2007. Several tenders for the detailed design, manufacturing, transport, on-site erection and acceptance tests were issued in 2012 and went to completion on last December.

**E-ELT** will be a revolutionary optical instrument for astronomical observations in the visible and near infrared; the 39 m diameter primary mirror will be able to collect 13 times the amount of light gathered by the presently available largest telescopes and together with its advanced adaptive optics correction system it will provide images 16 times more sharp than those obtained with the Hubble space

telescope. A summary of the most advanced internationally available technologies, of which Italy holds an undisputable leadership. E-ELT will provide to the international astronomical community the means to explore the most distant zone of the cold Universe, it will allow the detailed study of exoplanets orbiting around distant stars, of supermassive black-holes in the center of large galaxies and the Milky-Way, of the nature of dark matter and its properties, bringing us to the place where gravitational waves arise.

For further Information:

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