



Sacred Stars ESA trip

As winners of the CanSat Malta Competition, the Sacred Stars team had the privilege of representing Malta during the “Engineer for a Day” programme at ESA ESTEC in Leiden, Netherlands. This three-day experience provided students with a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of space engineering, learn from experts in the field, and collaborate with other young engineers from across Europe.

The experience began by an introduction session where the participating winning teams presented their CanSat projects, shared their experiences, and took part in icebreaker activities designed to encourage collaboration and build connections between teams.

The second day was dedicated to ESA ESTEC, the technical centre of the European Space Agency. Students participated in keynote presentations about the development of space missions, visited the impressive ESA facilities, and completed a scavenger hunt in the High Bay area, gaining insight into the scale and complexity of space projects. During the poster session, students presented their CanSat mission to other participants and had the opportunity to learn about the innovative projects developed by teams from different backgrounds.





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A major highlight of the programme was the Concurrent Design Workshop, led by Massimo Bandecchi, founder of ESA's Concurrent Design Facility (CDF) and former Head of Systems Engineering and the CDF. Students were divided into different engineering disciplines and worked together to design a satellite mission aimed at studying solar flares and the Sun's corona. Through this activity, students experienced the importance of systems engineering and gained valuable lessons in communication, teamwork, sharing information, and combining expertise to achieve a common mission objective.

The final day focused on presenting the outcomes of the Concurrent Design Workshop, with student groups showcasing their satellite designs and responding to questions from the audience. Students also participated in a Space Careers panel and role-play activity, where they engaged with professionals working in the space sector and explored the wide range of career pathways available within the industry.

Overall, the trip was an incredibly enriching experience that extended far beyond the technical aspects of space science and engineering. The students developed confidence in presenting their work, strengthened their collaboration and communication skills, and gained a deeper understanding of the opportunities available in STEM careers. The programme provided inspiration, motivation, and unforgettable memories, while allowing the students to proudly represent Malta on an international stage.



We are sincerely grateful to the sponsors and organisers who made this opportunity possible. Their support allowed our students to experience world-class facilities, interact with experts, and take part in an experience that will continue to inspire their future educational and career choices.



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My trip to ESA was a fun and inspiring experience where I learned many new things, enjoyed every activity, and made unforgettable memories. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to organise this amazing opportunity—your time, effort, and dedication made it a truly special experience that I will always remember.

-Giulia Cristina

The ESA trip was exciting and very interesting, As someone who likes space, I enjoyed learning about all sorts of things. The activities were fun - we had to socialise with a lot of people from around Europe and brainstorm new ideas. A huge thank you to those who made this dream possible and gave the group an opportunity as spectacular as this. It was truly unforgettable and I made so many memories with my group and people outside the group

-Sarah Rita Said



The ESA trip was an incredibly valuable experience, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate. It gave me the chance to work alongside students from many different countries, learn directly from professionals in the space sector, and gain a much deeper understanding of engineering and international collaboration. The experience has strengthened my motivation to pursue STEM.

-Nicole Bajada Jones

As someone who's loved astronomy ever since I was little, this experience helped me learn more about the space sector and more about the internal work that goes on there. The activities were quite enjoyable and valuable, and it was interesting getting to go around ESA and ESTEC. I got to work with new people, learn about other countries' CanSat projects, and gain a deeper understanding of opportunities and roles in the space sector. Thank you for giving us this enriching experience, I will cherish the memories and what I learnt here.

—Naiieli-iioana Apap



I just wanted to say a big thank you for such an amazing trip. I had a great time and enjoyed every moment of it. It was a really valuable experience and I've come back with lots of new knowledge and memories that I'll cherish forever. I appreciate all the planning and effort that went into making everything run smoothly. Thank you again for giving us this opportunity and for making the trip such a positive and memorable experience.

~Ella Borg Degiorgio