

## **PUBLIC TALK**

Title: Is there life elsewhere in the Universe?

By

Prof. Mirjana Povic

### **Abstract:**

We live in an amazing and very diverse Universe, in which our Sun is only one of 100-400 billion stars in the Milky Way, and our Milky Way is only one of 2-3 trillion galaxies. The size of our observable Universe is estimated to be about 90 billion light-years. However, the Universe could be much larger than that, even infinite, and in that case the above numbers could be even larger. Realising how small and irrelevant we are in such a large Universe leads us to appreciate the beauty and diversity of species that we have on our Earth, our true home. On the other hand, 'Is there life elsewhere in the Universe?' is one of the most fundamental questions, which will be discussed in this talk, considering different perspectives from modern astronomy and some of the best and most recent scientific data.

### **Bio:**

Mirjana Povic is a Serbian-Spanish astrophysicist, working as researcher at the Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía in Spain, as an associate professor and researcher at the Space Science and Geospatial Institute in Ethiopia, and as an honorary lecturer at Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda. Her main research interests are galaxy formation and evolution, in particular nuclear activity in galaxies, star formation, morphological classification of galaxies, and galaxy clusters. In addition, over more than 15 years, she worked on development in astronomy, science, and education in Africa, through different projects and initiatives related to research collaborations, education, institutional development, policy development, and women and girls in science. She is a current vice-president of the IAU Division C on Education, Outreach and Heritage, African Astronomical Society Executive Committee and Science Committee member, co-convenor of the Astrophysics and Cosmology Working Group under the African Strategy for Fundamental and Applied Physics, and founder and main coordinator of the African Network for Women in Astronomy. She received several awards and recognition for her scientific achievements and contribution to society, in particular for her work in Africa, including the 2018 inaugural Nature Research Award for Inspiring Science, and the 2021 inaugural European Astronomical Society Jocelyn Bell Burnell Inspiration Medal. She believes that through education, science, and technology we can combat poverty in the long term and make our world a better place for everyone in the future, regardless of where the children are born. She identifies herself as a pacifist, and strongly opposes the use of war, militarism and violence as a means of resolving crisis.