

# 25 years of RAGtime: Foreword by the director

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The RAGtime meeting organised in the year 2023 reached the “celebration” number 25. This is a good reason to look back and follow its history.

The idea to each year organise a meeting of scientists and students involved in relativistic astrophysics at the Silesian University in Opava came to my mind at the end of the 20th century. At those times, a group of scientists and their students, who were focusing their research on the processes around compact objects such as black holes and neutron stars, was established at the Institute of Physics, Faculty of Philosophy and Science, Silesian University in Opava. Because of this Relativistic Astrophysics Group (RAG), I invented the name of RAGtime Meetings, and our student Jakub Říčan composed the RAGtime hymn, in fact, a ragtime song with Silesian motives, which is sometimes used even in the recent times. For my decision to organise such a meeting each year, I found strong support from my teachers and colleagues from the Institute of Theoretical Physics at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University in Prague, Jiří Bičák and Jiří Langer, and from my good friends Marek Abramowicz from the Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg and John C. Miller from the University of Oxford, who promised support in establishing an interesting program for these meetings. I have to stress that both Marek and John are playing very important roles in RAGtime meetings at the present time.

We started with the RAGtime Meeting in 1999 with the strong contribution of Standa Hledík, who prepared the format of the contributed papers for the meetings; Standa and I prepared the logo.

It soon became clear that the RAGtime was a very useful idea, as the extent and the scientific relevance of the RAGtime meetings quickly increased, and the content covered many of the most relevant aspects of relativistic astrophysics and cosmology, including the black hole and neutron star physics in many theoretical aspects, with their relation to observational phenomena including the participation on the preparation of important cosmic projects organised under ESA, as ATHENA, eXTP, and others. In the beginning, the pure General Relativistic framework for gravity was considered, along with the Maxwellian framework for the electromagnetic phenomena, but soon, many alternative theories of gravity entered the play, along with various variants of non-linear electrodynamics. Soon after the start of the RAGtime meetings, my students and later my collaborators (Gabo Török, Jan Schee, Jirka Kovář, Petr Slaný, Martin Urbanec, Martin Petrásek, Tomáš Pecháček and others) had an important role in the preparation of the meetings, at the present time strong support also comes from younger colleagues (Deborá Lančová, Martin Kološ, Arman

Tursunov and others). In preparation for the program of the meetings, an important role was played very soon by people from closely collaborating institutes. Namely Vladimír Karas from the Astronomical Institute, Academy of Science of Czech Republic, and his colleagues Michal Bursa and Jiří Horák, Włoddek Kluźniak from the Copernicus Centre Warsaw, Bodo Ahmedov from the Tashkent University, and finally Remo Ruffini and Jorge Rueda from the ECRANET. I would like to thank them for their significant help in establishing very interesting scientific programs for the RAGtime Meetings.

I would like to thank very much all of the colleagues and students who helped in the preparations and organisation of the RAGtime meetings and all of the participants who helped to keep very high standards of the content of the Contributed Papers. I am sure that the RAGtime meetings have strong potential to significantly contribute to the future development of extremely exciting and fascinating research in the area of relativistic astrophysics.