



PRESS RELEASE and INVITATION

**POLARQUEST2018 – SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION IN SAILBOAT IN THE ARCTIC ON THE TRACK OF THE
ITALIA AIRSHIP**

Friday July 6 2018, 11h30

***Società Geografica Italiana, Palazzetto Mattei,
Villa Celimontana, aula Giuseppe Dalla Vedova room
Via della Navicella 12 – 00184 – Roma***

Geneva, 1/07/2018

Less than a month before casting off from Iceland towards the Arctic sea members of the Polarquest2018 (www.polarquest2018.org) expedition on board self-sufficient sailboat **Nanuq** (polar bear in Inuktitut), will meet the press and any other person interested in order to present the route, the objectives, the details of the expedition and answer any question.

The press conference will be presided by the president of the Società Geografica (Italian Geographical society) **Prof. Filippo Bencardino** and moderated by the general secretary **Dr. Rosella Belluso**. **The following Polarquest2018 members will be present:**

- **project leader Paola Catapano**, Science communicator at CERN;
- Geographer **Gianluca Casagrande**, in charge responsible of the geographical observation program and of identifying the probability area of the airship's wreck;
- Expedition technical coordinator and drone pilot **Mike Struik**;
- **Peter Gallinelli**, commanding officer on board, designer and conceiver of **Nanuq**;

Two descendants of the ITALIA crew will also take part: **Sergio Alessandrini**, grandson of Renato Alessandrini, rigger and **Pierpaolo Geissa**, grand nephew of Attilio Caratti, engineer of the Airship.

Route – circumnavigation of Svalbard

The expedition on board of Nanuq will leave on **July 21st** from Isafjordur, Iceland, for a crossing of the Greenland Sea via Jan Mayen to arrive in **Longyearbyen**, administrative capital of the Svalbard Archipelago, the Northernmost “capital” in the world, on **August 1**. She will leave from Longyearbyen on **August 4**, to reach **Ny Aalesund**, the scientific “village” where is based the Italian research station “**Dirigibile ITALIA**” of the CNR, for a **commemorative ceremony** in the presence of the **descendants** of the airship ITALIA crew and authorities. On August 6, Nanuq will set sail to attempt a **complete circumnavigation** of the Svalbard archipelago. From this moment, the expedition will be depending on the ice conditions, along the Northern



shores of the **Spitsbergen** islands. *Nanuq* will follow its route around the main island of the archipelago until its return to Longyearbyen, expected on **August 24**. On August 26, she will finally cross the Barents sea to reach Tromsø, in continental Norway, where the expedition will meet end, probably around **September 4**.

Polarquest2018 scientific projects :

1. ***PolarquEEEst*** (Extrem Energy Events) **Cosmic Explorer**- An unprecedented program for the measurement and study of cosmic rays at polar latitudes, with a detector developed at CERN in Geneva by the Enrico Fermi Centre Rome, in collaboration with the INFN (National Institute for Nuclear Physics), as well as with the participation of school students from Norway, Switzerland and Italy;
2. ***Nanuq-MANTANET***-Microplastics sampling program at sea, for the first time above 80 ° N, with a MANTANET sampling net, under the scientific responsibility of ISMAR-CNR Lerici (IT);
3. ***AURORA*** - Geographical observation program with consumer-level drones from the North coast of Spitsbergen Island and the coasts of Nordaustlandet, defined by the GREAL of the European University of Rome and Società Geografica Italiana;
4. ***Arco di Nobile*** - Experimentation of a new multi-beamer sonar developed by the Norwegian company NORBIT Subsea for the very detailed three-dimensional scanning of the seabed (as yet uncharted) in the area of maximum probability of the airship ITALIA crash in 1928, first targeted attempt at finding the wreckage of the missing airship. An important historical-geographical component will be the identification of certain areas (towards Nordaustlandet) where it is believed that remains of rescue missions on foot can be found, which in 1928-1929 set off in search of the ITALIA airship.

COMMUNICATION - All the scientific activities of Polarquest2018 will be documented and shared - as much as possible - live through social networks and Polarquest2018.org website, live connections with Italian TVRAI-Uno and through the production of a documentary that will be broadcast on various international channels

Institutional Partners and Sponsors

The project is made possible thanks to: **Elysia Capital** and the crowdfunding platform **Global Giving**, **Loterie Romande**, **Fondation Dudley Wright Geneva**.

Research: **Museo Storico e Centro e Ricerche Enrico Fermi**, Rome, **INFN**, **CERN** Geneva; **CNR-ISMAR**; **CNR-Presidenza**; **GREAL Università Europea di Roma**; **Società Geografica Italiana**; **CRS4** Cagliari.



Technological partners: **NORBITS**subsea, **B&G**; **Survitec**, **Drone Capture Systems**, **ALLIANZ**, **Advanced Tracking**, **HAMILTON Watches**, **Drift + Noise Polar Services**, **Fly-to-Discover**, **EWOL**, **Gréments Import**, **Weather Dock**, **SPADE**.

Food on board: **Marramiero** Vini D’Abruzzo; **BARILLA** pasta; **Eli prosciutti** Parma; **Oleificio Andreassi** Pescara; **RODOLFI** – Pomodoro a Parma; **Caseificio Battistero** Parma.

Thanks to: **Museo della Scienza e della Tecnica Leonardo da Vinci** of Milan, to the descendants of the airship crew **ITALIA** and to **RAI Uno – La Vita In Diretta Estate** for the precious collaboration.

Further information on the project: <http://www.polarquest2018.org>

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For press registration, interview requests and information about the press conference:

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