

PhD position in planetary sciences

Royal Observatory of Belgium



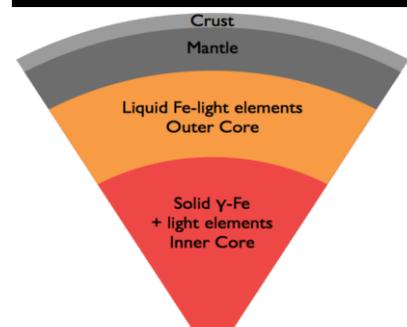
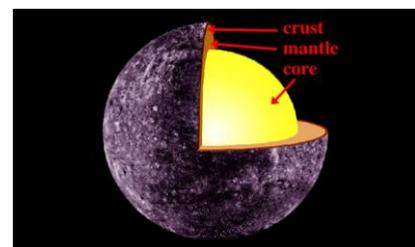
JOB DESCRIPTION

The selected candidate will investigate the interior structure and evolution of Mercury and will participate in the international project COME-IN (CONstraining MErcury's INTERior structure and evolution) funded by BRAIN-be, the Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks. The wealth of data from MESSENGER, the first spacecraft ever in orbit around the planet, is starting to revolutionise Mercury science. COME-IN aims at advancing our understanding of Mercury by integrating complementary approaches from igneous petrology, high-pressure mineral physics, computational materials science, geodesy, and geodynamics.

WHO ARE WE?

The research group in planetary sciences of the Royal Observatory of Belgium is a young and dynamic team of about 20 scientists and engineers. We are active in most ESA and NASA planetary missions, including ESA's BepiColombo mission to be launched to Mercury in 2017.

The Royal Observatory of Belgium is a scientific institute of the Belgian Federal Space Pole. The Observatory's research activities are divided into four scientific themes: Reference Systems and Planetology, Seismology and Gravimetry, Astronomy and Astrophysics, and Solar Physics and Space Weather.



YOUR PROFILE

- Master of science (astronomy and astrophysics, physics, mathematics, geology, or engineering)
- Highly motivated for research
- Strong interest in planets and planetary systems
- Interest in geodynamics and high-pressure mineral physics
- Interest in computational methods
- Creative and pragmatic problem-solving approach
- Willingness to invest in working in an interdisciplinary scientific environment and to prepare a PhD
- Able to communicate fluently in English
- Available for short (typically days or one week) travels abroad

WE OFFER

- Full-time contract of 2 years, with possible extension of 2 years
- Salary and social security are according to the federal regulations for civil servants (salary scale SW1).
- Working conditions include a flexible system of working hours.
- Pleasant and dynamic work environment in a scientific institute located in a green setting in the south of Brussels
- Participation in the international project COME-IN (www.come-in.oma.be)
- Benefits for the employees of the federal scientific institutes include a refund of commuting expenses when using public transportation or bicycle and a collective hospital insurance.

APPLICATION

- Send your application (in PDF format) to Prof. dr. Tim Van Hoolst (tim.vanhoolst@oma.be), project leader in planetary sciences. It should include a motivation letter, a detailed CV (including grades), and the names and contact details of two professional reference persons.
- Application deadline is 5 July 2015.
- Expected start of contract: 1 September 2015.