



European Gravitational Observatory, Tuesday October 3, 2017

Virgo congratulates Rainer Weiss, Kip Thorne and Barry Barish for being awarded the Physics Nobel Prize 2017!

The Virgo collaboration warmly congratulates Rainer Weiss, Kip Thorne and Barry Barish on the award of the [2017 Nobel prize in physics](#) “for decisive contributions to the LIGO detector and the observation of gravitational waves”. The first detection of gravitational waves was announced by the LIGO Scientific Collaboration and the Virgo Collaboration on February 11 2016, five months after the observation of the GW150914 signal, generated by the coalescence of two stellar mass black holes located more than a billion light-years away.

“I am delighted that this year’s Nobel prize has gone to our gravitational wave research”, says Jo van den Brand, from Nikhef and VU University Amsterdam, the spokesperson of the Virgo Collaboration. *“The detection of these minute wrinkles in spacetime constitutes an extraordinary achievement. It is the start of a new chapter in our study of the Universe”*

Since the first discovery, three more gravitational waves generated by two colliding black holes have been detected. [The most recent of these detections](#), on August 14, 2017, was the first one with three detectors at the same time, namely the two Advanced LIGO detectors and the upgraded Advanced Virgo instrument, which jointly operated for 4 weeks starting August 1, 2017.

“This first measurements of gravitational waves confirm an important prediction of Albert Einstein’s general relativity from 1915. This is the culmination of decades of work, both on the theoretical and experimental sides. Having a three-detector global network opens new prospects for multi-messenger astronomy”, adds Federico Ferrini, director of the European Gravitational Observatory (EGO) where the Virgo detector is located.

The Virgo collaboration consists of more than 280 physicists and engineers belonging to 20 different European research groups: six from Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in France; eight from the Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (INFN) in Italy; two in The Netherlands with Nikhef; the MTA Wigner RCP in Hungary; the POLGRAW group in Poland; Spain with the University of Valencia; and EGO, the laboratory hosting the Virgo detector near Pisa in Italy.