



European Organization for Nuclear Research
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Dear Trustees of the Birmingham Museums Trust,

Over the last eight months, I have been directing the production of a planetarium show about Dark Matter. This project is an international collaboration between CERN, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California, the University of Texas in Arlington, the Michigan State University and the Valencia Institute of Particle Physics, and counts on its board many respected scientists, including a Nobel-prize winner.

When we had to pick a dome to do production tests, the choice was the Birmingham Thinktank Planetarium. We have closer and cheaper alternatives available, yet we made this choice entirely because of the interaction with the planetarium manager, Mario Di Maggio.

Mario is an extremely dynamic, reliable and knowledgeable professional who has a truly innovative vision of the community role a planetarium may have in a city like Birmingham. This is expressed in the way he engages in projects like the Dome Club (an event I had the luck to attend on my first visit to the city, showcasing a clear pioneering and educational character) or his involvement and recognition in the fulldome community. Also his role on involving his facility in projects such as ours, that will have a very wide distribution and will increase the visibility of the Thinktank Planetarium worldwide.

If Mario's role in the planetarium were to be terminated or his freedom to engage in collaborations like the one we have in place were restricted, it would be truly sad and damaging for the city's future projection in this domain. We would be very happy if instead we could consider the Thinktank planetarium as a partner for eventual future projects.

Best Regards,

Joao Pequenaó
CERN Media Lab