



## **Swiss team wins 11th edition of European Rover Challenge**

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**Three days of exciting competition, dozens of teams from around the world, and one goal: to see which design will perform best in conditions inspired by real space missions.**

This was the finale of the 11th edition of the European Rover Challenge (ERC), the largest space and robotics event in Europe. On the campus of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, engineering students from different continents competed in tasks that may be performed in the future by robots exploring Mars and the Moon. After an exciting competition, the team from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne won.

The European Rover Challenge is Europe's largest international Mars robot competition, held annually in Poland. The best academic teams from around the world compete in it, testing their rovers in tasks inspired by real space missions. In the 11th edition, 25 teams selected from over 100 applications from universities in various countries, including Poland, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, India, Egypt, and Turkey, competed. As many as five Polish teams made it to the final, traditionally confirming the high level of domestic designers.

This year's winner was the Swiss team EPFL Xplore, representing the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, which scored the highest number of points, impressing the jury with the precision and innovation of its design. Second place went to STAR Dresden e.V., representing the Technical University of Dresden, and third place went to the hosts, AGH Space Systems from the AGH University of Science and Technology.

### **Missions on Earth's Mars**

The tasks faced by the teams were inspired by the real challenges that space agency specialists face on a daily basis. The robots had to independently explore the terrain, collect and secure samples for astrobiological analysis, perform precision maintenance work, and even work with drones to search for objects in difficult terrain. It was a test of both technology and teamwork skills.

"The competition was extremely close, and its level is growing every year. It is a pleasure to see how we are educating the next generation of engineers, both among those who take part in the competition and among the youngest viewers. ERC is the only event in Europe that brings together academia, engineers, and the space industry with the general public. Our event has become a permanent fixture in the space industry calendar and a space where science, technology, and education meet in practice," says Łukasz Wilczyński, president of the European Space Foundation, organizer of the ERC.

### **Poland still at the forefront**

Teams from Poland were strongly represented, with as many as five qualifying for the finals. The best



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of them was the team from the AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, which took third place on the podium. This is further proof that Polish students maintain world-class standards in space engineering and mobile robotics.

"The European Rover Challenge is more than just a competition for our university – it is a true celebration of science and technology. We are delighted to have hosted young engineers from around the world in Krakow and to have seen their innovative solutions prove themselves in conditions inspired by space missions. This event not only allows students to develop the skills of the future, but also inspires thousands of spectators, especially young people, to discover the fascinating world of science and new technologies. For AGH, the opportunity to co-organize the ERC and contribute to the development of the space sector is a source of great pride," emphasized Prof. Jerzy Lis, Rector of AGH in Krakow.

### **Science, passion, and business in one place**

ERC is not just about rover competitions. The event was accompanied by a popular science conference, divided this year into three thematic blocks: Earth, Moon, and Space. The audience had the opportunity to listen to experts from ESA, CBK PAN, ispace Europe, and representatives of many technology companies. Topics discussed included the circular economy, the Artemis program mission, space and digital medicine, as well as the missions to the International Space Station planned for 2026.

For all seekers of technological innovations and astronomy enthusiasts, regardless of age and level of knowledge, there was a scientific exhibitor zone — a space full of scientific experiments, educational workshops, and demonstrations of robots and 3D printing. ERC is also a place for industry meetings — companies and start-ups establish contacts with partners here and can also learn how to obtain funding for their projects. Thanks to this, every year the event becomes a meeting place for science, business, and the general public.

### **Organizers and partners**

ERC 2025 was organized by the European Space Foundation, and co-organized by the AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow. The Małopolska Province was the regional partner, and the City of Krakow served as the host city.

The honorary patronage over the event was taken by: the Minister of Education, the Minister of Science and Higher Education, the Marshal of the Małopolska Province, the Mayor of Krakow, and the Space Sector Employers' Association.

Partners included the US Consulate in Krakow, the Association of Polish Space Professionals, Mars Society Poland, the Polish Space Agency, MathWorks, DPS Software, the Polish Tourist Organization, the Poland Convention Bureau, and the Business in Małopolska Center. The project is financed from the state budget allocated by the Minister of Education and Science as part of the "Social Responsibility of Science II" program.



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The European Rover Challenge (ERC) - a regular international Mars robot competition held in Poland - attracts leading academic teams from many countries every year. The ERC is Europe's largest platform for scientific and technological communities to meet with the general public, combining technology demonstrations with science popularization and business. The inaugural edition took place in 2014.

Details are available at: [www.roverchallenge.eu](http://www.roverchallenge.eu).