



16 Virtual Institute of Astroparticle Physics and Discussions at XVIII Bled Workshop

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Abstract. Being a unique multi-functional complex of science and education online, Virtual Institute of Astroparticle Physics (VIA) operates on website <http://viavca.in2p3.fr/site.html>. It supports presentation online for the most interesting theoretical and experimental results, participation in conferences and meetings, various forms of collaborative scientific work as well as programs of education at distance, combining online videoconferences with extensive library of records of previous meetings and Discussions on Forum. Since 2014 VIA online lectures combined with individual work on Forum is being elaborated in a specific tool for MOOC activity. The VIA facility is regularly effectively used in the programs of Bled Workshops. At XVIII Bled Workshop it provided a world-wide discussion of the open questions of physics beyond the standard model, supporting presentations at distance and world-wide propagation of discussions at this meeting.

Povzetek. Virtual Institute of Astroparticle Physics (VIA), ki deluje na spletni strani <http://viavca.in2p3.fr/site.html>, je vsestranski sistem za podporo znanosti in izobraževanja na spletu. Sistem podpira neposredne spletne predstavitve najbolj zanimivih teoretičnih in eksperimentalnih rezultatov, udeležbo na konferencah in srečanjih, različne oblike skupnega znanstvenega dela, pa tudi programe izobraževanja na daljavo, ki povezujejo neposredne videokonference in zapise prejšnjih srečanj in diskusij na spletnem forumu VIA. Od leta 2014 se kombinacija neposrednih spletnih predavanj in individualnega dela na spletnih forumih VIA razvija kot orodje za množično spletno izobraževanje na daljavo (MOOC). Sredstva VIA se redno učinkovito uporablja na blejskih delavnicah. Na letošnji, osemnajsti, delavnici je omogočila diskusijo udeležencev iz vseh koncev sveta o odprtih vprašanjih fizike onkraj standardnih modelov fizike osnovnih delcev in kozmologije ter podporo predstavitev na daljavo in svetovno dostopnost diskusij na delavnici.

16.1 Introduction

Studies in astroparticle physics link astrophysics, cosmology, particle and nuclear physics and involve hundreds of scientific groups linked by regional networks (like ASPERA/ApPEC [1,2]) and national centers. The exciting progress in these studies

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will have impact on the knowledge on the structure of microworld and Universe in their fundamental relationship and on the basic, still unknown, physical laws of Nature (see e.g. [3,4] for review).

Virtual Institute of Astroparticle Physics (VIA) [5] was organized with the aim to play the role of an unifying and coordinating structure for astroparticle physics. Starting from the January of 2008 the activity of the Institute takes place on its website [6] in a form of regular weekly videoconferences with VIA lectures, covering all the theoretical and experimental activities in astroparticle physics and related topics. The library of records of these lectures, talks and their presentations was accomplished by multi-lingual Forum. In 2008 VIA complex was effectively used for the first time for participation at distance in XI Bled Workshop [7]. Since then VIA videoconferences became a natural part of Bled Workshops' programs, opening the virtual room of discussions to the world-wide audience. Its progress was presented in [8–13]. Here the current state-of-art of VIA complex, integrated since 2009 in the structure of APC Laboratory, is presented in order to clarify the way in which VIA discussion of open questions beyond the standard model took place in the framework of XVIII Bled Workshop.

16.2 The structure of VIA complex and forms of its activity

16.2.1 The forms of VIA activity

The structure of VIA complex is illustrated on Fig. 16.1. The home page, presented on this figure, contains the information on VIA activity and menu, linking to directories (along the upper line from left to right): with general information on VIA (About VIA), entrance to VIA virtual rooms (Rooms), the library of records and presentations (Previous) of VIA Lectures (Previous → Lectures), records of online transmissions of Conferences (Previous → Conferences), APC Colloquiums (Previous → APC Colloquiums), APC Seminars (Previous → APC Seminars) and Events (Previous → Events), Calender of the past and future VIA events (All events) and VIA Forum (Forum). In the upper right angle there are links to Google search engine (Search in site) and to contact information (Contacts). The announcement of the next VIA lecture and VIA online transmission of APC Colloquium occupy the main part of the homepage with the record of the most recent VIA events below. In the announced time of the event (VIA lecture or transmitted APC Colloquium) it is sufficient to click on "to participate" on the announcement and to Enter as Guest (printing your name) in the corresponding Virtual room. The Calender links to the program of future VIA lectures and events. The right column on the VIA homepage lists the announcements of the regularly up-dated hot news of Astroparticle physics and related areas.

In 2010 special COSMOVIA tours were undertaken in Switzerland (Geneva), Belgium (Brussels, Liege) and Italy (Turin, Pisa, Bari, Lecce) in order to test stability of VIA online transmissions from different parts of Europe. Positive results of these tests have proved the stability of VIA system and stimulated this practice at XIII Bled Workshop. The records of the videoconferences at the XIII Bled Workshop are available on VIA site [14].

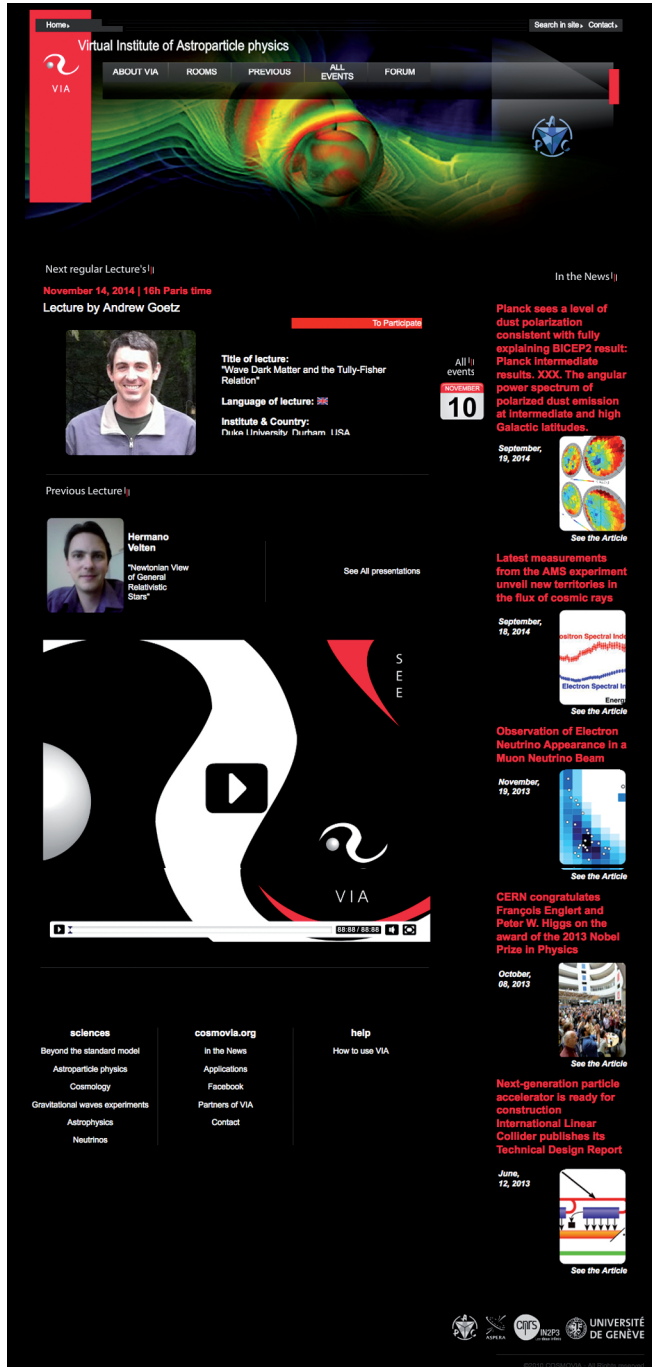


Fig. 16.1. The home page of VIA site

Since 2011 VIA facility was used for the tasks of the Paris Center of Cosmological Physics (PCCP), chaired by G. Smoot, for the public programme "The two infinities" conveyed by J.L.Robert and for effective support a participation at distance at meetings of the Double Chooz collaboration. In the latter case, the experimentalists, being at shift, took part in the collaboration meeting in such a virtual way.

The simplicity of VIA facility for ordinary users was demonstrated at XIV Bled Workshop in 2011. Videoconferences at this Workshop had no special technical support except for WiFi Internet connection and ordinary laptops with their internal video and audio equipments. This test has proved the ability to use VIA facility at any place with at least decent Internet connection. Of course the quality of records is not as good in this case as with the use of special equipment, but still it is sufficient to support fruitful scientific discussion as can be illustrated by the record of VIA presentation "New physics and its experimental probes" given by John Ellis from his office in CERN (see the records in [15]).

In 2012 VIA facility, regularly used for programs of VIA lectures and transmission of APC Colloquiums, has extended its applications to support M.Khlopov's talk at distance at Astrophysics seminar in Moscow, videoconference in PCCP, participation at distance in APC-Hamburg-Oxford network meeting as well as to provide online transmissions from the lectures at Science Festival 2012 in University Paris7. VIA communication has effectively resolved the problem of referee's attendance at the defence of PhD thesis by Mariana Vargas in APC. The referees made their reports and participated in discussion in the regime of VIA videoconference. In 2012 VIA facility was first used for online transmissions from the Science Festival in the University Paris 7. This tradition was continued in 2013, when the transmissions of meetings at Journées nationales du Développement Logiciel (JDEV2013) at Ecole Polytechnique (Paris) were organized [17].

In 2013 VIA lecture by Prof. Martin Pohl was one of the first places at which the first hand information on the first results of AMS02 experiment was presented [16].

In 2014 the 100th anniversary of one of the founders of Cosmoparticle physics, Ya. B. Zeldovich, was celebrated. With the use of VIA M.Khlopov could contribute the programme of the "Subatomic particles, Nucleons, Atoms, Universe: Processes and Structure International conference in honor of Ya. B. Zeldovich 100th Anniversary" (Minsk, Belarus) by his talk "Cosmoparticle physics: the Universe as a laboratory of elementary particles" [18] and the programme of "Conference YaB-100, dedicated to 100 Anniversary of Yakov Borisovich Zeldovich" (Moscow, Russia) by his talk "Cosmology and particle physics" [19].

In 2015 VIA facility supported the talk at distance at All Moscow Astrophysical seminar "Cosmoparticle physics of dark matter and structures in the Universe" by Maxim Yu. Khlopov and the work of the Section "Dark matter" of the International Conference on Particle Physics and Astrophysics (Moscow, 5-10 October 2015). Though the conference room was situated in Milan Hotel in Moscow all the presentations at this Section were given at distance (by Rita Bernabei from Rome, Italy; by Juan Jose Gomez-Cadenas, Paterna, University of Valencia, Spain and by

Dmitri Semikoz, Martin Bucher and Maxim Khlopov from Paris) and its work was chaired by M.Khlopov from Paris [22].

The discussion of questions that were put forward in the interactive VIA events can be continued and extended on VIA Forum. The Forum is intended to cover the topics: beyond the standard model, astroparticle physics, cosmology, gravitational wave experiments, astrophysics, neutrinos. Presently activated in English, French and Russian with trivial extension to other languages, the Forum represents a first step on the way to multi-lingual character of VIA complex and its activity.

16.2.2 VIA e-learning and MOOC

One of the interesting forms of VIA activity is the educational work at distance. For the last six years M.Khlopov's course "Introduction to cosmoparticle physics" is given in the form of VIA videoconferences and the records of these lectures and their ppt presentations are put in the corresponding directory of the Forum [20]. Having attended the VIA course of lectures in order to be admitted to exam students should put on Forum a post with their small thesis. Professor's comments and proposed corrections are put in a Post reply so that students should continuously present on Forum improved versions of work until it is accepted as satisfactory. Then they are admitted to pass their exam. The record of videoconference with their oral exam is also put in the corresponding directory of Forum. Such procedure provides completely transparent way of evaluation of students' knowledge.

Since 2014 the second part of this course is given in English in order to develop VIA system as a possible tool for Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) activity [21]. The students must write their small thesis, present it and being admitted to exam pass it in English. The restricted number of online connections to videoconferences with VIA lectures is compensated by the wide-world access to their records on VIA Forum and in the context of MOOC VIA Forum and videoconferencing system can be used for individual online work with advanced participants.

16.2.3 Organisation of VIA events and meetings

First tests of VIA system, described in [5,7-9], involved various systems of videoconferencing. They included skype, VRVS, EVO, WEBEX, marratech and adobe Connect. In the result of these tests the adobe Connect system was chosen and properly acquired. Its advantages are: relatively easy use for participants, a possibility to make presentation in a video contact between presenter and audience, a possibility to make high quality records, to use a whiteboard tools for discussions, the option to open desktop and to work online with texts in any format.

Initially the amount of connections to the virtual room at VIA lectures and discussions usually didn't exceed 20. However, the sensational character of the exciting news on superluminal propagation of neutrinos acquired the number of participants, exceeding this allowed upper limit at the talk "OPERA versus

Maxwell and Einstein" given by John Ellis from CERN. The complete record of this talk and is available on VIA website [23]. For the first time the problem of necessity in extension of this limit was put forward and it was resolved by creation of a virtual "infinity room", which can host any reasonable amount of participants. Starting from 2013 this room became the only main virtual VIA room, but for specific events, like Collaboration meetings or transmissions from science festivals, special virtual rooms can be created. This solution strongly reduces the price of the licence for the use of the adobeConnect videoconferencing, retaining a possibility for creation of new rooms with the only limit to one administrating Host for all of them.

The ppt or pdf file of presentation is uploaded in the system in advance and then demonstrated in the central window. Video images of presenter and participants appear in the right window, while in the lower left window the list of all the attendees is given. To protect the quality of sound and record, the participants are required to switch out their microphones during presentation and to use the upper left Chat window for immediate comments and urgent questions. The Chat window can be also used by participants, having no microphone, for questions and comments during Discussion. The interactive form of VIA lectures provides oral discussion, comments and questions during the lecture. Participant should use in this case a "raise hand" option, so that presenter gets signal to switch out his microphone and let the participant to speak. In the end of presentation the central window can be used for a whiteboard utility as well as the whole structure of windows can be changed, e.g. by making full screen the window with the images of participants of discussion.

Regular activity of VIA as a part of APC includes online transmissions of all the APC Colloquiums and of some topical APC Seminars, which may be of interest for a wide audience. Online transmissions are arranged in the manner, most convenient for presenters, prepared to give their talk in the conference room in a normal way, projecting slides from their laptop on the screen. Having uploaded in advance these slides in the VIA system, VIA operator, sitting in the conference room, changes them following presenter, directing simultaneously webcam on the presenter and the audience.

16.3 VIA Sessions at XVIII Bled Workshop

VIA sessions of XVIII Bled Workshop have developed from the first experience at XI Bled Workshop [7] and their more regular practice at XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI and XVII Bled Workshops [8–13]. They became a regular part of the Bled Workshop's programme.

In the course of XVIII Bled Workshop meeting the list of open questions was stipulated, which was proposed for wide discussion with the use of VIA facility. The list of these questions was put on VIA Forum (see [24]) and all the participants of VIA sessions were invited to address them during VIA discussions. During the XVIII Bled Workshop the test of not only minimal necessary equipment, but either of the use of VIA facility by ordinary non-experienced users was undertaken. VIA Sessions were supported by personal laptop with WiFi Internet connection only, as

well as in 2015 the members of VIA team were physically absent in Bled and all the videoconferences were directed by M.Khlopov at distance. It principally confirmed a possibility to provide effective interactive online VIA videoconferences even in the absence of any special equipment and qualified personnel at place. Only laptop with microphone and webcam together with WiFi Internet connection was proved to support not only attendance, but also VIA presentations and discussions. In the absence of WiFi connection, the 3G connection of iPhone was sufficient for VIA management and presentations. However technical problems didn't provide time for all the talks scheduled for VIA Session.

In the framework of the program of XVIII Bled Workshop, M. Khlopov, gave his talk "Composite dark matter" (Fig. 16.2). It provided an additional demonstration of the ability of VIA to support the creative non-formal atmosphere of Bled Workshops (see records in [25]). VIA facility has provided presentation at distance

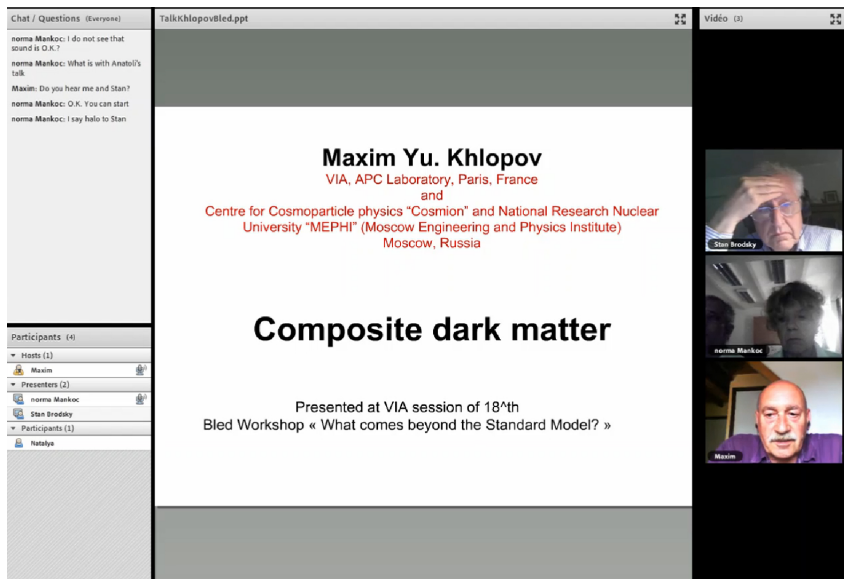


Fig. 16.2. VIA talk by M.Khlopov given from Paris at XVIII Bled Workshop

for talks "Particle Dark Matter direct detection" by Rita Bernabei and Riccardo Cerulli (Rome University TorVergata, Italy) (Fig. 16.3) and "New Perspectives for Hadron Physics and the Cosmological Constant Problem" by Stan Brodsky (SLAC, USA) (Fig. 16.4)

VIA sessions also included talks of Bled participants of the Workshop: "Regularization of conformal correlators" by Lorianò Bonora (Fig. 16.5) and "Novel string field" by Holger Bech Nielsen.

Due to technical problems and the lack of time during the Workshop it was not possible to support by VIA the talk "The Spin-Charge-Family theory offers the explanation for all the assumptions of the Standard model, for the Dark matter, for the Matter-antimatter asymmetry, for... ,making several predictions" by Norma

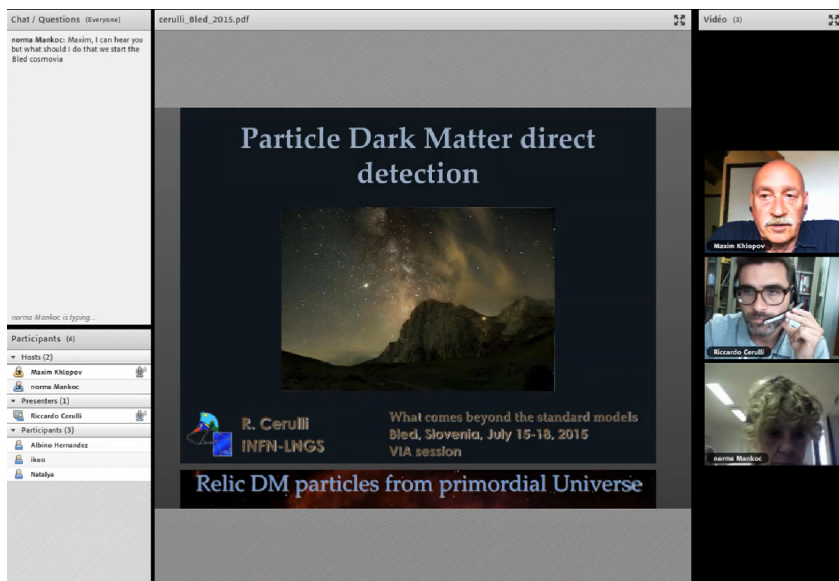


Fig. 16.3. VIA talk of R.Bernabei and R.Cerulli presented by R.Cerulli from Rome, Italy at XVIII Bled Workshop

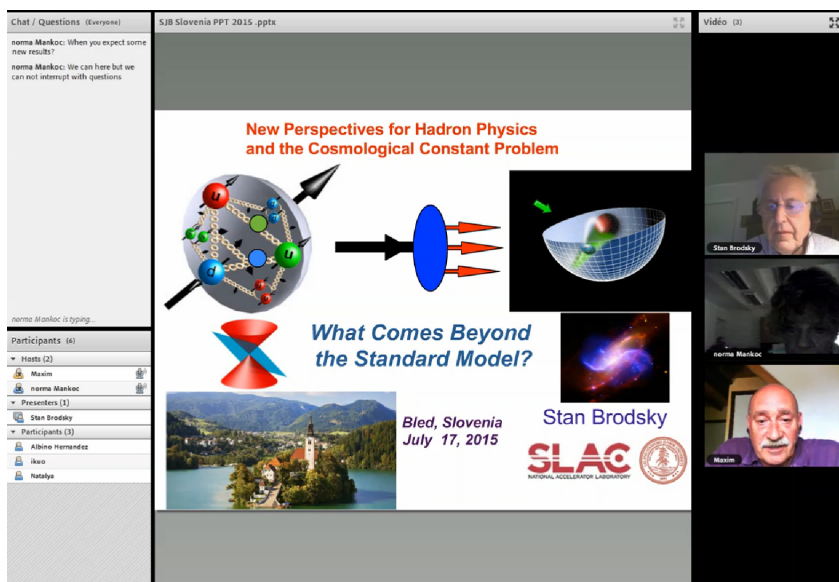


Fig. 16.4. VIA talk by Stan Brodsky from SLAC, USA at XVIII Bled Workshop

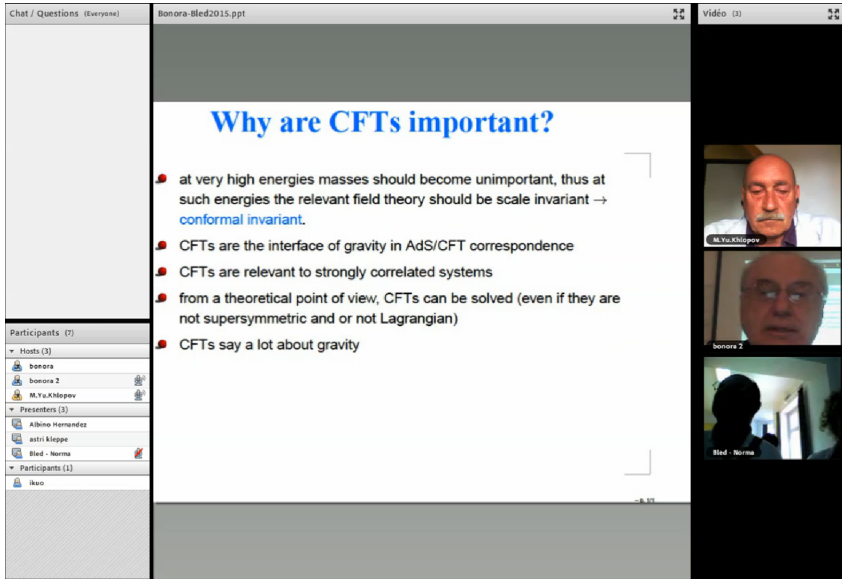


Fig. 16.5. VIA talk by Lorian Bonora at XVIII Bled Workshop

Mankoc-Borstnik. This talk was given in VIA specially later, so that its record has appeared in the list of VIA presentations at the XVIII Bled Workshop (Fig. 16.6). The records of all these lectures and discussions can be found in VIA library [25].

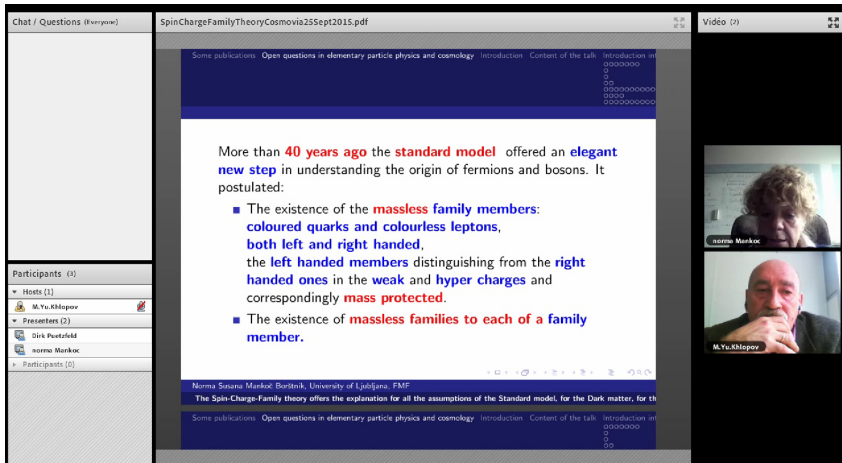


Fig. 16.6. VIA talk by N. Mankoc-Borstnik at XVIII Bled Workshop

16.4 Conclusions

The Scientific-Educational complex of Virtual Institute of Astroparticle physics provides regular communication between different groups and scientists, working in different scientific fields and parts of the world, the first-hand information on the newest scientific results, as well as support for various educational programs at distance. This activity would easily allow finding mutual interest and organizing task forces for different scientific topics of astroparticle physics and related topics. It can help in the elaboration of strategy of experimental particle, nuclear, astrophysical and cosmological studies as well as in proper analysis of experimental data. It can provide young talented people from all over the world to get the highest level education, come in direct interactive contact with the world known scientists and to find their place in the fundamental research. These educational aspects of VIA activity is now being evolved in a specific tool for MOOC. VIA applications can go far beyond the particular tasks of astroparticle physics and give rise to an interactive system of mass media communications.

VIA sessions became a natural part of a program of Bled Workshops, maintaining the platform of discussions of physics beyond the Standard Model for distant participants from all the world. The experience of VIA applications at Bled Workshops plays important role in the development of VIA facility as an effective tool of e-science and e-learning.

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