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Paranal observatory as a showcase of European cooperation

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ESO's Paranal Observatory, the flagship of European astronomy, is located in one of the most inhospitable areas of the Atacama desert in Chile. Besides its role in enabling world-class astrophysical research by European scientists, Paranal Observatory offers an excellent success story to raise awareness of the power of cooperation within Europe, and also of Europe with other countries. Paranal is frequently visited by officials, decision makers, and influential personalities of the ESO Member States, of the Host State Chile, and of many other countries. The observatory location, setup and facilities provide an excellent framework to convey key messages on international cooperation at work, the role of intergovernmental organisations, interaction with industry, outreach, etc., all this customized to the area of interest of the visitors. This talk will present some reflections on the rationale and outcome of visits to Paranal Observatory based on the speaker's experience.

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