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## The Athena X-ray Observatory

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Athena is the second large mission of the Cosmic Vision science program of the European Space Agency. Dedicated to the study of the Hot and Energetic Universe, Athena will carry a large aperture X-ray telescope, and two complementary focal plane instruments: the Wide Field Imager (WFI) and the X-ray Integral Field Unit (X-IFU). In this talk, I will briefly recall the prime scientific objectives of Athena, aiming at understanding the formation and evolution of large scale structures and on the role of black holes in shaping the Universe. I will then describe the mission profile and the science payload, emphasising on its X-IFU, whose breakthrough capabilities will contribute to make Athena the most powerful X-ray observatory ever launched. I will report on the latest status of the mission, including the anticipated performance of its payload. Athena is to be launched at the start of the 2030s.

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