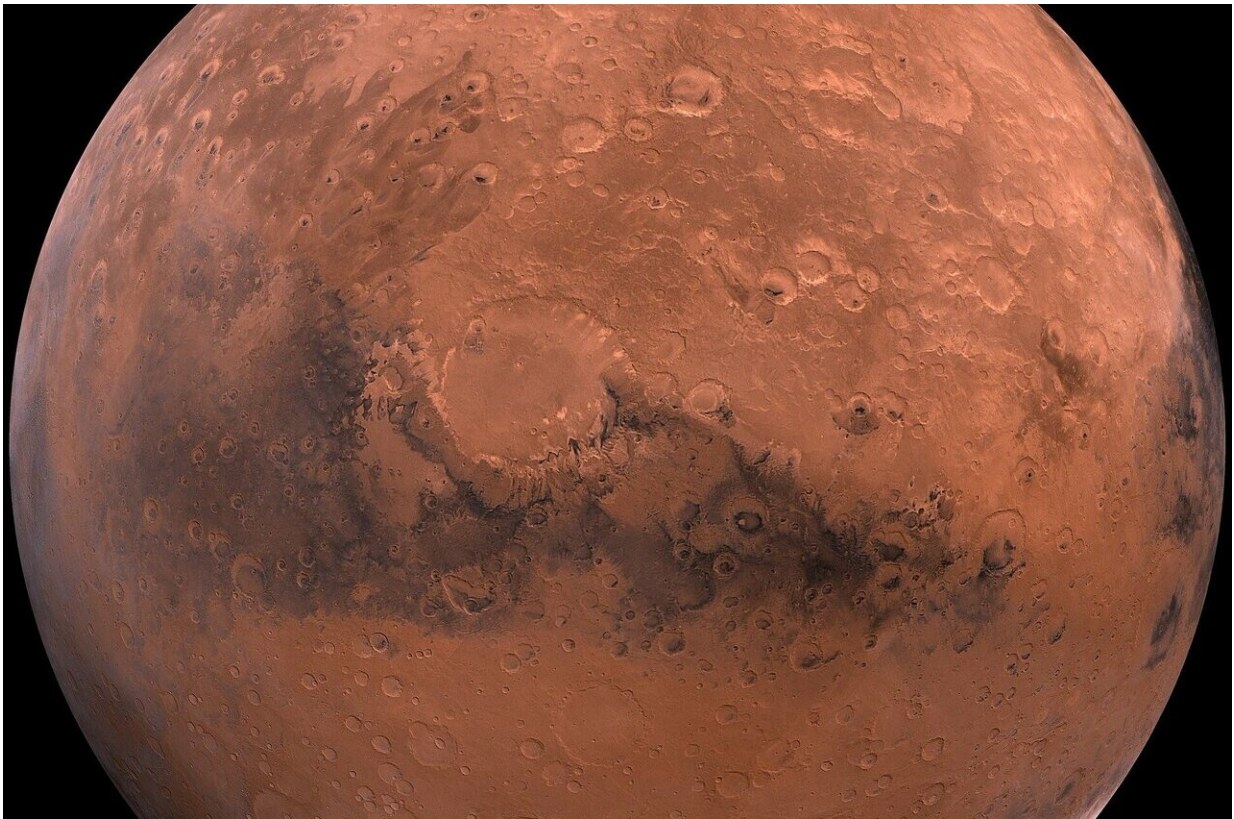


Far out: Bosnian village tickled to share name with Mars crater

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The tiny village of Jezero in western Bosnia is "too happy" to share its name with a crater on planet Mars that will be the landing site for NASA's 2020 Mars rover, its mayor said Thursday.

Earlier this week, mayor Snezana Ruzicic received a letter from the US space agency honouring the link between the village and its other-worldly twin.

The 28-mile-wide (45-kilometre-wide) crater on Mars was named after the Bosnian village because it was once home to a river-fed lake like the one just outside Jezero, according to NASA.

While the earthly village has no more than 1,400 people, it is at least "a bigger population than the inhabitants on Mars!" the mayor laughed.

Jokes aside, "we see it as an opportunity for the development of our locality," added the 43-year-old who plans to ask for help from NASA on ecological projects.

In its letter, the director of NASA's Mars Exploration, James Watzin, said he wanted to "recognize your town for its connection to this upcoming mission."

"We hope that you will follow the endeavors of the Mars 2020 rover as it makes this journey," he added.

The Mars 2020 rover will be launched in July 2020, aiming to touch down in February 2021.

Jezero Crater was set as the rover's destination last November.

The [village](#) will host public screenings to follow rover's journey, the mayor assured.

In a poor country burdened with gloomy news about a faltering economy and bitter ethnic divisions, the announcement has become fodder for Bosnia's trademark gallows humour.

"NASA is expected to name the 51,197 square kilometres (the area of Bosnia) around the [crater](#) Bosnia and Hercegovina because this part of Mars looks so much like the atmosphere in our country," local journalist Almir Panjeta wrote on his Facebook page.

In response, [mayor](#) Ruzicic kept the joke rolling:

"If we can not get our rights on Earth, we, the inhabitants of Jezero, will have priority for this trip," she said.

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