

Asteroid hits Earth hours after being spotted, meteor turns into 'beautiful' fireball over Europe

April 17 2023, by Jordan Mendoza



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

An asteroid hit Earth hours after it was discovered Monday, turning into a dazzling fireball that was spotted throughout Europe.

Around 12:18 p.m. ET Sunday, astronomer Krisztián Sárneczky detected

an [asteroid](#)—initially dubbed Sar2667—at the Piszkestető Observatory in Hungary, the European Space Agency said in a news release. After a second observation was made minutes later, it was reported to the International Astronomical Union Minor Planet Center.

'100% impact probability'

About 40 minutes after the asteroid was discovered, the Višnjan Observatory in Croatia confirmed the object. The ESA said various impact assessment systems observed the asteroid and determined it has a "100% impact probability" above the English Channel—the strip of the Atlantic Ocean between southern England and northern France.

Luckily, astronomers said it was a 3-foot asteroid, officially named 2023 CX1, meaning it posed no threat to Earth or humanity.

Asteroid 2023 CX1 hits Earth, turns into fireball seen throughout Europe

Astronomers around the world continued to observe the asteroid through Sunday night into Monday morning, spotting it until it became "invisible" as it fell into Earth's shadow, the ESA said.

At 2:58 a.m. UT (9:58 p.m. ET), the asteroid entered Earth's atmosphere, turning into a "beautiful [fireball](#)" that streaked across the European skies. A fireball is another name for an usually bright meteor that has burned up in Earth's atmosphere, NASA says.

The meteor was spotted throughout western Europe, as the International Meteor Organization said it received 61 reports of the fireball across Wales, England, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

The ESA said its possible some fragments of the asteroid could have survived and made it near the coast north of Rouen in Normandy, France.

Several videos of the fireball were posted on Twitter.

Asteroids spotted just before hitting Earth

Officials said this was the seventh time an asteroid had been detected just before it hit Earth.

One of the most recent instances also involved Sárneczky; in March 2022, a fridge-sized asteroid—about 6 1/2 -feet-long—hit Earth two hours after he initially spotted it.

NASA's Asteroid Watch said although asteroids like 2023 CX1 aren't a threat to humanity, they are an "excellent exercise" of Earth's planetary defense capabilities, as the ESA added spotting these asteroids just before they hit Earth is "a sign of the rapid advances in global detection capabilities."

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