THE RECORD NEUTRINO

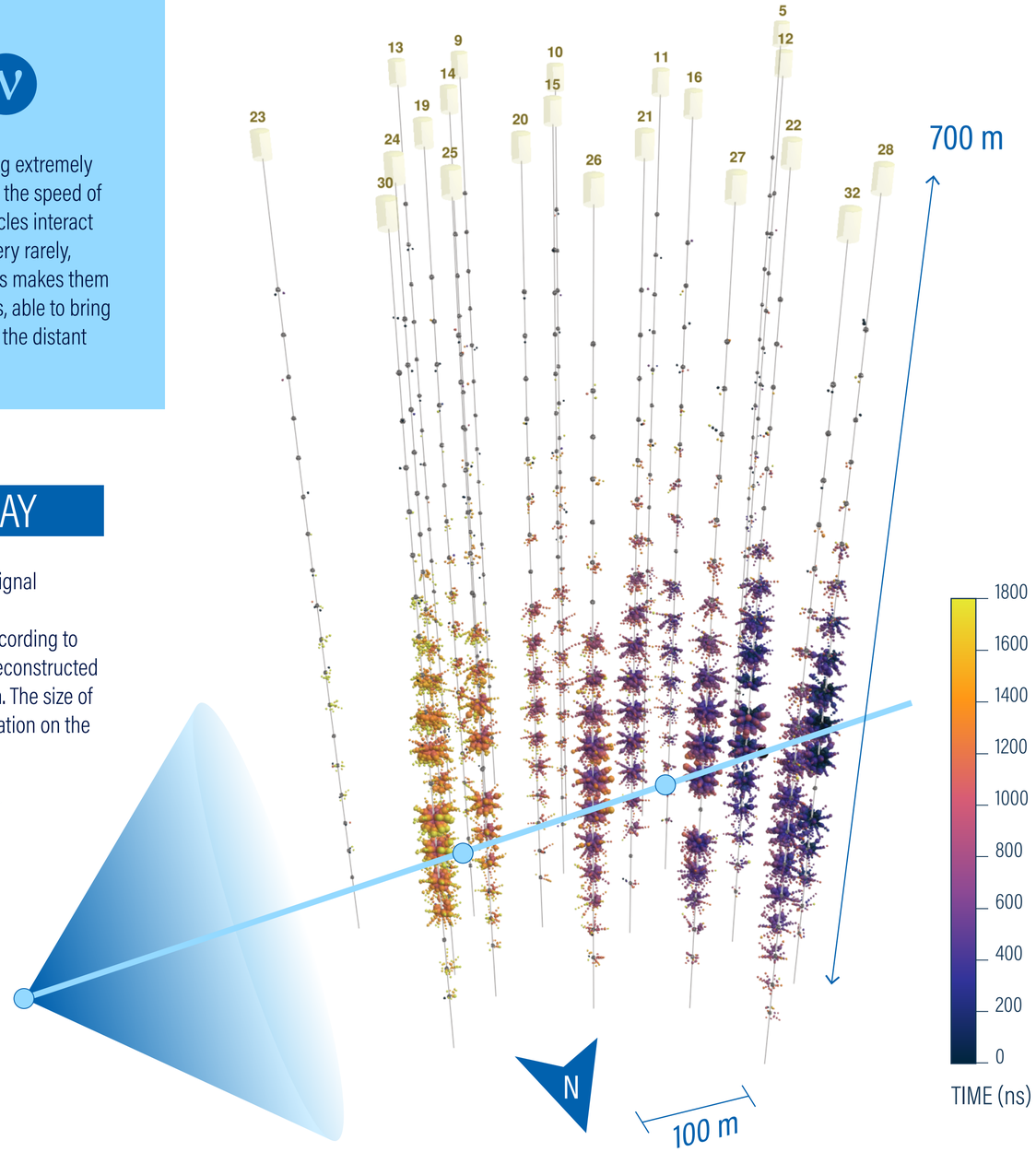
On 13 February 2023, at a depth of 3450 metres off the coast of Sicily, in Italy, the ARCA detector of the KM3NeT submarine neutrino telescope recorded an extraordinary signal: produced by a neutrino with a record energy of about 220 PeV, corresponding to 220 million billion electronvolts. This signal, named KM3-230213A, provides the first evidence that neutrinos with such extreme energies exist in the universe.

NEUTRINOS

With no electric charge, being extremely light and travelling almost at the speed of light, these elementary particles interact only weakly, and therefore very rarely, with matter. Their elusiveness makes them valuable cosmic messengers, able to bring us unique information about the distant universe.

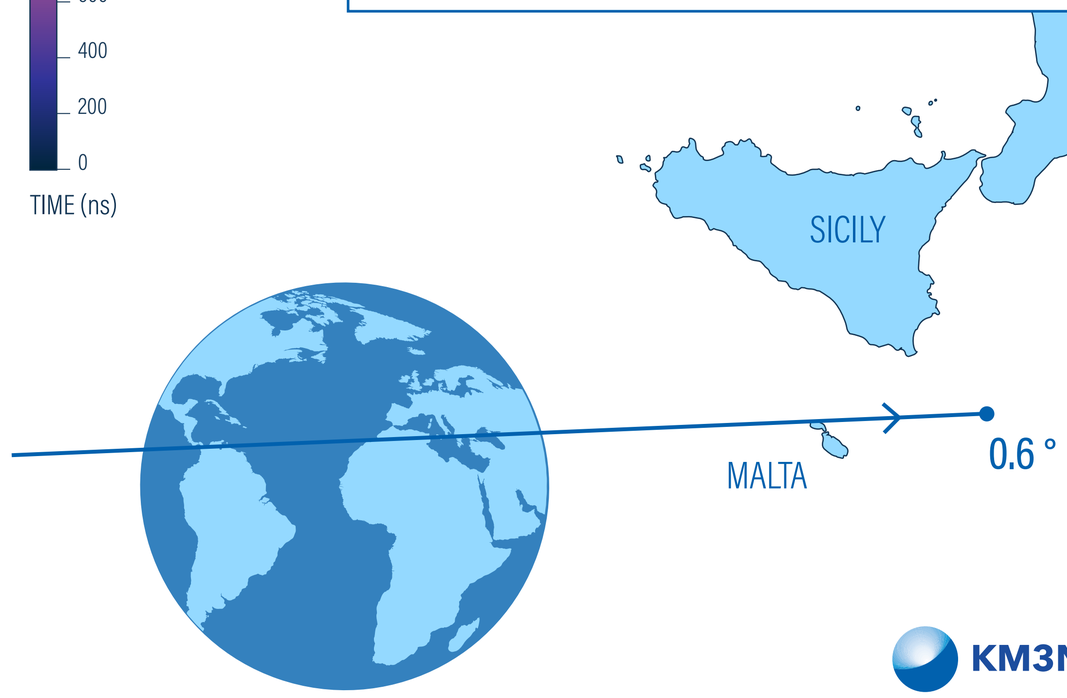
THE EVENT DISPLAY

A view of the KM3-230213A signal detected by KM3NeT.
The spheres are coloured according to the detection time and the reconstructed track of the particle is shown. The size of the blue cone gives an indication on the amplitude of the signal.

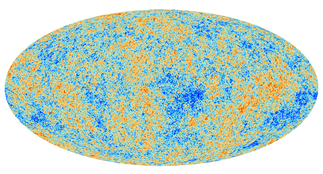


KM3-230213A IDENTIKIT

The cosmic neutrino plunged into the Mediterranean Sea and crossed the Malta continental shelf with an inclination of 0.6° above the horizon. During this journey, it travelled almost at the speed of light and interacted with an atomic nucleus, generating an ultra-relativistic muon, which crossed the whole detector.



THE SOURCES



The origin of the ultra-high energy neutrino could have been one of the cataclysmic events that animate our universe, such as an active galactic nucleus or a gamma-ray burst. Or it could be a neutrino generated by the interaction of an ultra-high energy cosmic-ray particle with the cosmic background radiation that permeates the universe.

KM3NeT

Co-funded by the European Union