

Towards a space strategy for the European Union that benefits its citizens

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution in response to the Commission's communication entitled "Towards a space strategy for the European Union that benefits its citizens".

Recalling that space policy is a key element of the Europe 2020 strategy and an integral part of the [flagship initiative on industrial policy](#), Members welcome the Commission's Communication as the first step towards a comprehensive EU space policy serving the interests of its citizens, its policies and its diplomacy. Nevertheless, they stress that the priority areas of action should be made clearer and that an assessment of all the technical options and related costs, risks and benefits, and of the social implications, should be undertaken, including all possible impacts on the European Union's industrial base and European industrial policy.

Addressing societal challenges: the resolution stresses that space solutions (relying on state of the art technologies and a competitive European industrial base) are vital to address today's important societal challenges, such as natural disasters, resources and climate monitoring, to develop the telecommunications sector and to foster relevant applications in the fields of climate change policies, land-use planning, environment management, agriculture, maritime safety, fisheries and transport.

Members point out that a European space programme should focus on areas of European added value and avoid dispersion of efforts or duplications with activities undertaken by the European Space Agency (ESA).

A coherent approach: Members consider that the European Union is responsible for coordinating and consolidating national space policies and programmes with a view to establishing a coherent European approach in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders. It also stresses the need for clear governance in relation to space policy, making optimal use of the skills available in Europe, with effective supervisory and coordination mechanisms, in order to harmonise priorities and ensure the sound management of resources derived from national funding and from the European Union, the ESA and other European agencies dealing with space and of significance to the EU.

Parliament agrees with the Commission that **Europe must maintain independent access to space** to be able to achieve its established objectives in carrying out its space policy and continue to benefit from the spin-offs from space application. They therefore, encourage the Commission to put forward **specific proposals in the strategic area of launch vehicles**, in particular by giving them special attention in the context of industrial policy in the space sector.

Flagship Galileo and GMES projects:

(1) Members consider that **Galileo is one of the European Union's flagship programmes** as well as being the first satellite navigation system in the world designed for civilian use, and could enable the Union to remain independent in a strategically important field. They are convinced that **the aim of Full Operating Capacity (FOC)**, based on a constellation of 27 satellites plus a suitable number of spare satellites and adequate ground infrastructure, is a prerequisite in order to attain the added value of Galileo in terms of authentication, high precision and uninterrupted service and therefore to reap the economic and societal benefits

As a result, Parliament formulates the following recommendations:

- the Commission should **complete the legislative and financial framework**, particularly with regard to the establishment of a financial framework for 2014 - 2020, an approach on effective governance, Galileo services and rules on responsibility; the financing plan to be adopted for Galileo needs to be such as to ensure that long-term needs are able to be met and continuity is provided, including with regard to operating, maintenance and replacement costs;
- **the capacity to provide initial services should be completed by 2014** at the latest to ensure that Galileo does indeed become the second GNSS constellation of reference for receiver manufacturers;
- the Commission and the EU GNSS Agency (GSA) should put much more effort into **raising awareness** of GNSS among potential users and investors, promoting the use of GNSS-based services, as well as identifying and concentrating the demand for these services in Europe.

The resolution stresses that Galileo and EGNOS are instrumental in the creation of a Single European Sky and for the further development of safe and cost-effective air traffic management in Europe. They are also vital for efficient and environmentally sustainable road traffic management, road-use fee collection systems, eCall and real time tracking systems, and future digital tachographs. Members therefore call for the **setting of an ambitious and firm timetable**, along with stable financing of research and innovation in implementing the two programmes.

They also draw attention to the importance of the EGNOS system covering the whole of the EU and emphasise the need to expand that system in southern, eastern and south-eastern Europe, the Mediterranean region, Africa and the Arctic.

(2) Members consider that **GMES is also a European Union flagship programme** playing a key role in earth observation. They urge the Commission to complete the legislative framework and put forward a proposal for effective governance of the different levels of development and management of the programme.

The Commission and the other institutions are invited to **include financing for GMES in the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020**. Members underline that the costs relating to GMES are already covered until 2013, totalling EUR 3 billion (approximately EUR 2.3 billion for the satellites and EUR 700 million for related services) and that it is estimated that the programme's operational costs for the period 2014-2020 will average EUR 850 million per year. They call on the Commission to **promote public-private partnership and attract more private-sector capital**.

Secure Space to Achieve Security and Defence Objectives: Parliament supports the discussions being held by the Commission on **strengthening the 'security' component** of the GMES programme with regard to the monitoring of borders, support for the European Union's external action, maritime surveillance, complex emergencies, humanitarian aid and civil protection. Space policy should also include policies on the security of critical European space infrastructure and on the safe recovery of disused equipment.

Members consider that maximum use of satellite communication services will directly support the competitiveness of European manufacturing industry, foster the industrial base in Europe and respond to the following key policy objectives:

- achieving total coverage of the EU with **broadband Internet**, including for next generation services;

- implementing sustainable, safe and intelligent transportation on land, at sea and in the air;
- maximising the EU contribution to cooperation programmes with **developing countries** and enhancing the EU contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- ensuring an adequate EU role in responding to future **disasters** within and outside the EU.

Boosting Research and Innovation: Parliament considers that the European Union needs a **solid knowledge and technological base** if it is to act independently and have a competitive space industry. It stresses the importance of a **research and innovation strategy** in the area of space policy that ensures technological progress, industrial development and EU competitiveness and creates jobs in the EU.

It calls on the Commission to draw up a **strategic agenda** in order to ensure consistency between the efforts of the European Union in the field of R&D and those of the ESA and the Member States concerning all necessary technologies, skills and double sources needed to achieve competitiveness, European independence, access to international markets and reduction of risks for European programmes.

Members ask the Commission to examine, in cooperation with the ESA, **options for space exploration**, indicating the potential costs and benefits; considers in this connection that a joint strategy should be developed with international partners through a cooperation agreement based on the general consensus of all stakeholders and with reasonable contributions from the European Union.

International cooperation: Members reiterate that **international cooperation for peaceful purposes is a basic value of the European Union**. They point out that the European Union should be a leader in the space field and maintain a **substantial strategic role** at world level, particularly in the international negotiations on the Space Situational Awareness System and space exploration. The report stresses that work in the space policy sector may be made more effective through industrial cooperation and sharing of investment in major programmes, such as the International Space Station.

The Commission is invited to draw up an **international cooperation strategy**, in collaboration with the Member States and the ESA, in order to strengthen dialogue in the space policy field with strategic partners (the United States, the Russian Federation and Japan) and explore the possibility of establishing a similar dialogue with other emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil. International cooperation, particularly with regard to research, must be reciprocal and of mutual benefit.

Relations between the European Union and the ESA: Members consider that the growing involvement of the European Union in the space sector calls for its relations with the ESA and the national agencies to be redefined, taking account of the fact that the technical and planning expertise developed by the ESA and the national agencies are essential to maintaining the technological capacity and the competitiveness of European industry at a high level.