EU space industrial policy, releasing the potential for growth in the space sector

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the own-initiative report by Angelika NIEBLER (EPP, DE) on EU Space Industrial Policy, releasing the Potential for Growth in the Space Sector.

The report asked the Commission to take a **horizontal approach** with a view to mainstreaming space policy and its objectives into the various fields of policy of the Union, such as telecommunications, transport, environment, agriculture safety or culture.

In order to **give space policy an European approach**, Members invited the Commission to prioritise the following areas:

1) Institutional questions: **all the actors involved in the governance** of future EU space policies, including the Commission, the European GNSS Agency, the ESA, the national agencies and the specialised agencies such as EUMETSAT, must be interlinked and must operate on a long-term basis.

The Commission, the Member States and the ESA were asked to establish a form of **coordination group** whose members should coordinate strategies and measures in the field of space at regular meetings in order to avoid duplication of structures and **develop a common approach** to international issues and forums.

2) Galileo and Copernicus: the report stressed that the completion of Galileo and the continuation of Copernicus should be assigned the highest priority as the flagships of European space policy, so that the first Galileo services can in practice be opened to the public **in 2014.**

The Commission must present, as soon as possible, a clear **roadmap** for GMES/Copernicus and for the development and deployment of the various Satellite Sentinels, as well as the legal and operational framework proposed for this complex system.

Members regretted that not all of the EU is currently covered by the **EGNOS** system. They called for that system to be extended to southern, eastern and south-eastern Europe, hence enabling its use throughout Europe. They also wanted to promote the use of EGNOS in various areas, such as transport.

3) The role of the space industry in driving growth and creating employment: the report called on the Commission, and the Member States to **create incentives** for European industry to develop space components at European level in order to **reduce dependence on imports from third countries.** The Commission, the ESA, the EDA and the Member States were urged to identify **critical technologies** in the context.

Stressing that a **suitable pool of highly skilled employees** is key to a competitive European space industry, Members called on all parties concerned to step up cooperation between universities and industry and to encourage young talent, in particular female talent, to commit to this sector.

4) Access to space: the report stressed the importance of access to space for all Member States and of commercial sales for the European space industry. It called on the Commission and the Member States, jointly with the ESA, to maintain and expand a European launcher system and a rocket-launching service in the long term.

5**) The role of research and development**: Members urged the EU, the ESA and the Member States to develop a joint '**research roadmap'** for the period ending in 2020, and to define priorities and objectives for space policy which should be attained jointly, in order to **provide consistency of planning** for the actors involved.

The report welcomed the fact that under the new Framework Programme for Research (Horizon 2020) the sum of EUR 1.5 billion is to be invested in space research and innovation. It stressed the need to ensure that the appropriate funding is provided for research and development in respect of GNSS and urged the Commission to introduce arrangements **enabling SMEs to access funding** more easily.

6) Satellite communication: Members noted that that satellite communication played an **important role** within the European space industry. It was an efficient way of providing **multimedia services**, with a view to achieving total broadband internet coverage in the EU. It was also taking on an increasingly important **logistical function** in crises such as natural disasters or in maintaining internal security.

In this context, the Commission was called upon to:

- ensure that, with reference to technological neutrality, the **satellite internet** is appropriately taken into account in the technology mix to be used to expand broadband, for example in the EU's cohesion policy;
- ensure at the next ITU World Radio Communications Conference that the EU's interests and those of the satellite communication industry in the field of **global and regional spectrum allocation.**

7) Space debris: space-based infrastructure constitutes the backbone of many services used by industry and society in everyday life. Accordingly, Members asked the Commission and Member States to: (i) work towards global governance for space; (ii) encourage third countries to sign the Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities drawn up by the EU; (iii) support the establishment at European level of the **programme to support observation and tracking of objects in space.**