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

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on EU space industrial policy: Releasing the Potential for Growth in the Space Sector, following the Commission's communication on the same subject.

Building upon it resolution of 9 January 2012, Parliament invites 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 view of increasing competition from newly emerging space-faring nations, such as China and India, Members point out that the political weight of the EU Member States in national terms may no longer suffice to address the challenges ahead in this sector.

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

1) Institutional questions: Members recommended that the EU, in very close cooperation with the ESA, should coordinate the space policies and programmes of the Member States more than hitherto in order to adopt a genuine European approach.

The Commission, the Member States and the ESA were called upon 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 resolution 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. This is why the Commission should present, as soon as possible, a **clear roadmap** for the GMES/Copernicus programme.

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: Parliament recalled that the European space industry has a consolidated turnover of EUR 6.5 billion and employed over 34 500 highly skilled people. The resolution:

- underlined the importance of an **action plan for the European GNSS Agency** in order to expand the GNSS market;
- 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;
- pointed out the importance of the efficient use of European funding from Horizon 2020, particularly for operations close to the market, especially in the context of **autonomous and intelligent robotic systems**;
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- 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, and to ensure the availability of a suitable pool of highly skilled employees.

4) Access to space: Parliament 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 resolution 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, Parliament 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.