

Framework for space surveillance and tracking (SST) support

2013/0064(COD) - 02/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 602 votes to 17, with 10 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a space surveillance and tracking support programme (SST).

Parliament adopted its position at first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of an agreement negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council. They amend the proposal as follows:

Overall objective: Parliament and the Council agreed that the SST support programme should have as its general aim to contribute to ensuring the **long-term availability** of European and national space infrastructure facilities and services essential for the safety and security of the economies, societies and citizens in Europe.

The **specific objectives** are as follows:

- assessing and reducing the risks to in-orbit operations of European spacecraft in terms of collisions, enabling spacecraft operators to more efficiently plan and carry out mitigation measures;
- reducing the risks relating to the launch of European spacecraft;
- surveying uncontrolled re-entries of spacecraft or space debris into the Earth's atmosphere and providing more accurate and efficient early warnings with the aim of reducing the potential risks to the safety of Union citizens and mitigating potential damage to critical terrestrial infrastructure;
- seeking to prevent the proliferation of space debris.

Main actions: the SST support programme shall support the following actions which seek to establish an **SST capacity at European level and with the appropriate level of European autonomy**:

- the establishment and operation of a sensor function consisting of a **network of Member State ground-based and/ or space-based sensors**, including national sensors developed through ESA, to survey and track space objects and to produce a database thereof ;
- the establishment and operation of a **processing function** to process and analyse the SST data at national level to produce SST information and services for transmission to the SST service provision function.

The SST support framework **shall not cover** the development of new SST sensors.

SST services: the SST services shall be of a **civilian nature**. They shall comprise the following services: (i) the generation of collision avoidance alerts during the launch, early orbit, in-orbit operation and disposal phases of spacecraft missions; (ii) the characterisation of in-orbit fragmentations, break-ups or collisions; (iii) the risk assessment of the uncontrolled re-entry of space objects and space debris into the Earth's atmosphere and the generation of related information, including the estimation of the timeframe and likely location of possible impact.

Commission's role: the Commission shall: (i) manage the SST support framework and ensure its implementation; (ii) monitor risks related to the SST support framework; (iii) ensure the update of SST user requirements as appropriate; (iv) define general guidelines for the governance of the SST support framework; and (v) facilitate the broadest possible participation of Member States.

The Commission shall **provide to the European Parliament and to the Council**, in a timely manner, all relevant information on the implementation of the SST support framework, in particular to provide transparency and clarity regarding: (a) the indicative efforts and the different Union sources of funding; (b) participation in the SST support framework and the actions supported thereby; (c) the evolution of the networking of Member State SST assets and of SST service provision; and (d) the exchange and use of SST information.

Participation of Member States: any Member State wishing to participate in the implementation of the actions shall submit an application to the Commission demonstrating compliance with a certain number of criteria:

Member States which comply with the criteria shall designate a national entity to represent them. The designated national entities shall constitute a consortium.

Responsibility for the operation of sensors, the processing of data and the implementation of data policy shall lie with the participating Member States. The assets of participating Member States shall remain fully under national control.

The European Union Satellite Centre (SATCEN) may cooperate with the consortium by concluding the necessary implementing arrangements with the participating Member States.

Monitoring and evaluation: no later than 1 July 2018, the Commission shall forward a report on the implementation of the SST support framework to the European Parliament and the Council. This report may be accompanied by proposals for amendments, where appropriate, including the possibility for a **basic act** within the meaning of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (on financial rules applicable to the EU's general budget) for SST.