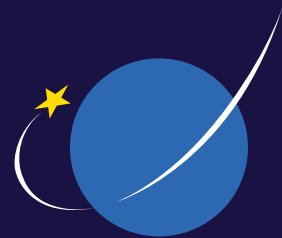


# Green Paper on European Space Policy



## Discussion point:

## The Institutional Framework of a new European Space Policy

**Diversity is a fundamental and cherished characteristic of Europe, but too much diversity of purpose can mean wasted time and resources in the strategic area of space. There are currently a number of public agencies pursuing space activities to varying degrees and on the basis of various policies and instruments.**

Nearly 30 years ago, Europeans recognised the fact that a coherent space policy could not be formulated on a purely national basis. The European Space Agency (ESA), founded in 1975, was aimed at bringing together the necessary resources and skills for developing an integrated space applications programme and developing a European launcher. A prime example of co-operation among European states, ESA has emerged as the driving force behind Europe's considerable accomplishments in space, displaying scientific and technological mastery in many fields and providing Europe with a high level of autonomy in the space sector.

### Some ESA accomplishments:

- Ariane rockets developed by ESA lead the commercial market in space launches;
- Developments in telecommunications satellites by ESA maintain Europe's satellite fleet at the peak of technical advances;
- ESA leads the world in monitoring the hole in the ozone layer, ice sheets, ocean winds and currents;
- ESA plays a leading role in the study of the sun and its effects on the earth;
- ESA's astronauts have served on many US shuttle missions, on the Russian space station Mir and on the International Space Station.

### ESA Member States

ESA's 15 Member States are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Canada has special status and participates in some projects under a co-operation agreement.

### ESA and national space agencies

A number of national space agencies, operational bodies and Community space initiatives complete the European space picture. This diversity in the space sector has evolved over time based on pragmatic and national-level concerns. Today, the discussion focuses on the best way to organise these bodies, particularly at a time when Europe is dealing with new goals and ambitions.

ESA is currently working in liaison with national agencies in order to avoid gaps or redundancies in their overall activities. ESA has undertaken to organise all of the relevant bodies into a coherent network of European and national centres. This optimisation of competencies and means is a positive development in the spirit of the European Research Area.

### The European Union and ESA

The Union sees space as an important tool for supporting a wide range of Community policies. Combining ESA's 'technology push' approach with the EU's emphasis on 'demand pull' is viewed as potentially very fruitful, but efforts to establish closer co-operative and working relationships have underlined differences and the absence of certain links between the two entities.

### Notable EU/ESA issues:

- Membership – some Union Member States are not ESA Member States and vice versa;
- Working principles – unlike the EU, ESA largely (and historically) operates on the principle of 'juste retour': the principle that the proportion of contracts under a particular programme awarded to firms from a given country is in proportion to the funding that country has contributed to the programme;
- Decision-making – There is currently no common EU/ESA decision-making body.



The need for a common institutional and programming framework for space has led to the establishment of ad hoc structures such as the European Commission/ESA Joint Task Force on space, aimed at implementing a common European space strategy. Among its concrete accomplishments are the elaboration of the Communication 'Towards a European Space Policy' and the preparation of the recently published Green Paper on European Space Policy. It has also been instrumental in developing dialogue between the EU, ESA and international partners, including Russia and Ukraine. Similar but more permanent institutional solutions are now being called for.

In order to guarantee a genuine coherence and homogeneity of decisions taken by the Member States in the corresponding programming frameworks, the European Space Policy must establish guidelines to ensure that the contributions made by various institutional players converge. It is therefore important to clearly define the responsibilities of those involved and to clarify the relationship between institutional actors. This is particularly important with development agencies and operational structures, and their relationships with the private sector.

### **Space and the Treaty**

There are several reasons for including space in the next European Constitutional Treaty. First, space is, by its very nature, extra-territorial and, as such, it calls for human resources and financial support that go beyond purely national constraints. In addition, space presents unique opportunities for the development of a broad range of highly beneficial civil and public services, including environmental monitoring, navigation and observation services as well as defence- and security-related services. A pan-European institutional framework for space activities would help to focus and rationalise Europe's space activities, providing a common vision and a common set of rules.

### **Bildt on space**

Speaking at the Space Green Paper inauguration in Brussels, Carl Bildt, the former Swedish Prime Minister, gave a stimulating and widely appreciated presentation on institutional issues. He described institutions as archaeological remnants, with different histories and foundations that are often difficult to understand, uproot and/or reconcile. Among his provocative suggestions was the establishment of a "European Union Space Agency".

"By this I don't mean to suggest that we need to deconstruct ESA," he said, "but perhaps we need ESA working to implement the goals of the EU." Some participants at the meeting cringed at the comment, but most agreed that the resolution of the institutional dilemma will be crucial to the viability of any future European Space Policy.

