

IIIrd EUROPEAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY SPACE CONFERENCE

-- TRANSLATION --

FINAL DECLARATION

The representatives of the Parliamentary Space Groups of Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom gathered in Brussels on 24 and 25 September 2001. This meeting took place under the Belgian presidency within the framework of the third European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC).

The EISC invited the parliaments of the Netherlands and Sweden to participate as permanent members of the EISC. Both parliaments are considering their participation.

It was not possible for the parliamentary groups of Germany and Austria to participate in the conference because of the national and international political situation. They have confirmed their commitment to continue to participate in the EISC as permanent members.

The EISC is pleased with the presence of different national space agencies, the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Commission, parliamentary delegations of the European Union and ESA Member States, delegations from Norway, Finland and Switzerland and a representative of the Technological and Aerospace Committee of the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU).

The EISC confirms its willingness to be a permanent forum of parliamentary co-operation, emphasising on a reinforced collaboration between the different members and a large promotion of their activities. The EISC encourages the exchange of information concerning their space activities and promotes a better mutual understanding concerning the national politics of its member states.

In the light of the realisation of these objectives, a number of political and programmatic resolutions have been adopted, addressed to the different actors in the space field. These resolutions reflect the positions and common intentions of the members of the EISC.

The different Parliamentary Groups on Space commit themselves to communicate and defend the decisions of this conference with their national governments.

The Belgian presidency will forward the results of this conference to the competent European bodies : the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Assembly and the Secretariat General of the WEU, the Presidency of the European Union and the Executive body of ESA.

In accordance with the provisions of political resolution nr. 6 of the Second European Interparliamentary Space Conference, the Belgian presidency will organise in the spring of 2002 a seminar of which the subject will be determined at a later date.

The next EISC will be held on 23, 24 and 25 July 2002 in the United Kingdom.

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POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

The EISC is shocked by the terrorist attacks that struck New York and Washington on 11 September. The EISC shows solidarity with the American people, the government of the United States, as well as with the families of the victims. It is in this atmosphere that the conference proceedings were held, devoted to the European space co-operation and to the dual use of space technology. During the debates, the EISC members wanted to emphasise the importance of this technology in the battle against international terrorism.

1. With regard to the European space policy, the EISC is pleased with the collaboration between the European Union (EU) and ESA, a collaboration that resulted in the adoption of the resolutions concerning a European space strategy. These resolutions were adopted on 16 November 2000 by the Research Council of the European Union and ESA.

Given that a common workgroup ESA – European Commission has to formulate, by the end of 2001, proposals concerning co-operation structures between ESA and the EU, the EISC stresses the necessity to involve to a large extent the European Parliament and the European Council in the definition, adoption and implementation of this European space policy.

2. With regard to the institutional reform within the framework of this space policy, the EISC takes note of the recommendations presented in a report for the Director General of ESA by Mr Carl Bildt, Mr Jean Peyrelevade and Mr Lothar Späth. This report deals with the future development of ESA, who is destined to become the agency responsible for the implementation of European Union programmes. In this respect, the dual character of certain programmes fits into the promotion of security and the maintenance of peace.

3. With reference to the European space strategy, the EISC is aware that Europe contrary to the United States of America does not have the necessary structures to mobilise researchers and university graduates in different areas of science, to study the different subjects of space policy. This is the reason why the EISC wishes to see the rapid creation of a European Institute for Space Policy. In the long term, this institute must play a central role in the analysis of European needs, capacities and perspectives concerning space matters.

The EISC takes note of the fact that the member states of ESA have already, during the Ministerial Council on 11 and 12 May 1999, adopted with unanimity a Resolution, inviting the Director General of ESA to examine the possibility to establish such an institute.

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Next to the necessary academic research, a larger implication in space strategy of all decision makers, both in the public and in the private sector, is indispensable. Therefore, the EISC believes it is imperative to envisage the creation of a centre (institute or foundation) with networks in the different countries, which main task is to train these decision makers.

4. In terms of international space policy, the EISC believes that space allows for a better understanding of the growing complexity of international relations. Europe must intensify its co-operation with a number of countries. Emphasis must be laid on the co-operation with Russia and Ukraine. Space is not only an instrument for stability, but also for peace and technological, economic and cultural development.
5. With reference to the industrial space policy, the EISC insists on the necessity for the public authorities of every Member state, to pursue a balanced industrial policy that takes the interests of prime contractors, subcontractors and equipment suppliers into account. As in other examples of European policy, particular attention will have to be given to small and medium sized enterprises: they constitute a strong force for innovation. They must, hence, be encouraged to gain access to ongoing research.”
6. The EISC wishes the creation of a standing secretariat which main task will be to secure co-operation between the EISC, the European Commission and ESA. The latter will provide for the necessary logistic support. This secretariat will be chaired by the country presiding the EISC. It will also have to make proposals concerning the possible creation of an EISC-internet website.
7. The EISC appeals to ESA and the national space agencies to enlarge and deepen their mutual co-operation. Collaboration between the different space agencies on the basis of their own expertise and complementarity has to be aimed for. The EISC is convinced that this co-operation will contribute to the amplification of the increase in scale effects and the reduction of the cost of new projects.
8. The EISC wishes to underline the necessity of a deeper co-operation between civil and military activities. This co-operation is indispensable for a better development of dual technologies in the light of favouring interaction between both sectors.
9. The EISC calls on the member states of the European Union to reflect on the creation of an ad hoc parliamentary assembly, composed of delegations of the national parliaments and the European Parliament, that will provide for the follow up and the democratic framework of the European security and defence policy and European space policy in all its aspects.

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10. The EISC wishes to encourage the mobilisation of all of its members to approach their respective governments to obtain a budgetary increase for space activities, i.e. for R & D, launching activities, earth observation, communication and navigation systems. The EISC believes that these activities will lead to some improvement in the infrastructure, with predictable economic advantages, will create a powerful lever on the whole chain and will produce an added-value beyond the merely space framework. In this respect, the EISC considers the budgetary effort of Belgium as a possible reference point.

11. The EISC, knowing that the definition and implementation of a European space strategy and the increase in budgetary spending for space activities in Europe require the existence of a real 'Space Culture', urges all of its members to set up a think tank in order to raise the awareness of the public opinion as regards space issues.

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PROGRAMMATIC RESOLUTIONS

Space has to be seen as a whole. The different programmes and initiatives that the EISC has decided to emphasise, target Europe's strategic autonomy and allows Europe to have the necessary means to put political choices to work.

Europe has decided to be a major actor in the information, innovation and knowledge society. Therefore, it needs to use space knowledge and technology in full, in order to gather, transmit and distribute information on a global level.

1. Strategic Autonomy through independent Space Access

- It has been recognised that launching activities remain the key for an independent European space policy and that this independence is guaranteed by the durability of the "Ariane" network and the other European launchers. The EISC believes that the development program of Ariane 5+, knowing that the competitiveness of Ariane 5 is the necessary condition to balance the whole "Ariane" network, must be imperatively supported, to increase its efficiency and to meet the need for a growing number of telecommunication satellites.
- The EISC also believes that the "Infrastructure" programme and the "Centre Spatial Guyanais financing" programme play a determining role in improving the competitiveness of Ariane 5, and considers them to be of the utmost importance.
- The EISC highlights the European preference as regards governmental launching, on the condition that the operator guarantees competitive pricing with regard to the market.
- The EISC is convinced that Europe should develop a proper and diversified gamut of launchers. In particular, the possibility of using the "Soyoez" launchers in Kourou, must be studied in detail, without however prejudicing the "Ariane" network and the other European launchers.

2. Strategic Autonomy through Navigation

- With regard to satellite navigation, the EISC stresses the strategic importance for Europe of the satellite navigation programme 'GALILEO'. The definitive adoption of the 'GALILEO' programme by the Council of the European Union and by the Council of ESA at the end of 2001, is a matter of the greatest importance for the European space policy. In this respect, a single management mechanism through ESA is indispensable.

3. Strategic Autonomy through Earth Observation

- The EISC strongly supports the GMES initiative ('Global Monitoring for Environment and Security'). This initiative seeks to co-ordinate at a European level,

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the use of space for the study and surveillance of the environment. Nowadays, space is indispensable for a global view on the environment. For the first time, GMES will install earth observation in Europe as an operational rather than a scientific capacity. The launch of the 'ENVISAT' satellite, foreseen for December 2001, will be an important step in the realisation of this policy.

4. International Co-operation

- The EISC is pleased with the international co-operation that allows the development and use of the international space station (ISS). The EISC underlines the importance of this co-operation that should also be an aspect of other large space projects. This should compensate for the considerable expenses generated by such projects. Moreover, this co-operation contributes to better mutual understanding and improved collaboration at an international level.

5. European Science

- Recognising the importance of maintaining a strong European presence in space science, and responding to the public interest in planetary exploration, the EISC calls upon its member states to increase, or at least not to reduce, the space science budget during the next ESA Council.