

CONCLUSIONS OF THE PRESIDENCY

Parliamentarians representing the Parliamentary Space Groups of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom met in conference in London from 12th – 14th November 2002 under the auspices of the United Kingdom Presidency of the European Interparliamentary Conference (EISC). Parliamentary delegations from Finland, Greece, Russia and Switzerland, as well as the European Parliament were also in attendance. Representatives of the European Commission, the Western European Union, the European Space Agency, National Space Agencies, and other institutions joined the proceedings as observers.

The EISC constitutes a permanent forum for cooperation between the European national parliaments. It aims to develop a continuing dialogue on space policy issues, and press national governments and European institutions to adopt a common strategy for space, which will ensure that space delivered services for the European peoples are provided by a vigorous and globally competitive European industry.

The specific political and programmatic Conclusions of the Presidency, reflecting the findings of the conference, are set out in the following sections.

The UK Presidency will submit the findings of this Conference to the competent European institutions in particular the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Convention, the Assembly & Secretariat of the WEU, the Presidency of the European Union, and the Executive body of ESA. Chairmen of the national parliamentary space groups undertake to present the findings of the conference to national governments and actively to pursue the issues arising.

The next EISC will be held in November 2003 in Berlin.

POLITICAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The EISC affirms that space, which gave the world many of its greatest scientific, technological and cultural advances in the twentieth century, remains central to the evolution of the world community in the twenty-first century. Mastering the most advanced space applications being the only way to gain guaranteed access to information, space power represents one of the major tools to ensure a strong position and independence for Europe in all areas (political, military, economic, environmental, technological and cultural). Therefore the Conference confirms the absolute necessity for Europe to pursue an ambitious and consistent space policy. The political and budgetary resources devoted to this policy have to be commensurate with this ambitious goal. Reaffirming the strategic role of space power for Europe, the EISC considers this approach to be consistent with the STAR 21 Report led by the European Commission.

2. The EISC also recognises that the space industry in Europe is currently in a time of crisis due to the collapse of the commercial satellite telecommunications market on which it heavily depends. Whereas, the Global production capacity has been developed to a level supporting the manufacture of around 30 commercial satellites per annum, orders in 2002 are expected to be substantially less than half of this, with the situation not improving significantly until 2005 or 2006. In Europe, manufacturing capacity is around 15 with a greater dependence on commercial orders than is the case for the US industry. This position is reflected downstream in a dramatically reduced demand for launch services leading to a similar problem of global over-capacity. The EISC calls for urgent attention to this situation through new programmes, reorganisation of the industry and sector restructuring.

3. It is in this context that, building on the Conclusions of the 3rd Conference in Brussels, the EISC confirms its support for closer collaboration between the European Commission and ESA and looks forward to the completion of the Framework Agreement that will define the closer co-operation between these institutions up to the end of this year. The EISC welcomes the tasking by the Commission of a Green Paper on space, which will examine the strategic role of space activities for Europe and underline the value of the partnership between the European Commission and ESA. The Conference calls upon the European Commission and ESA to press ahead urgently with developing a strategy that will cover both near and long term objectives. This process must involve all the key players including, as well as the European Commission and Agencies, the space industry (which is the ultimate repository of European space capability), satellite operators such as Eumetsat, SES-Astra, Hispasat, Eutelsat and Inmarsat, and operators which use space as a tool - such as Eurocontrol.

4. The EISC further calls on the European Commission and ESA, in close co-operation with the Member States and Agencies, to establish a permanent and effective mechanism, not only to put in place the European Strategy, but for its review and up-dating at regular intervals so that Europe can be proactive in the face of global changes in the political scene, public demand for space delivered services and emerging new markets. In this regard the Conference emphasises the necessity of taking into account military space applications in the framework for the definition and implementation of the European Space policy. The EISC also appeals to the European Union and Member States for economic and financial (public/private) activities to be aimed at keeping the ownership of Eutelsat and Inmarsat under European control.

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5. The EISC urges all Members of the European Convention to introduce a reference to space in the new European Treaty, taking into account the Green Paper to be published by the European Commission. In this context the Treaty should also state that ESA is the entity responsible for projects implemented in the framework of the European Space Strategy.

6. To provide a secure regional base for the European industry, the EISC underlines the importance of clarifying and aggregating public needs for products and services which can be delivered, at competitive prices. It calls upon Member States and European institutions to give increased priority to the process of transferring technology from the research base to the private sector by providing targeted funding, and encouraging private European investment through long term government commitments and procurement and operations guarantees for public undertakings.

7. The EISC urges that strong action at the political level is required to support European operators in gaining access to space telecommunications markets, and in securing frequency allocations in the context of WRC 2003 and follow-on negotiations. The Conference also calls for a sustained effort to achieve pan-European harmonisation to remove the need for burdensome inter-community regulatory constraints (both at the national and European levels), that currently hamper the speedy resolution of issues concerning exploitation licences and terminal siting that is essential in order to attract investment in European space-based telecommunications services.

8. In the ongoing reviews of the European space research, technology and manufacturing base, the EISC wishes to underline the fundamental importance of retaining key core competences at the European level in a framework of real competitiveness among the companies operating in the space sector. To meet this imperative, governments and agencies should promote and support the global competitiveness and independence of the European space industry both at the prime and supply chain level. In this regard, the European launcher sector needs to be promoted and supported with a specific determination to provide autonomous access to space as a prerequisite for European countries to develop independent space programs and policies. This calls for advanced satellite programmes with the associated technology, and applications development, in conjunction with a fair industrial policy that ensures a competitive environment. It also requires that existing European centres of excellence for space research, development and operations - which have been built up over many years - will be integrated into a European Network of Centres which is effectively adapted to public and commercial demands.

9. The EISC recognises the pre-eminence in several key areas of space science, which has been achieved through ESA and Europe's national programmes. These programmes address some of the most challenging and fundamental questions in science today, on topics such as the origins of life and man's place in the Universe - as well as helping to sustain the vital academic base of physics and engineering research and education at universities, that is fundamental to the future of the wider European economy. The Conference therefore calls on ESA and the Member States to underpin the future of space research in the European science community by providing the necessary funding and a concerted science strategy, and also to seek means to exploit space science results through national and European Framework programmes.

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10. Recognising the potential contribution that the Accession Countries can make to European space, the EISC welcomes the initiative of the European Commission and ESA at the Warsaw Space Seminar in July 2002, in calling for a developing collaboration between the expanding group of new and old partners. Believing that knowledge should flow freely across European national borders the conference affirms that the Accession Countries have an important role to play in bringing space back to society and welcomes the European Commission undertaking that they will be full partners in the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The Conference wishes that membership or observer status should be extended to the Accession Countries for EISC03.

11. The EISC notes the presence of ESA at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg aimed at finding practical responses to the challenges of improving the lives of all human beings whilst protecting the environment. It recognises the contribution to sustainable development which space applications can provide by providing information and measurements of natural and artificial phenomena, and calls upon ESA and the European Commission to give priority to the development and use of space technologies and applications in the implementation of plans for sustainable development, and the deployment of space systems to monitor natural disasters, and provide operational information, in accordance with the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters of 1999.

12. The EISC recognises that space has a major part to play in meeting future military and civilian security requirements. While the rationale for EDSP is changing, military capabilities remain essentially a matter for national sovereignty in EU countries. However space is an area where there is much commonality between military and civil technologies - and future military requirements will often in future be provided by satellite infrastructures which provide civil services. Space systems have a significant role to play in international treaty monitoring and implementation, environmental stress, crisis/risk management and the monitoring of frontiers. Increasingly, many of the needs for civil security, particularly in the new era of a more widespread terrorist threat, are best addressed by space systems.

13. The EISC is grateful for the assistance of ESA in providing support to the Conference secretariat and, in line with the Conclusions of the Third Conference, wishes further progress to be made in establishing a standing Secretariat including resource, some of which could be provided by ESA. Using this resource, EISC agrees that a Standing Committee should be set up, composed of Heads of Delegations, in order to prepare and encourage further expansion of the Conference membership and links with other countries, in particular Russia and Japan, as well as to ensure uninterrupted action and contacts between annual conferences.

PROGRAMMATIC CONCLUSIONS

Space affects the daily life of the peoples of Europe in many different ways. The space infrastructure, and the services it enables, are all-pervasive; and space derived data is intrinsic to the organisation and operation of a modern society. This is exemplified by the extension of the Convention of Eumetsat to cover a wider role in climate monitoring and operational oceanography. In addition, space has opened up major new commercial markets and stimulates many of the high technology areas, which are essential to future commercial success at the global level. The EISC therefore urges the European Commission and the Member States to encourage the development of space applications throughout the industry chain (including the downstream sectors) so as to exploit fully the potential of space-based systems by the delivery of services and products. This requires clear forward thinking as to future requirements, and the subsequent implementation of well focused space programmes.

1. Competitiveness in Space Technology

Underpinning all the major programme areas, the EISC recognises the need for Europe, notwithstanding the need to pursue a policy of real competitiveness among the companies involved, to ensure self-sufficiency in key strategic technologies (for example electronic and optical components) and for innovative technological development to be supported by ESA and the Member States. Such technological development can be further exploited downstream of the space sector and help to grow the wider economy. While other leading space players, and in particular the United States, receive major support and technological stimulation through large investments in the military space sector, Europe does not - and ESA's support for pre-competitive innovation in space applications therefore remains crucial to the European industry in sustaining its global competitiveness. In particular:

- The EISC welcomes the re-structuring of ESA's framework ARTES (Advanced Research in Telecommunications Systems) programmes along more flexible and potential market related lines. With the current downturn of commercial markets and over capacity in the telecommunications satellite sector, a vigorous technology programme is required if Europe's capability in this key area is not to be at risk. The Conference therefore calls upon the Member States to support ESA's technology programmes and to seek to ensure that transfer to industry for commercial exploitation is facilitated at the earliest possible stage in the process. Governments and industry should be stimulated to use European made launchers, by preference, for their satellites taking full account of prevailing market pricing.
- The space science research programmes of ESA and the Member States, play an important role in stimulating technology. The EISC therefore welcomes the progress towards consolidating ESA and national space science programmes so as to maintain a strong European presence in this field. The Conference would wish to see future programmes give a strong emphasis, wherever possible and appropriate, to technology developments - for instance robotics - that can be exploited commercially outside the space sector.

- Progress in Earth observation science also stimulates innovation in the development of space technologies. The EISC therefore encourages ESA to continue with its ‘Living Planet’ strategy of developing shorter, cheaper and more focussed EO science missions. The EISC welcomes the establishment by the European Commission and ESA of the Outline Action Plan (Initial Period 2001-2003) for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) initiative.

2. Independence in Space Applications

A strong European presence in certain key space applications areas is essential, both as a powerful political instrument, and also in order to safeguard Europe’s strategic independence and help to sustain a vigorous and globally competitive European economy. In particular:

- Following the landmark decision of the EU Transport Council of 26th March 2002 to launch the development phase of the GALILEO satellite navigation system, the EISC urges the European Commission and ESA urgently to progress the development and validation phase so as to meet the requirement for a satellite launch in 2004 to secure the vital spectrum allocation; and also to set in place a management organisation in the Joint Undertaking that will ensure the delivery of best value to the public sector. In parallel, the Conference urges the European Commission and Member States to take all necessary steps to build up the European presence in the emerging market for space-based location and navigation services and to support industry in taking over the responsibility for the exploitation and operational phase.
- The EISC urges the European Commission and Member States to ensure a strong European presence in all aspects of space-based Earth observation in the implementation of the GMES initiative and ESA’s pre-operational and operational programmes, as well as those of Eumetsat, so as to provide a balance between European autonomy and international cooperation in this key strategic field as well as access to future projects for utilisation and the provision of commercial services. The Conference welcomes the start of the stakeholder consultation process (announced by the European Commission and ESA on 15th July 2002) aimed at the definition of European requirements to enhance global monitoring for the environment and security (GMES) and the objective of upgrading Europe’s capability for global monitoring by 2008.

3. Access to Space and International Cooperation

- It is recognised that a coherent and ambitious space policy aims first and foremost at autonomy for Europe, and therefore implies control over the key elements of the supply chain, where launchers have a critical role. Considering the recent structural problems faced by the European launchers industry, EISC urges national governments to provide to their industry the support necessary to allow it to remain operational. In this regard, they should push for the quick adoption of an effective support plan that will be elaborated by ESA, and discussed for adoption in early 2003 (at the next ESA ministerial Conference), upon which the future of European launchers depends. To respond to the unbalanced situation between Europe and other space powers (Russia and the US in particular), the Conference urges

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national governments to launch their own satellites on European launchers (Ariane and Vega) provided that economic conditions are comparable.

- The EISC notes with satisfaction the establishment in December 2001 of an EC/ESA/Rosaviakosmos joint statement on a “Euro-Russian Space Partnership” and the subsequent collaborative activities initiated with the Russian Federation. The EISC urges ESA, the European Commission and Member States to continue to build closer relationships with the United States, Russia, Japan and other space nations which wish to participate in such cooperation, with the objective of promoting a productive role in future joint national and international projects especially where there is the potential for commercial exploitation.
- The EISC welcomes the decision at the ESA Council at Ministerial level in Edinburgh last year to support the concept for a family of European launchers and a Future Launcher Preparatory Programme (FLPP). Restructuring of the European launcher industry and public organisations will lead to increased efficiency and substantial cost reductions. We may think in terms of further close co-operation with Russia with the long-term objective of safeguarding European access to space with a high degree of competitiveness and at acceptable public and industrial costs.
- ESA is participating as a partner in the International Space Station (ISS). ESA should now concentrate on securing optimised utilisation of the ISS as a European research infrastructure for all disciplines - especially life and physical sciences, applied research, technology development and validation - and as a powerful educational tool. In addition, the ISS should be acknowledged as an element of the European Research Area.
- The Conference calls the attention of European governments to the absolute necessity of finding a European solution to prevent Inmarsat and Eutelsat, by far the largest commercial customers of the European space industry, being controlled by non European private interests. Indeed, considering the strategic activity operated by Eutelsat, competition policy cannot be implemented without taking account of the need to defend European public interest.