



**Assembly of Western European Union
The Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly**

Press release No 31

Colloquy on space, defence and European security (Kourou, French Guiana)

European Defence *must* have a space dimension

Paris, 25 September 2006 - On 19-22 September 2006, the WEU Assembly and the European Interparliamentary Space Conference joined forces to hold a colloquy on Space, Defence and European Security in Kourou (French Guiana) in association with the European Space Agency (ESA), France's national centre for space studies, the *Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales* (CNES) and Arianespace. The event brought together over a hundred Members of Parliament from European nations along with Members of the European Parliament and senior executives from ESA, CNES, Arianespace and the space industry in Europe.

The main aim of the discussions was to examine the space sector in its application to security and defence and assess industrial capabilities in the light of the challenges Europe faces at the present time. The participants noted the gulf between the strategic ambitions Europe had of its space dimension and the level of funds it was prepared to commit to it. There was a risk of Space Europe losing its head start.

The President of the Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly (WEU Assembly), Jean-Pierre Masseret emphasised the importance of Europe being able to draw on the full gamut of space-based facilities: earth observation, telecommunications, intelligence, navigation and ballistic missile early warning systems, noting further that this comprehensive range of capabilities played a crucial part in preventing, managing and exiting crises and would guarantee Europe **genuinely autonomous powers of decision** and action in security and defence matters.

The President of the European Interparliamentary Space Conference, François Roelants du Vivier, welcomed the fact of the colloquy being held in Kourou, in his view "not a moment too soon". If Europe wanted to catch up with its main competitors in space, it needed **to take the financial decisions that were necessary, and quickly!** The vital necessity of the security and defence dimension being discussed at the colloquy was something that parliamentarians must seriously take on board in order to convince governments to invest massively in space – an area that had been far too long neglected.

The Director-General of the European Space Agency (ESA) Jean-Jacques Dordain felt that messages were being received from the conference that would constitute important inputs into the preparation, by the European Commission and ESA, of the European Space Policy, to be unveiled at the Fourth Meeting of the Space Council scheduled to take place in May 2007. Members of national parliaments and of the European Parliament had affirmed **the strategic importance of space for the continent of Europe**. In defining and implementing a European Space Policy, Europeans should build on present successes. There was a need to take feedback from users, consolidate technological and industrial capacities, maintain flexibility, strengthen coordination between the various parties involved and manage the evolution of space governance by stages. This was a challenge for everyone and one to which, with the commitment of all concerned, and in particular of the member states, Europe was quite equal.

For the President of the French *Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales* (CNES), Yannick D'Escatha, Space had now become thoroughly interdisciplinary, and was consequently a key element of major European policies. He emphasised space's special "dual" contribution in virtually every field (military and civil) connected with people's security and was adamant that **Europe must take advantage of this dual-use aspect**, in view of the differential between levels of investment in Europe and the United States (in a ratio of 1:6).

On the subject of access to space, the Director of Arianespace, the Chief Executive Officer of Arianespace, Jean Ives Le Gall, pointed to the ever stronger position of the world leader in European launchers, with Ariane 5 especially, whose reliability and frequent regular launches had enabled Europe to put up the highest number of commercial satellites in 2005 and 2006. These high levels of activity in the worldwide commercial market had brought Europe the spin off of ready, reliable, guaranteed competitive access to space for sovereign missions by European governments. In this respect, the European launcher programme was a model of the success of European integration in the service of security and defence, as the launches that had already taken place of 26 military satellites served to illustrate. Finally, the **full range of launchers** in use at the Kourou European space port from 2008 – including **Vega, Soyuz and Ariane 5**, would mean that Europe was able independently to put a payload of any given weight into any chosen orbit.

About the Assembly: The Assembly of WEU, Europe's only interparliamentary security and defence assembly, was founded in 1954 when the 1948 Brussels Treaty was modified. It held its first session in 1955. The Treaty contains an unconditional mutual defence clause (Article V) and provides an organic link to NATO (Article IV). It also established the Assembly, to which some 40 countries send their parliamentary representatives. These include all the EU member states and the European NATO countries as well as Russia, Ukraine and all the Balkan states. The Assembly scrutinises European intergovernmental activities in all areas of security and defence, including armaments cooperation. Following the transfer of WEU's operational activities to the EU, the Assembly also serves as the interparliamentary platform for the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) on the basis of the parliamentary instruments for which the WEU legal framework makes provision.

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