



Council of the
European Union

065144/EU XXVI. GP
Eingelangt am 17/05/19

Brussels, 17 May 2019
(OR. en)

9246/19
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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Council

Subject: **European Space Policy - Preparation of the Space Council**

Delegations will find in the Annex a background document in view of the policy debate in the Space Council on 28 May 2019.

Space as an enabler - Policy debate**Background document****I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Europe — the European Union, the European Space Agency (ESA), their respective Member States, and all other relevant space-related European stakeholders — has achieved many successes in space with breakthrough technologies, applications, science and exploration programmes and missions.
2. Space is a critical sector, enabling public policies and European engagement worldwide and creating new business opportunities that support economic growth, quality of life and sustainable development. The capacity to use and access space is indispensable for Europe in tackling global challenges, such as technology revolutions, shifts in geopolitical power or humanitarian crises, safety and security or space originated threats such as asteroid impacts. The use of space for future generations needs to be promoted and preserved, taking into consideration that no single European country or organization can face the current challenges or fully grasp all emerging opportunities alone.

II. POLITICAL CONTEXT

3. On the occasion of the publication of the Communication of the European Commission on a "Space Strategy for Europe"¹, the European Union and the European Space Agency signed, on 26 October 2016, the "Joint Statement on Shared Vision and Goals for the Future of Europe in Space". The statement expressed the collective ambition that every single European citizen should benefit from Europe's space capacities and capabilities.

¹ Adopted by the European Commission on 26 October 2016 (COM(2016) 705 final).

The Joint Statement sets up three main goals: to maximise the integration of space into European society and economy, to foster a globally competitive European space sector, and to ensure European autonomy in accessing and using space in a safe and secure environment. These goals should rest on the solid foundation of excellence in science, technology and applications, developed through an ecosystem based on outstanding education and skills and a thorough knowledge base.

4. The ESA Council at Ministerial level adopted the resolution on ESA strategy “Towards Space 4.0 for a United Space in Europe” on 2 December 2016.
5. The Council of the European Union in its conclusions adopted on 30 May 2017², welcomed the Communication on a Space Strategy for Europe and called for an extensive awareness raising campaign in order to promote the generation and utilization of space solutions.
6. In 2018, the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Spanish Presidency of the ESA Council at Ministerial level agreed on a Joint Position Paper on "Europe in Space: Roadmap towards a coordinated space policy for Europe" to strengthen the cooperation between the EU and ESA, to provide greater coherence and synergies to ensure the full economic and social potential of space.
7. All these political positions acknowledge the new challenges we are facing today, when we have entered into a new space era of intense global competition and complex evolving geopolitical context. The new space era also offers Europe and its citizens new opportunities and a common future, based on successes, programmes, strengths and values. To keep Europe at the forefront of the new space race, a constant dialogue between the EU, ESA and their Member States is of paramount importance.

² Doc. 9817/17

III. CONCLUSIONS

8. Space facilitates the implementation of the European policies and overarching priorities, inter alia the single market, migration, external relations, climate change, security and defence, which were already identified by the European Council on several occasions as key topics for the EU to be tackled.
9. In recent years many new actors worldwide, new space faring nations and private companies have entered the space sector, resulting in increased competition on the global scene. In order for Europe to keep pace with such a competitive framework, it needs a common, strong and coordinated response from all the European space actors.
10. A strengthened strategic cooperation and coordination at political level between the EU, ESA, their respective Member States and other relevant space related European stakeholders is vital to address the whole European space landscape.
11. It takes a bold attitude to not only follow what other international actors do, but to stimulate stakeholders to develop their innovative ideas in space and address the European space policy in a holistic manner, seeking best synergies between the national, intergovernmental and supranational frameworks.

IV. QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED BY DELEGATIONS:

Space is an enabler for a wide spectrum of activities, from basic research to societal and economic applications, to safety and security and contributes to a wide range of political priorities, such as climate change, agriculture, transport or digital agenda. Moreover, Space is a long term driver for innovation and creates new opportunities to address global challenges.

In this context:

What should be the most pressing issues to be addressed in future Space Councils? Based on these pressing issues, how can we best reinforce the common European view on Space policies and strategic matters?