



Brussels, 22 July 2021
(OR. en)

11014/21

FIN 631	TELECOM 301
ESPACE 75	MI 580
RECH 362	ENER 339
COMPET 566	EMPL 326
IND 207	CSC 289
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TRANS 488	CSDP/PSDC 397
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MAR 146	

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 13 July 2021
To: Delegations

Subject: Council Conclusions on the Special Report No 07/2021 from the European Court of Auditors entitled “EU space programmes Galileo and Copernicus: services launched, but the uptake needs a further boost”

Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on the Special Report No 07/2021 from the European Court of Auditors entitled “EU Space programmes Galileo and Copernicus: services launched, but the uptake needs a further boost”, adopted by the Council at its 3808th meeting held on 13 July 2021.

**Council conclusions on Special Report No 07/2021
from the European Court of Auditors entitled:**

***"EU space programmes Galileo and Copernicus:
services launched, but the uptake needs a further boost"***

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- A. RECALLING the Commission's Communication on a Space Strategy for Europe, presented on 26 October 2016¹ and especially the goal of exploiting the potential of the European space programmes by maximising the benefits of Space for Society and the EU economy;
- B. RECALLING that the EU Space Programme Regulation provides a single framework for the space initiatives and programmes, ensuring their continuity and improving the services they provide in order to reap the maximum benefits of the Programme, as well streamlining user and market uptake activities, and downstream application development activities for all the Programme's components; and that Galileo and Copernicus services are operational and their downstream exploitation and use are important to achieve their objectives;
- C. ACKNOWLEDGING that the Court of Auditors' audit examined whether the Commission: (a) developed a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy for promoting the uptake of services provided by the EU space programmes, including all relevant actors; (b) set up sound systems to assess the benefits provided by the EU space programmes and monitor the achievements of strategic objectives; (c) took effective action to increase the uptake of services; and (d) took appropriate measures towards the creation of a regulatory framework, supportive of the uptake of services provided by Copernicus and Galileo;

¹ Doc. 13758/16.

1. WELCOMES the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 07/2021 entitled "EU space programmes Galileo and Copernicus: services launched, but the uptake needs a further boost" and the Commission's replies to the Report;
2. NOTES that it is the first audit carried out by the Court on the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Commission to promote the uptake of services derived from Galileo and Copernicus, towards the achievement of expected economic and societal benefits provided by these services;
3. NOTES that the strong orientation towards user needs is an essential rationale for the design and development of the Union space programme's components in order to stimulate growth, societal benefits and to contribute to the implementation of Union sector policies;
4. UNDERLINES that the Court reviewed the approaches and actions taken by the Commission, the GSA² and the Copernicus entrusted entities in supporting the uptake of the services provided by the Galileo and the Copernicus programmes, whereas EGNOS and the uptake of the Galileo Public Regulated Service were excluded from the scope of the audit;
5. STRESSES that the scope of the audit is a period starting from 2014 to mid-2020 and that during this period, the key effort of the Commission was to put in place the necessary space and ground infrastructure, which is indispensable for providing Galileo and Copernicus services and hence for their market and user uptake, allowing both Galileo and Copernicus to be operational and providing services to users, which are setting global standards in satellite navigation and Earth Observation; and NOTES that Copernicus user uptake activities, which were not part of the initial programme objectives, started after the mid-term review of the programme;

² Now replaced by the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA).

6. HIGHLIGHTS the conclusion that Galileo and Copernicus provide valuable services and data, which the Commission supported with different means, and that efforts are still needed to capitalise on the significant investment made to achieve the expected societal and economic benefits and thus strengthening the EU Internal Market, including competitiveness of European companies, in particular SMEs and midcaps, and to address the fragmented structure of the markets for space services;
7. HIGHLIGHTS that the Union has made significant investments in EU space programmes and as part of the EU Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and that more efforts are needed to capitalise on the significant investments made to achieve the expected societal and economic benefits, including the contribution of space services and data to the digital and green transitions; and that Space is an enabler for a wide range of industrial and technological activities, innovations and new businesses;
8. UNDERLINES the role of the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) that will be responsible for promoting the commercial market uptake of Galileo, EGNOS, and also Copernicus, without prejudice to Copernicus activities and Services entrusted to other entities, exploiting synergies of all components of the EU Space Programme;
9. HIGHLIGHTS that Galileo will be the first GNSS constellation offering advanced services to the user like authentication and high accuracy; and ACKNOWLEDGES that the Commission already adopted regulatory measures such as eCall, which should be built on to facilitate the uptake of Galileo services in the domain of road safety and emergency; moreover, NOTES the existence of international standards, as in the field of aviation, therefore offering new opportunities to initiate sector-specific regulatory actions which is likely to support a more widespread use of Galileo services;

10. NOTES the Court's first recommendation that, in order to support the further uptake of EU space services more effectively, the Commission should develop a comprehensive strategy for supporting the uptake of EU space services, and should define realistic and measurable targets; and WELCOMES in this regard that the EU Space Programme for 2021-2027 sets for the first time a framework for all Union space data and services, which provides a sound basis for a comprehensive strategy for supporting the uptake of Galileo and Copernicus space services, that includes all relevant actors and entities, including national stakeholders, at their various levels and responsibilities taking into account the specificities of each component;
11. NOTES the Court's second recommendation that, in order to estimate economic and societal benefits of space services, in a more reliable and consistent manner, and to monitor more effectively the achievement of key objectives, the Commission should develop a conceptual framework on the basis of sound methods and reliable data for estimating the benefits of the EU space programmes and improve the set of appropriate performance indicators; HIGHLIGHTS the provisions enshrined in the EU Space Programme's Regulation on the evaluation of the performance of the Programme towards its objectives; NOTES that the GSA³ already developed a sound framework for estimating the benefits of EGNSS and that a future conceptual framework should be developed on this basis;

³ Now replaced by the EUSPA.

12. NOTES the Court's third recommendation that, in order to better support uptake and provide efficient access to space data and products, the Commission should ensure full readiness of Galileo and develop, in cooperation with Member States and other relevant actors, a long term framework for a more sustainable and integrated approach of access to Copernicus data and products; ACKNOWLEDGES the different measures already underway to promote the market and user uptake of Galileo and Copernicus services and that the Commission already undertook many targeted actions, such as the Horizon 2020 downstream R&D, the EGNSS Fundamental Elements programme, the Copernicus and Galileo hackathons, accelerators, incubators, Copernicus Relays & Academy, the Copernicus Data Information and Access Services (DIAS), among others, for the uptake of the EU space services; and ENCOURAGES EUSPA to promote activities linked to Galileo fundamental elements as part of the Space Programme Regulation;
13. NOTES the Court's fourth recommendation that, in order to encourage and facilitate further uptake of services under the EU space programmes, the Commission should better use the regulatory framework, including conduct an analysis where EU legislation or standards could promote making best use of Copernicus data and products and facilitate the use of Galileo for each relevant market segment; TAKES NOTE that the EU has already introduced for main market segments (e.g. transport and radio equipment) regulatory measures supporting the uptake of EU space services and that further action should be taken on standardisation measures; and ACKNOWLEDGES that the EU Space Programme puts great emphasis on the downstream sector, the market uptake and the exploitation of space data, which will allow for coherency of the market and user uptake activities of all space data and services;

14. UNDERLINES the role of EUSPA for promoting the uptake of all the components of the Space Programme, including Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and Governmental Satellite Communication (GOVSATCOM), and the potential for promoting the development of applications that integrate services and data from the different components, without prejudice to the service and user uptake activities entrusted by the Commission to the Copernicus entrusted entities; and in this context, RECALLS that the Commission and EUSPA should foster, through an action plan, the uptake of space services and to increase the competitiveness of the EU downstream space industry⁴;
15. WELCOMES the measures already in place that are in line with the Court's recommendations; and CALLS on the Commission and on EUSPA to follow up on this report where further action is required, in coordination with relevant actors as appropriate, and to inform the Council on progress made in the implementation of these recommendations, based on relevant targets and performance indicators.
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⁴ doc. 9163/21