

SECURING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IN SPACE – SPEED AND SIZE MATTER



In times of climate crisis and war, each day counts. Only timely climate action can secure a green future of our planet. Rapid and resilient crisis response can save lives, and space can be an even more integral part of the solution. In turn, space itself, as a strategic asset needs to be protected. European space has much achieved and much more to offer. **A decisive European space policy is needed. Now. At scale. By all actors.** Recently, European space united twice, in Paris, where ESA Member States held their Ministerial Council meeting (CM22), and in Brussels, at the 15th European Space Conference. At both events, the strategic importance of space was clearly recognised. However, when measured against the magnitude of climate and geo-political challenges and the urgency to act, both events demonstrated that **transformation is needed to ensure effective and timely action.**

European space has come a long way. However, despite major efforts by EU and ESA **no major new impulse has been visible during the “Zeitenwende” of the past year**, which would truly secure the future of Europe in space when faced with global competition. The new EU security flagship, IRIS² will only become available earliest by 2027, its €2.4B of EU funding over several years is about 1% compared to the \$50B annually of public space funding for security & defence globally. Similar ratios apply for ESA CM22 initial funding of €1.6B for space safety & security. Despite the undisputed urgency to protect our space infrastructure and astronauts, there is little evidence of adequate SSA/SST funding at EU level prior to the next MFF, and situational awareness of cislunar space is beyond current European imagination. While Cassini provides valuable stimulus, its funding component only represents 30% of the capital raised by European New Space startups in 2022 and is unlikely to provide the critical funding structure enabling the late-stage growth needed in Europe.

The strong voices of awareness and ambition provided in Brussels give **hope**. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative and Vice-President, European Commission stated that “the geopolitical competition [...] is now increasingly projected up in space” and referred to space as a “battlefield”. He underlined the urgency of concrete common European action. Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton referred to a “Single market moment of space”. Sweden’s Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson stated that Sweden will promote the space strategy for security and defence and sees climate change mitigation as a priority during its EU Presidency. Echoing the remarks on the Swedish EU Presidency for a sustainable use of space, Anna Christmann, Federal Government Coordinator of German Aerospace Policy stressed the importance of a zero debris policy. However, to close the gap between ambition and the actual speed and size of action, Europe needs to step up.

- **To ensure that space policy is better integrated into the national and EU policies of green transition, security & defence and digital infrastructures, acknowledging that more often than not space has no clear place in these policies yet**
- To increase synergies between national and European priorities, acknowledging that more than 80% of institutional funding for space in Europe originates from national budgets and agencies,
- To include the transformation of the industrial complex, stimulating its innovative powers and going beyond a focus on industrial policy and direct industrial return and harnessing the talent of the next generation.

During the European Space Conference, Niklas Nienass, Member of the European Parliament, voiced the need for more discussion about a European space strategy. The 2023 Space Summit, the EU MFF Mid-Term-Review and the preparation of ESA CM25 may provide the milestones to **shape and transform Space in Europe**, with all actors, EU, ESA, member states and industry. This would also respond to industry concerns, such as those expressed by Jean Marc Nasr, Executive VP, Airbus Defence and Space, seeing Europe’s position at risk, referring to a wake-up call to Europe, if it wants to remain a strong player in the international scene facing the US and China and the **“need for a new deal”**.

For the times they are a-changin’

Yours sincerely,



Hermann Ludwig Moeller
Director of ESPI