

SUCCESS WITHIN POLITICAL BOUNDARIES – BUT WIDENING THE GAP



The ESA Council Meeting on Ministerial Level CM22 this month in Paris was a success when considering the current energy, security, and economic crises. With subscriptions totalling €16.9B for the next 3-5 years it represents a 17% increase compared to ESA Space19+. All ESA Member States demonstrated their full commitment to ESA, with almost all Member States increasing their contributions. The outcome also confirms the European dimension of space. It provides **a clear message that space is on the agenda of all European economies and societies.**

Germany, chairing ESA CM22, provided the highest contribution of €3.5B confirming its leading position on European level taken three years ago. France follows with €3.2B (+20%), provided from the highest national space budget in Europe of €9B. Italy with €3B made a most remarkable statement with an increase of +35% and the UK confirmed its European ambition with €1.8B, an increase of +14%. The budget entrusted to ESA by its Member States continues to represent **the largest public funding for space on European level**, about double the funding for the EU Space Programme of €14.9B over 7 years.

All individual programme proposals were approved, resulting in the **most complete European space programme to date, with a continued rise in space applications programmes.** Most prominently, ESA's programme related to EU Secure Connectivity (IRIS²) has been subscribed with €650M. Just 5 days after the adoption of IRIS² at EU level this provides an **excellent example of EU and ESA with its Member States working hand-in-hand when it matters.** In addition, navigation saw a remarkable increase to €351M, up from €72M in 2019. Also, the young domain of safety and security, initiated at Space19+ found increased support, Space Safety with €731M from €432M in 2019 and with the start of a new programme for Civil Security from Space (CSS). As another new programme, the Commercialisation Programme "ScaleUp" was oversubscribed by 17%, while Moonlight will provide Europe with an element in support to its future lunar ambitions.

Yet, when measuring against Europe's ambition to become an autonomous space power, next to the US and China, and against rising public and private space investments globally, the result translates into a **further widening of the gap between Europe and other world regions.** With a space budget share of GDP in the range of 0.05% in Europe compared to about 0.25% in the US, space in Europe fails to live up to its full potential.

The European challenge goes well beyond CM22, ESA or the current EU-ESA cooperation in the EU Space Programme. In fact, both mechanisms, at ESA and EU may be considered as performing rather well, within the boundaries resulting from political priorities. However, with the exception of France and Luxembourg, space has not earned its place in the European political priorities of our time. It is **not seen as part of a solution to today's challenges, for energy and mobility transition, security and defence, climate action** (beyond climate monitoring).

At a time, when stakeholders in other world regions have since long recognised the strategic importance of space and invest accordingly, when commercial infrastructures are deployed at a speed unseen in the history of space, when space powers go back to the Moon and aim further, Europe still fails to step-up. CM22 marks the beginning of the preparations for a European Space Summit 2023, of the Mid-Term Review of the EU Space Programme and of the road to ESA CM25. These key milestones will define Europe's power in space for the foreseeable future. A bold whole-of-Europe vision for space is a prerequisite for joining the global space powers. Europe still has the unique opportunity for evolving and transforming its space ecosystem to ensure European political and technological autonomy. **A 2023-2025 match-plan for space is needed**, if Europe wants to be with the space powers, which will set the rules and shape the future of space for the foreseeable future. . . . "Nach dem Spiel ist vor dem Spiel".

Yours sincerely,



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Director of ESPI