

IAC AND WSBW 2022: PART OF OUR BEST ENERGIES AND SKILLS



The 12th of September marked the 60th anniversary of the JFK Moon speech. What then was a governmental initiative of geo-political dimension was also set out to “serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills”. Today, while the Moon again has become a destination, and while new geopolitical challenges are emerging, new ambitions in space need to address also its commercial dimension in an emerging U.S. \$1T space economy.

September also saw two major space communities come together in Paris at Euroconsult’s World Satellite Business Week (WSBW) and at the IAF’s International Astronautical Congress (IAC). While WSBW and its Summit for Satellite Financing and Earth Observation Business mainly addresses the commercial satellite community including private investors, the IAC traditionally is host to governmental actors, policy makers, space industry and academia with more focus on institutional space missions and public investments. WSBW 2022 addressed major commercial announcements such as the planned Eutelsat-OneWeb merger, SpaceX’s Starlink partnership with T-Mobile and Globalstar bringing satellite communications to Apple’s iPhone, while at IAC institutional flagship programs such as the success of the James Webb telescope or ambitions for Destination Moon and Mars were more prominent.

However, more than ever both events also demonstrated that governmental objectives and commercial ambitions in space increasingly become intertwined. Entrepreneurs respond to sustainability concerns, and an Artemis generation will exist next to a Digital generation, where much of the venture capital also in space is directed to edge-computing, mobility, cybersecurity, AI and quantum or data fusion and where ITC leaders such as Microsoft and Amazon have entered the space race. This trend is also visible with the nomination of the new IAF President, Clay Mowry. For the first time this position will be held by a profile active in commercial space venture, bringing new impulse and an agenda to IAF to help secure continued investment in space to enable a sustainable space environment. This acknowledges a U.S. \$9B investment of venture capital in space in 2021 and that private and government financing in space both will grow and play an important role in the evolution of space. Similarly, the ESA Director General, Josef Aschbacher at WSBW presented the ESA proposal for its Ministerial Council 2022 with €2B earmarked as support to commercialization, in line with ESA Agenda 2025 ambitions, the establishment by ESA of a NewSpace Advisory Board and of the European Centre for Space Economy and Commerce (ECSECO). Private and governmental actors are engaging to explore new ways to increase the socio-economic impact that space can have well beyond the traditional space eco-system, in support to energy transition, and in domains such as health and telemedicine, climate and NetZero, autonomous vehicles and smart cities, aviation and maritime, digital divide and Internet and space for peace and progress. **New branches of government and of the economy become users and investors in space.** It may be the challenge of the decade ahead of us to bring these actors together to optimize synergies between entrepreneurial ambitions and policy goals. As an example, the planned EUTELSAT-OneWeb merger next to its commercial ambitions raises questions from governmental European stakeholders, including the role of shareholders from outside Europe. Also in Europe, governmental stakeholders and established industrial players will need to adapt to the speed of the market, to shortened innovation cycles and lifetime of space infrastructures, to more effectively work with NewTech/NewSpace mechanisms. Next to other measures, public procurement schemes will need to evolve to allow industries to compete for new markets, which predominantly are global in scope and where access to public contracts, e.g. as anchor customer and for support to innovation remains one of the key challenges. This can be expected to be accompanied by a shift of governance towards more public-private schemes. In turn, industrial commercialization schemes will need to acknowledge increasing governmental ambitions for autonomy, resilience and security.

As the new Director of ESPI since 1st of September, it will be an honor together with the ESPI team to join and support you in this endeavor for a Europe as a strong global partner in space. ESPI may help identify why governments and private actors shall go to space together to bring most value to the challenges of our time. ESPI may help in providing direction for a shared mission and for programs for their realization. ESPI may contribute research how and under which governance the public and private stakeholders can be symbiotic while stimulating competition. All together we can help to organize and bring together the best of our energies and skills.

Yours sincerely,



Hermann Ludwig Moeller
Director of ESPI