

December 2024

ESPI Vienna Space Diplomat

5th ESPI VSD Newsletter



As we approach the end of the year, I am pleased to share the 5th edition of the ESPI VSD newsletter. 2024 has been a year of continued and increasing engagement of ESPI with the Vienna Space Diplomacy community. Among the highlights, before the summer break, ESPI co-organised the VSD Summer Reception with the Permanent Representation of Switzerland, strengthening our international partnerships. Following the break, we had a busy and impactful period with the 2nd VSD Forum in September and the Autumn Conference in October, closely followed by the IAC in Milan, all fostering valuable engagement with the space and diplomatic communities.

2nd VSD Summer Reception

On 13 June 2024, ESPI co-hosted the second annual Vienna Space Diplomat (VSD) summer reception with the Permanent Mission of Switzerland. The event brought together over 40 senior diplomats from 20 countries. Swiss Ambassador H.E. Raphael Nægeli opened the event, followed by a fireside chat with Daniel Neuenschwander, ESA's Director of Human and Robotic Exploration, and Carmen Possnig, an ESA astronaut reserve member. ESPI Director Ludwig Moeller reflected on the VSD initiative's growth, with over 400 participants attending seven VSD events since its only recent launch in 2023.

2nd VSD Forum

On October 11th, 2024, ESPI hosted the second VSD Forum of the year, focusing on Space Debris Mitigation and Remediation. This event brought together over 30 participants from the local diplomatic community to explore key technical developments in space safety. **Quentin Verspioren**, Space Safety Programme and PROTECT Accelerator Coordinator at ESA and a former ESPI Global Fellow in Japan, was the guest speaker. His presentation highlighted the Zero Debris Charter (ZDC), a new instrument gaining momentum with a growing list of signatories. The forum provided an in-depth examination of current efforts and challenges in space debris management, reinforcing its relevance for the diplomatic community in Vienna engaged with space affairs.



Newsletter Highlights

VSD Summer Reception
JUNE 13th 2024

2nd VSD Forum
OCT. 11th 2024

18th ESPI Autumn Conference
OCT. 1st and 2nd 2024

ESPI's Presence at the IAC
OCT. 14th to 18th 2024





18th ESPI Autumn Conference

The 18th edition of ESPI's Autumn Conference took place on October 1st and 2nd in Vienna, with a strong focus on space security and defence in light of Europe's growing awareness of strategic vulnerabilities, particularly in the context of the ongoing war in its neighbourhood. The conference gathered 250 participants from across 22 countries, spanning the military, government, and private sectors. Ahead of the conference, **ESPI hosted the first ESPI Roundtable of European Space Commands and Ministries of Defence, bringing together representatives from 8 different European countries.** This roundtable provided a platform for military space actors to exchange views on current threats, share best practices, and foster increased cooperation. ESPI also officially launched the **Network of European Space Policy Think Tanks (NEST)**, with the aim of fostering collaboration and impact across the continent's policy think tanks, ensuring stronger, coordinated recommendations to policymakers. Throughout the conference, attendees underscored the need for stronger political will required to actually implement strategic ambitions for space security and the necessity of better aligning and coordinating military and civil space programmes. The event reflected a clear recognition of the need for boosting Europe's dual-use space capabilities to ensure resilience and security in space, particularly through partnerships within the EU, ESA, and NATO.

ESPI's presence at the IAC

ESPI welcomed its stakeholders at the 75th International Astronautical Congress (IAC), hosting its own booth for the first time, enabling more direct efforts to facilitate informed dialogue and to maintain existing and build new

relationships. The IAC provided the platform for excellent interactions and events with decision-makers and institutions at the highest level.

ESPI welcomed the President of POLSA, as the Polish Space Agency joined ESPI as its 21st member. Marking an important step in establishing deeper cooperation in space security policy with the rapidly emerging Asian powerhouse, ESPI strengthened its international cooperation in South Korea, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korean Academy of Space and Security (KASS). The development of closer ties with the Latin American region was at the focus of further high-level meetings with the Head of CONAE, the Argentinian Space Agency and the Head of AEB, the Brazilian Space Agency, discussing possible collaborative undertakings.

At IAC, ESPI also hosted and facilitated different roundtables, panels, webcasts and discussions, on space diplomacy, space policy opportunities, space sustainability, and future space challenges.

NEXT VSD ENGAGEMENTS

3rd VSD Forum on Space and Nuclear

ESPI's 3rd VSD Forum will take place during the first trimester of 2025, delving on the topic of "Synergies between Space and Nuclear". More details will follow as the time approaches.

VSD Summer Reception 2025

We are delighted to announce that the 3rd VSD Summer Reception will be co-hosted with the Permanent Mission of Spain. We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Spain for their hospitality in facilitating this event.

We are looking forward to welcoming you on both events, wishing you all the best for the holiday season and a peaceful year 2025.

Yours sincerely,

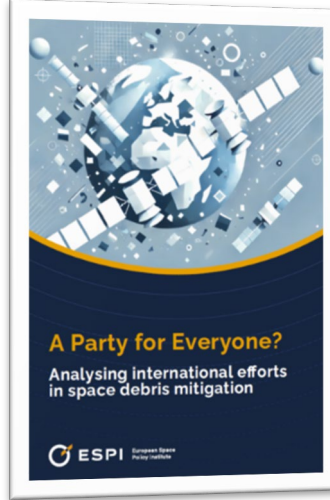
Hermann Ludwig Moeller
Director of ESPI



Selected ESPI publications to the attention of the VSD community



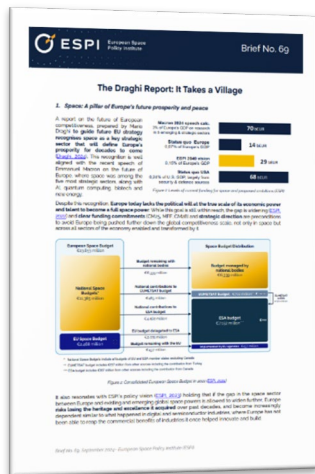
[European Parliament Elections](#)



[A Party for Everyone?](#)



[Multilateral engagement on Space Security](#)



[The Draghi Report: It takes a village](#)



[Trade & Export Credit Agencies, a Strategic Enabler in the Space Data Economy](#)



[ESPI Insights](#)



[ESPI Perspectives](#)



Events organised by ESPI · 2025

JANUARY

VSD Forum - Q1 2025
Synergies between Nuclear and Space

FEBRUARY

Evening Event
Alongside
STSC
February 4th & 10th

MARCH

APRIL

Inter-Regional Dialogues
LATAM
April or May

MAY

Evening Event
Alongside
LSC
May

JUNE

VSD Summer Reception
June 5th
Organised with the Spanish PM

Evening Event
Alongside
COPUOS
June

JULY

Evening Event
Alongside
COPUOS
July

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

VSD Forum
Date TBD

DECEMBER