

Resolution on
ESA Accelerating the Use of Space in Europe

(adopted on 23 November 2022)

Council, meeting at ministerial level,

CONSIDERING holding this meeting in exceptional times of global opportunities and challenges, making space a subject of importance and interest that has become more relevant than ever for the development of countries and their economies, and alongside for the future of ESA and the European space sector at large,

CONSIDERING FURTHER that this meeting is a critical steppingstone in a sequence of high-level assemblies carried by the ambition to make Europe, its states, institutions and organisations collectively future-fit through exploring and using space to the fullest extent for the benefit of its people, and preparing the path for future milestones like the Space Summit 2023, called to be held as an ESA-EU Space Council, and the Council meeting at ministerial level to be organised in 2025,

HAVING REGARD to the Convention for the establishment of a European Space Agency (hereinafter ‘the Convention’), which entered into force on 30 October 1980, and RECALLING in particular the purpose of ESA established in Article II thereof,

HAVING REGARD to the Director General’s Proposal on “Accelerating the Use of Space in Europe” (ESA/C-M(2022)2) presented to Council in its final form at the occasion of this meeting,

HAVING REGARD to the Director General’s long-term plan (ESA/C(2021)131) and the annual reporting thereupon, established and executed in accordance with the Convention, as well as to the Director General’s ‘Agenda 2025’, shared with the Member States in March 2021 and presented to Council in June 2021 (ESA/C(2021)51),

HAVING REGARD to the Framework Agreement between the European Space Agency and the European Community (hereinafter ‘the Framework Agreement’), which entered into force on 28 May 2004 (ESA/LEG/279),

HAVING REGARD to the Resolutions adopted by Council, meeting at ministerial level in Luzern in 2016 (ESA/C-M/CCLXIV/Res.1 (Final)), in Madrid in 2018 (ESA/C-M/CCLXXVI/Res.1 (Final)) and in Sevilla in 2019 (ESA/C-M/CCLXXXVI/Res.1 (Final)), RECALLING in particular that ESA Member States shall continue to act, notably within the framework of the Convention, across all space domains,

CONSIDERING the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement between the European Commission, representing the European Union, the European Union Agency for the Space Programme and the European Space Agency, which entered into force in June 2021 (ESA/LEG/518), RECALLING in particular Article 26 thereof,

CONSIDERING the Contribution Agreement between the European Commission and the European Space Agency on the implementation of the Union Space Programme and Horizon Europe (ESA/LEG/519) and the Contribution Agreement between the European Union Agency for the Space Programme and the European Space Agency on the implementation of the Union Space Programme (ESA/LEG/520),

HAVING REGARD to the “Resolution on Accelerating the Use of Space in Europe”, ESA/C-M/CCCII/Res.1 (Final), also referred to as the ‘Matosinhos Manifesto’, adopted by Council meeting at ministerial level on 19 November 2021 (IMM21), as well as to the deliberations at the Space Summit held in Toulouse on 16 February 2022,

1 | A new space age and a world in transformation

The paradigm shift of the space sector: into a new space age

1. RECOGNISES the unprecedented significance of space for global society and economy, boosted by an equally unparalleled rate of development and transformation of the modern space sector, facilitating and protecting life on Earth, furthering scientific discovery and understanding, bringing technological advancement and thriving economic opportunities for the benefit of present and future generations;
2. RECOGNISES the fundamental shift that space has brought in several domains, most notably in space transportation, broadband internet communication, positioning and navigation, and Earth observation, where the public sector enabled the development of a vibrant commercial sector, while also OBSERVING the dynamic evolution of the launcher sector with the emergence of new commercial launch service providers, and CALLING for Europe to collectively accelerate its efforts in order to remain competitive and take advantage of commercial opportunities across the space sector;
3. RECOGNISES the global renewed interest in the exploration and use of outer space by governments and private actors alike, and alongside the promises and opportunities of a new space age opening up, from the full integration of space into life on Earth via the establishment of new orbital economies to the return of humankind to the Moon and beyond, CERTAIN that Europe, as one of the world’s space powers, is to play its role in those endeavours, collectively and progressively, to increase its independence while equally becoming an even stronger partner at the global, international level;

4. ACKNOWLEDGES the profound evolution of the role of space industry, the broadening of the industrial landscape with established actors and new entrants, the continuing rise of NewSpace actors, the encouragement of space entrepreneurship and technological advances through investment and technology incubation, as well as the diversification and democratization of space actors and space activities, CONVINCED that competitiveness fuels innovation and achievement within appropriate frame conditions set by the public sector in an open economy;
5. RECOGNISES that this new space age brings along challenges – such as a rapidly increasing space traffic and human footprint on the space environment, critical dependency on space infrastructure, political competition or questions of governance and regulation – that require concerted efforts to protect outer space and continue its exploration and use for the benefit and in the interest of all; and STRESSES the need for resilient and innovative space ecosystems, as governments and institutions ever more rely on space-based capabilities for assuming their responsibilities towards society;
6. RECOGNISES, in this regard, the importance of scientific progress, technological development, engineering solutions, public interest and inspiration, space diplomacy, international cooperation and the rule of law in outer space, altogether elements significant for ESA as a space actor and as a mechanism of international cooperation;

Unprecedented political and societal challenges: our world in transformation

7. RECOGNISES the unfolding climate crisis as the central concern of our time, with repercussions across all areas of society such as the protection of the terrestrial environment, global health, and the sustainable development of life on Earth; and that space offers opportunities to tackle these problems from a unique vantage point by increasing scientific understanding and technical possibilities, and by providing tools, applications and services to governments, institutions and individuals likewise;
8. NOTES with concern that the contemporary climate crisis is amplified by other crises and instabilities, including the evolving geopolitical circumstances that already yielded negative repercussions on the global space agenda, and that, with rising tensions, outer space may become an increasingly contested environment;
9. REAFFIRMS, therefore, the continued value and importance of intergovernmental mechanisms like ESA which enable governments to effectively pool resources in pursuance of shared ambitions, as well as of multilateral space cooperation and international partnerships as means to contribute to global space efforts and to advance collectively the peaceful exploration and use of outer space;

2 | The imperative for Europe as a space power

Space for Europe at a critical point in time

10. CONSIDERS that, in present times and circumstances more than ever before, Europe must excel as a space power, building on political, economic and societal rationales, CONVINCED that space is fundamental to securing European independence, strengthening its society, aiding its governments, fostering its industry, educating its future generations, fuelling its knowledge-based society and protecting its ways of living;
11. RECOGNISES, therefore, the need for Europe to reinforce its role as a global frontrunner and partner in space through sustained efforts, new motivations and bold ambitions to be attained at national, intergovernmental and supranational levels of competence, and AFFIRMS its appreciation of ESA's central role in that strategic, long-term endeavour, as the space agency of its Member States and for Europe, trusted for its heritage, quality and competence;
12. EMPHASISES that securing an own, continuous and resilient gateway to space is a prerequisite for Europe as a space power, offering flexibility and competition through a scalable system of launch vehicles of different performances, while enhancing their environmental sustainability and cost efficiency, and therefore:
 - (a) CONFIRMS its support to the Ariane 6 and Vega C stabilised exploitation way forward as referred to in the Resolution on principles related to Ariane 6 and Vega C exploitation models and new space transportation solutions, adopted on 13 August 2021 (ESA/C/CCXCIX, Res.1 (Final));
 - (b) INVITES the Director General, together with the States having finalised the Launcher Exploitation Declaration of 2017 and ESA Member States, to review the legal framework governing the European launcher exploitation scheme, with the objective to decide, by the end of 2023, on a way forward to become effective at the latest by mid-2024; and AGREES that, until then, the Resolution on the application of the common legal framework governing the exploitation of ESA developed launchers (etc.), adopted on 16 December 2020 (ESA/C/CCXCV/ Res.1(Final)), continues to apply; and
 - (c) ACKNOWLEDGES that also privately developed, operational European micro- and mini-launch systems shall have the possibility to compete for ESA satellite launch service procurements in accordance with the Convention, in particular its Articles VII.1 and VIII.1;

13. RECALLS the renewed European space ambitions endorsed by the IMM21 to be implemented inclusively and for the long-term benefit of all Member States, emphasised at the Space Summit 2022 and carried forward since then, in particular the Accelerators as a new way to use space through a building block architecture enabling services for the benefit of Europe and its citizens, in full synergy with, and complementing, existing initiatives and capabilities and starting with 'Space for a Green Future';
14. WELCOMES the work of the High-Level Advisory Group on Human and Robotic Space Exploration for Europe as an important input to Member States for the preparation of the Space Summit in 2023; and REAFFIRMS ESA's role in shaping the future of space transportation in Europe by balancing cooperation and competition based on European technologies and solutions, thus carrying forward a critical element of Europe as a space power;
15. WELCOMES furthermore the ongoing commitments to accelerate the use of space in Europe through solutions to global challenges, as well as creating opportunities for a long-term European presence in low Earth orbit, enabling the first European to explore the Moon's surface by 2030 and paving the way to other inspiring prospects for Europe beyond Earth orbit;

ESA at the continuous service of its Member States and partners

16. UPHOLDS that the developments and prospects of a new space age in a world facing crises and transformation call for addressing a possible evolution of ESA to strengthen it as a versatile and future-fit agency of its Member States, CONVINCED of the Agency's role, relevance and competences as a leading international space organisation at the heart of the European space sector, active through its programmes and activities across all space domains;
17. AFFIRMS that any evolution of the Agency is to be based on its intergovernmental status and on the decade-long successes of the ESA mechanism as provided for in the Convention, and shall serve the present and future needs of all Member States and Europe at large through, inter alia, technical, industrial, scientific and operational excellence, cooperative heritage, programmatic flexibility and collective decision-making;
18. APPRECIATES the mechanism of optional programmes across all space domains decided by and among the Member States under the Convention, the Agency's role in space programme management and competitive industrial procurement as well as the geographical return as distinctive elements of the ESA model that demonstrated their usefulness over time and contributed to the Agency's continuing success as the space agency of Europe at the core of creating a globally competitive, world-class industry;

19. RECOGNISES that there is not yet fully harvested potential of the ESA mechanism as laid down in the Convention to further European space ambitions by stimulating, sustaining and strengthening the European space ecosystem as an enabler and facilitator for commercial players, national space ambitions of Member States and the internationalisation of national programmes;
20. CALLS UPON ESA to develop forward-looking tools for accompanying and stimulating the commercialisation of space activities through innovative support to European commercial actors by inter alia aiding technical developments and, in appropriate circumstances, as a first customer, bearing in mind the changing paradigms of the public and private sectors in space globally, capitalising on the opportunities brought along by this development and easing the commercialisation of products developed within ESA programmes;
21. EMPHASISES furthermore the necessity to better capitalise on, and exploit:
 - (a) the *innovation potential* of the Agency through forward-looking and novel programmatic ambitions and the promotion of cooperation, inter alia by means of the Accelerators, for ESA to stay at the forefront of space research and technology push;
 - (b) the *inspirational potential* of the Agency through a significant reinforcement of its outreach activities, for ESA to inspire and attract the next generation of European talent and workforce especially but not solely in the STEM fields, manifest its role for citizens and governments and convey the critical importance of space to society at large; and
 - (c) the *transformational potential* of the Agency through the flexibility of its optional programmes and its evolving procurement policy, for ESA to support and strengthen the competitiveness and robustness of the European space sector;
22. UNDERSCORES the role of ESA in realising value-based international cooperation in times of rising global challenges, by reviewing and consolidating existing relationships and opening up new cooperative avenues, maximizing the benefits of Member States' investments and acting as a reliable international partner, while taking into consideration developments that are affecting Europe and the world;
23. ACKNOWLEDGES the Director General's ongoing efforts to increase the institutional strength of the Agency through progressing the ESA transformation towards further improving the Agency's organisational and operational efficiency and effectiveness in a sustainable manner, STRESSES the importance of stabilising the Agency's workforce by maintaining its core competence inter alia in view of the imminent retirement wave; and INVITES the Director General to propose further measures to maintain excellence in delivery in the long run.

Space and the evolving context of security

24. ACKNOWLEDGES the continued relevance of space as an enabler delivering tools that are pertinent and critical for the safety, security and protection of Europe and its citizens, particularly in the face of present-day crises that render it imperative to enhance Europe's overall independence and resilience;
25. AFFIRMS, in that context, the role of ESA in research and development , delivering security-relevant benefits to its Member States and partners through technical excellence and its unique or leading capabilities in response to stakeholder requirements; and RECOGNISES the Agency's internal security governance enabling it to securely manage its activities and programmes;
26. WELCOMES the potential of the Agency to support its Member States in space-related domains that are relevant to safety and security, within the purpose of the Agency as defined in the Convention, inter alia through optional programmes and third-party activities; the provision of technology blocks; and the definition of technical standards and user interfaces.
27. INVITES the strengthening of ESA's ability to serve its Member States and cooperate with its partners, including the European Union, in the context of security, by it reinforcing European industry and its competitiveness, fostering exchange and dialogue with security actors of Member States, and developing technologies and capabilities to better protect Europe and its citizens from crises and risks;
28. STRESSES that any such engagement must recognise the sovereignty of the Member States in the field of security and be based on the respective roles and competences of domestic and international actors, including of the European Union; the need to create synergies and assure complementarity; and the importance of safeguarding adequate mechanisms for the Member States to exercise appropriate governance and supervision;

The cooperation of European space actors

29. WELCOMES the strengths and benefits that Europe draws from advancing its overall space policy in a concerted and synergetic manner, taking advantage and benefit of the independent and complementary status, and the established roles and responsibilities, of its institutions, organisations and players, and REITERATES therefore the importance of reinforcing institutional relationships and synergies in Europe;
30. EMPHASISES that ESA is the space agency for all its Member States, while at the same time being the space system developer for the European Union, thereby further progressing in implementing appropriate relations between both organisations;

31. UNDERLINES the milestones achieved with the entry into force of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA) and the related Contribution Agreements, as well as the progress made on the implementation of EU programmes by ESA since then, safeguarding the interests of both organisations and their members; and NOTES in that regard the request of the European Commission to ESA, in accordance with the FFPA, to provide its opinion on the Galileo contracting authority for the contracts implementation phase, which it CALLS to be expeditiously elaborated by the Director General together with the Member States;
32. RECOGNISES the importance of carrying out cooperative programmes with the European Union on the basis of appropriate opportunities and mutually acceptable solutions, and building on the successes of joint programmes already implemented, to allow the members of both organisations to bring value to, and benefit from, all phases of such programmes while preserving their interests and respecting their institutional frameworks;
33. INVITES the Director General, in view of the evolving European space landscape and its institutions, to prepare the Space Summit in 2023 in cooperation with the European Commission, the Member States and the presidencies of both ESA and the European Union, with a view to making proposals to take an ambitious European space policy forward through forward-looking actions and appropriate solutions;

3 | The Director General's Proposal on the path to realising Europe's renewed space ambitions

34. WELCOMES with appreciation the Director General's proposal on "Accelerating the use of space in Europe" as a timely and appropriate response to the opportunities and challenges opening up at the dawn of a new space age; and AFFIRMS that the Agency shall continue to fulfil its objectives by sustaining and further developing excellence in all areas;
35. INVITES the Director General to further shape and promote ESA as an instrument to achieve Europe's competitiveness and independence in space in the decades to come, inter alia by strengthening the technological and digital transformation of the space sector, empowering Europe to lead in industrial competitiveness, space science and fundamental research, fostering the role of private actors as bottom-up drivers of space in Europe, and enhancing Europe's resilience to risks and adverse changes emanating from space and on Earth;

36. ENCOURAGES the Director General to enhance ESA's global visibility addressing universal themes such as climate change and space sustainability; to promote the Agency as a responsible and inclusive vanguard organisation; to pursue actions in view of reducing the carbon footprint of the Agency by 46% by 2030 as compared to the 2019 baseline; to implement systematic life cycle assessments and a zero-debris approach for its missions; and to encourage partners and other actors to pursue similar paths, thereby collectively putting Europe at the forefront of sustainability on Earth and in space, while preserving the competitiveness of its industry;
37. INVITES the Director General to approach future international cooperation activities based on lessons learned and decisions taken during the present geopolitical crisis; to assess novel cooperation opportunities in view of the emergence of new institutional and private space actors that bring innovative capabilities; to pursue the building-up of relations with regional space organisations and to continue ESA's instrumental and proactive role in multilateral fora;
38. APPRECIATES the Agency's continued support of Member States in the establishment and implementation of national space legislation and programmes through technical and legal advice; providing opportunities to exchange and coordinate positions on international space law; strengthening capacity-building for the evolution of global space governance; and contributing as an active permanent observer to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to support the role and rule of law in outer space.

4 | Conclusion: ESA accelerating the use of space in Europe

39. RECAPITULATES that these are exceptional times, for space has never before been as relevant, as thriving and as promising, offering uncounted opportunities while risking at the same time to see its own future compromised by an ever more contested and congested space environment, an ambivalence that leaves no choice for Europe but to assume its role as a forward-looking global space power;
40. AFFIRMS its conviction that ESA, with its Member States and Associate Members, possesses the competence and excellence to carry space for Europe forward and accelerate the use of space in Europe, acting together with the European Union as appropriate, other European institutions and organisations as well as European industry and international partners; and ENCOURAGES the Director General, therefore, to continue implementing the Agency's purpose and all its programmes and activities in accordance with the Convention, in a foresighted manner and for the long-term benefit of all Member States;

41. INVITES the Director General, on the basis of this Resolution, to realise a modern, forward-looking growth of ESA as the space agency of its Member States and for Europe, in pursuance of the objectives laid down in the LTP and Agenda 2025, increasing its internal efficiency and innovation potential, further reinforcing a solid relationship with the European Union, strengthening its instrumental role towards industry, capitalising on its place at the centre of the European space landscape and being instrumental in realising Europe's future in space;
 42. IDENTIFIES the present meeting as a critical milestone to stabilise and realise the European space ambitions, with further elements to be laid by the European Space Summit in 2023, which it CALLS to be held, for relevant matters, in the form of joint and concomitant meetings of the Council of ESA at ministerial level and the Council of the European Union ('Space Council') as foreseen in the Framework Agreement, as well as by the ESA Council meeting at ministerial level to be organised in 2025.
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