

“Contributing to European-wide connectivity is one of the new frontiers for the EU Space policy” says European Parliament Sky and Space Intergroup

Brussels, November 3, 2016 - The Space Group of the AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD-Eurospace) welcomes the initiative of the European Parliament's Sky and Space Intergroup (SSI) to discuss, on the occasion of the October 19 High-Level lunch debate on Space and Connectivity, how the EU Space policy can contribute to achieving the European Digital Agenda objectives.

Monika Hohlmeier, MEP, President of the Sky and Space Intergroup, opened the discussions by underlining the fact that Space can support numerous EU policies, including the Digital Single Market. Mrs Hohlmeier mentioned that *“satellite communications are crucial to face the challenge of achieving access to digital connectivity for citizens and companies across the EU, particularly in remote areas not accessible to terrestrial networks or where they are too costly”*. To this end, she recalled that all institutional and industrial actors needed *“to discuss the role and contribution of Space in the move towards a digitalized and data-driven economy in Europe.”*

MEP **Marian-Jean Marinescu** emphasized the *“need to integrate EU Space programmes in our daily lives and to put Space at the service of connectivity”*. To this end, he called on the Commission to put forward legislative proposals *“that will oblige different sectors to use Space technologies for the benefit of the EU citizens”*. By way of example, Mr Marinescu recalled that he had succeeded in having Galileo play a key role in the European E-Call Directive, an automatic emergency calling system for cars which shall use satellite navigation technologies.

In her intervention, MEP **Cora Van Nieuwenhuizen** echoed her colleagues by adding that *“companies who don't get involved in the digital revolution, will have challenges with their business models. There are no other options but to get involved”*. She also stressed the urgency to move towards a 5G and Gigabyte society.

DG CONNECT Director General **Roberto Viola** highlighted that Space can be an important contributor in many areas of the digital policy and in the data economy. Mr Viola stated that *“if Europe wants to be competitive in the high-tech sector, it has to invest in Space”*. Referring to the publication on September 14, of several initiatives of the Digital Single Market strategy which will raise the European ambition to provide gigabit connectivity of 100Mb/s across Europe by 2025, Mr Viola provided examples of key areas of connectivity which would benefit from the Space sector and for which Europe had to be at the forefront: *“the digitization of European Industry, 5G, connected cars, big data, are all sectors of clear opportunities which can all benefit from satellite technologies and which can generate knowledge and competitiveness”*.

DG GROW Deputy-Director General, **Pierre Delsaux**, speaking on behalf of Director General Lowri Evans, presented the key messages of the upcoming Space strategy set to be adopted on 26 October 2016. He insisted on the fact that this strategy would involve all players in Europe, including the European Parliament, and that it would be instrumental for the future, *“considering the specificities of the Space sector, it is crucial to act now, decisions which are taken today will have a positive effect in 5-10 years.”* Mr Delsaux mentioned in particular that one of the big challenges for the Commission in the future would be to facilitate the access and use of EU Space data for European companies to develop projects and applications. Mr Delsaux also insisted that now was the time to go quickly in boosting innovation investments, in order to counter growing international competition and to allow the European industry to remain excellent and competitive on a worldwide basis, *“we need to strengthen our capacities in Europe if we want to be able to develop our programmes in the future”*.

Giuseppe Morsillo, Secretary General of ASD-Eurospace, speaking on behalf of Jean-Loïc Galle, President of ASD-Eurospace, recalled that the EU Space policy has to be put at the service of the European economy and public policies, in particular digital policies. He stressed that *“having a necessary complementarity between terrestrial and space-based infrastructures is essential to provide optimal connectivity in support of the EU action against the digital divide, to promote the development of the Internet of Things and to complete the transition towards a data-driven economy”*. Mr Morsillo insisted that these objectives could only be achieved through the *“fair implementation of the principle of technology neutrality, with regulatory measures ensuring that technology neutrality does not wrongly turn into technology marginalisation or even technology avoidance”*.

Rupert Pearce, President of the ESOA, underlined the central role of satellite communication services in today’s digitized world. In describing the satellite role in today’s digital eco-system, Rupert Pearce noted: *“As well as extending their reach, satellites provide an invisible and resilient overlay for terrestrial networks. The ‘Gigabit Society’ implies millions of connections between people, devices, and things. This system of systems will require inter-connectivity and stability at unprecedented levels that terrestrial networks alone cannot deliver.”*

MEP **Nathalie Griesbeck** told participants that support to this high-tech and innovative sector has to be in coherence with all economic actors, industries and research. She emphasized the need for budgets to be allocated *“in an equal manner between industries and research entities in order to achieve the EU policy objectives”*. Finally, taking the example of connected mobility, Mrs Griesbeck mentioned that this was a concrete way of bringing Space closer to European citizens.

Joost Vantomme, Smart Mobility Director at the European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), presented some of the ongoing discussions related to connected vehicles both at European and UN level. He depicted some of the challenges the European automobile manufacturers are confronted with in this respect, which include cybersecurity issues, spectrum, connectivity coverage, and legal questions. *“The successful introduction of connected and automated driving will require seamless communications networks, providing full network coverage with low latency and high bandwidth for millions of vehicles and connectivity between vehicles and road infrastructure. Satellite communication can contribute to meet the connectivity needs of tomorrow’s vehicles.”*

By way of conclusion, **Monika Hohlmeier**, told participants that the Intergroup will be supportive on both Commission and Industrial sides, to support this industrial approach. Mrs Hohlmeier emphasized that the full deployment of the various EU Space programmes *“is not the end of the story. It’s the starting point”*.

About ASD-Eurospace

Created in 1961, Eurospace is the non-profit European trade association of the European space manufacturing Industry. In 2004, Eurospace became the Space Group of ASD, the European Association of the aeronautics, space and defence industries in Europe, enabling industry to benefit from existing synergies between aeronautic, defence and space industrial activities. With a membership from 14 European countries and with a coverage of more than 90% of the total European manufacturing industry employment and turnover, Eurospace fosters the development of space activities in Europe and promotes a better understanding of space industry related positions.

About ASD

The AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe represents the Aeronautics, Space, Security and Defence industries in Europe. Based in Brussels, the organisation’s membership today comprises 14 major European aerospace and defence companies and 26 member associations in 19 countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK). These industries reach a turnover of 199.4 billion euro; invest 20 billion euro in R&D; employ 795,000 people; count over 3,000 companies and 80,000 suppliers, many of which are SMEs.