



Minutes of the
the Working Group on SPACE POLICY of Tuesday, 6 October 2009 on

EUROPEAN SPACE POLICY IN THE VIEW OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Chaired by Etelka BARSÍ-PATAKY, former MEP

Introduction by

- Etelka BARSÍ-PATAKY, former MEP
- Karl von WOGAU, former MEP, Secretary General of the Kangaroo Group

Speaker:

- Paul WEISSENBERG, Director Aerospace, GMES, Security and Defence, European Commission

In his introductory note Mr von Wogau noted that space policy is going to be a key project for the next legislature, both for the European Parliament and the Commission. Europe's main ambition on this field is to ensure autonomous access to space which is a precondition of sovereignty. Mr. von Wogau reminded on the report by French Prime Minister Francois Fillon on the European strategy of launch vehicles that also drives the attention to the sustainable guarantees of an autonomous access to space for Europe. Mr. von Wogau noted that a White Paper on the implementation of the European security strategy is expected to be published in early 2010 which may incorporate a special chapter on space relevances.

Mrs. Barsi-Pataky strongly welcomed the result of the second Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, underlining that this Treaty will be the most important legal basis for the European Space Policy when it enters into force. Referring to the role of the next European Commission she highlighted the question whether there is a need for a special Commissioner responsible for a separate space portfolio and encouraged MEPs Colleagues to focus on an appropriate answer at the upcoming hearing of the Commissioners at the Parliament. Her second introductory remark referred to acceleration of financial cooperation on Europe's space activities which is a key factor for the space industry at times of economic crisis. According to Mrs. Barsi-Pataky the right answer to economic crisis is to promote new business opportunities and new markets for space applications (e.g. on the fields of environment, traffic safety, crisis management, security). She also reminded that on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty the EU can make a better use of the capacities of all Member States taking advantage of their scientific, industrial and technological potential.

Director Weissenberg expressed his thanks to the MEPs who intensively promoted space policy issues, which is reflected by numerous resolutions and reports in the last parliamentary term. He highlighted that the European Space Policy (ESP) is now a joint policy of all the institutional actors including the European Commission, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Member States.

According to Mr. Weissenberg the Galileo system remains a priority for the Commission. The programme offered many lessons for the future European flagship projects. Based on the lessons learned for example, the business case for the GMES programme is expected to be a public-public partnership (instead of a PPP) with the involvement of the Commission and the Member States. The current Commission proposal to Council and EP requests to make a budget of 150 million euros available for GMES that will move from research to operation activities.

Mr. Weissenberg underlined that space needs to go beyond the two flagship projects, Galileo and GMES, and a special focus is going to move towards space and security. Defending and securing the European space infrastructure will also be a priority for the Commission.



The Director described "space and climate change" as a special topic for the Commission in the future. The fight against climate change is going to rely on the use and modelling of data delivered from space. He added that European Ministers already paved the way for these activities.

Mr. Weissenberg introduced the new area of "space and innovation" by highlighting that innovation can significantly contribute to overcoming the economic crisis in Europe by promoting economic growth and fighting unemployment. Space is a sector with high innovation potential and measures aiming at generating and exploiting space-related innovation should be better considered in the EU's innovation policy.

In terms of "space and exploration" the ESA has made remarkable achievements, stated Mr Weissenberg. Space exploration has never been linked to European identity but more to science and research. The Director saw the chance now to gain political identity for Europe through exploration by investing in this area.

Mr. Weissenberg described ensuring Europe's independence regarding launchers as the biggest challenge ahead. Ensuring autonomy is a financially difficult task under the current circumstances. Another open question for the future is whether the EU should take part in prolonging the functioning of the International Space Station which will finish activities in 2015.

Answering questions raised by representatives of the space industry Mr. Weissenberg added that in the case of Galileo and other infrastructure projects the market should pull the developments and innovation by the private sector and after the kick-off investments no other market financing is foreseen by the Commission from Community resources. Responding to questions by the Chairs Mr. von Wogau and Mrs. Barsi-Pataky Mr. Weissenberg noted that the Community should consider developing refugee mapping solutions as Member States are often unable to provide emergency services in urgent cases. The policymakers should further recognise the fact that while military budgets are stagnating throughout the Community, civil security budgets are increasing in the Member States. Mr. Weissenberg also agreed to the need of bringing space innovations to other sectors. Such "spin-out" is much stronger developed in the US. As regards of a potential European Space Law the Director suggested starting to reflect on it, however it will remain a sensitive area for example due to the aspects of the regulation on public procurement.

Mr. von Wogau concluded the event by recalling the new aspects of European Space Policy that have been introduced by the keynote speaker such as space's relevance on climate change, innovation and exploration and underlined further that major steps are expected during the upcoming legislature in Europe's space policy.

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December 2009*