



Council of the
European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 8512/20

Subject: Council Conclusions on "Space for a sustainable Europe"

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on "Space for a sustainable Europe", adopted by written procedure on 4 June 2020.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON

"SPACE FOR A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- A. the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that establishes an EU competence in Space¹;
- B the Communication from the Commission on the Space Strategy for Europe of 26 October 2016² and the Council Conclusions on "A Space Strategy for Europe" of 30 May 2017³;
- C. the Council Conclusions on "Space as an enabler" of 28 May 2019⁴;
- D. the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals and in particular, No. 4 – Quality Education; No. 5 – Gender Equality; No. 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth; No. 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; No. 10 – Reduced Inequalities; No. 13 – Climate Action; No. 14 – Life Below Water; No. 15 – Life on Land and No. 17 – Partnerships for the Goals⁵;
- E. the principles enshrined in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies;

¹ In particular Articles 4 and 189.

² doc. 13758/16.

³ doc. 9817/17.

⁴ doc. 9248/19.

⁵ Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015.

Space for long-term sustainable growth

1. UNDERLINES the need to promote the development of a sustainable European space sector to meet the demands of future generations and guarantee European competitiveness; RECOGNISES the growing strategic importance of the space sector; ACKNOWLEDGES that the space sector is undergoing a rapid transformation due to an increasing supply of, and demand for, space-based products and services as well as the technological changes and emergence of the so-called “New Space”, with new actors, a wide range of applications across different economic activities; and larger private sector investment alongside increased interactions between governments, including through space agencies, intergovernmental organisations, private sector, universities, research organisations and society;
2. RECOGNISES the short, mid and long-term impacts that the current COVID-19 pandemic has globally; and STRESSES the need to build upon the lessons learned; UNDERLINES the contribution that space technologies and services can make in response to the situation; and EMPHASISES the importance of the space sector in the reboot of the economy towards a sustainable future and a more resilient society;
3. STRESSES that the space sector offers numerous opportunities to support long-term sustainable growth by promoting social and economic benefits in line with, among others, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework⁶, the Paris Agreement⁷ and EU strategic priorities such as the EU Pillar of Social Rights⁸, as well as informed decision-making and to improve public policies in all sectors; and UNDERLINES that Earth science and European space data, services and technologies may contribute to the European Green Deal⁹, enabling Europe to become a global leader in the transition to a sustainable world, solving societal challenges and preserving the functioning of natural ecosystems, for the benefit of future generations;

⁶ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015.

⁷ Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-first session, FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1

⁸ doc. 13129/17.

⁹ doc. 15051/19.

4. UNDERLINES the importance of sustainability of space activities for their role in realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals; HIGHLIGHTS that ensuring long-term sustainability of the space environment requires wider international cooperation and information sharing in order to preserve an operational, sustainable and safe space environment; ENCOURAGES the voluntary implementation of the UN guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;
5. UNDERLINES that global competition and the new sustainable growth models require major transformations in industrial organisation, supply chain, jobs and skills, including in the space sector;
6. RECOGNISES that the EU Space Programme, in synergy with Horizon Europe, together with the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) programmes and Member States activities, within their respective roles and responsibilities, support Europe to remain a leading international actor, in addressing various societal challenges and in strengthening the competitiveness of the European space industry through the whole value chain, in particular tackling critical technologies dependence, in fast evolving markets;
7. RECOGNISES the importance of fostering cross-fertilisation and spin-off effects between space and non-space sectors, taking into consideration capabilities of SMEs and start-ups for developing a sustainable, resilient and agile European industry, facing global competition and compelling societal challenges;

8. ACKNOWLEDGES the opportunities of digital transformation and cutting-edge technologies (e.g. automation, connectivity, big data, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, high performance computing, advanced manufacturing, internet of things) to maximise synergies with the space industry, contributing to create new, high growth business opportunities in Europe and shaping the European economic base and the European social cohesion, as underlined in the Industrial Strategy¹⁰, in the SME Strategy¹¹, in the new European strategy for data¹² and Europe's digital future¹³;
9. ACKNOWLEDGES that space plays an important role in and contributes to the development of skills, technologies and services needed to build a resilient society capable of addressing global challenges in a changing world, such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, health crises, food security and migration;
10. RECOGNISES that the uptake of space services and space data by other sectors, such as health, transport, security, agriculture, rural development, forestry, fisheries, resources management, energy, logistics, defence, culture, tourism, emergency response, as well as monitoring of climate, biodiversity or natural and cultural resources, offers opportunities for industry to develop high value services throughout the whole value chain and for public sectors to improve policy decisions; and RECOGNISES that such uptake could also foster high quality and high value jobs and long-term employment, thus improving productivity and resilience in the EU economy and society at large and supporting a sustainable Europe;
11. HIGHLIGHTS that space solutions contribute significantly to the challenge of a climate-neutral economy, in particular through digital innovation, offering a harmonious, fast and safe service, boosting the circular economy and smart management of resources, fostering smart cities and smart villages and assessing the impact of policies by monitoring the Earth's atmosphere, ecosystems and climate;

¹⁰ doc. 6782/20.

¹¹ doc. 6783/20.

¹² doc. 6520/20.

¹³ doc. 6237/20.

12. EMPHASISES the importance of the EU Space Programme and Horizon Europe; STRESSES the importance for the EU of European independent critical space systems such as positioning, and timing, climate and green-house gases and environmental monitoring, governmental telecommunications and access to space; and CALLS on the European Commission and Member States to facilitate and promote the usage of data and services provided by Copernicus, Galileo and EGNOS in the implementation of non-space policy areas on a European and national level; RECOGNISES the added value of existing and new cooperative projects (e.g. Space Situational Awareness – SSA) to European sustainability;
13. INVITES the Commission to develop an in-depth analysis of the European New Space current landscape and future perspectives and its contribution to the European economy, expanding existing market capacities, supporting SMEs and start-ups and encompassing the emergence of new actors and new developments; and UNDERLINES the importance of supporting the Member States with emerging space capabilities, as well as their industry and academia, in their active involvement to unlock the full potential of the EU space economy and strengthen its economic resilience;

Education and Skills for Space

14. NOTES that in a globalised world of rapid technological evolution, automation and digitalisation, associated with new trade and economic scenarios and societal challenges such as climate change, health crises outbreaks and demographic shifts, Europe must increase its efforts to develop the knowledge, interdisciplinary skills and necessary competences to reach adequate solutions; EMPHASISES that the just transition to a new digital and green economy requires investments in people to support both the economic and social agendas; CALLS on the European Commission, together with Member States, in cooperation with industry, research organisations and academia, to identify future skills shortages and gaps, and to consider possible solutions and targeted initiatives;

15. CALLS on the European Commission to build on the European Data Strategy and the forthcoming update of the New Skills Agenda for Europe and the EU Digital Education Action Plan to foster skills development in emerging areas, including digital skills and data analytics, in particular in view of the growing volume of Earth observation and other space data;
16. HIGHLIGHTS the importance for Member States, in cooperation with the private sector, universities and research organisations, as well as intergovernmental organisations, to increase efforts to develop skills and stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, to foster an attractive work environment and a viable space sector;
17. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of investments in space related Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education programmes at all levels; CONSIDERS that space activities are likely to attract the interest of young scholars and students; STRESSES the importance of ensuring a strong knowledge base in the European space sector and RECOGNISES the need to encourage the younger generation to study and work in the STEM fields among others with the aim of promoting gender balance; and CALLS on the Member States and the European Commission, in cooperation with ESA and EUMETSAT, to intensify outreach programmes, including -hands-on activities, to increase the positive image and attractiveness of space activities among European young people;
18. CALLS on the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems Agency (GSA) to cooperate with Member States and provide them with technical information and specifications on market development and upskilling and to discuss setting up working groups with relevant national public and private experts that would contribute to understanding and identifying market needs and allowing space data and services to boost job creation and speed up a mass market uptake;
19. HIGHLIGHTS that the existing and future knowledge transfer and capacity building initiatives should also be used to leverage knowledge across the EU and to support the development of a pool of talent with space-specific skills for industry;

20. CALLS on Member States and the European Commission to facilitate a more integrated approach on skills development across the value chains of the space sector, for example by fostering vocational training, online and continuous learning and by promoting joint degrees and training offers in higher education;
 21. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of regional cooperation; and CALLS for increased involvement of regional and local authorities in skills development and knowledge sharing for boosting job creation, innovation and entrepreneurship across the EU, benefiting from the development of a strong industry based on space applications and services; UNDERLINES the need to strengthen cooperation (including cross-sectorial) and exchange of information and best practices; and CALLS for simplification of access to European funds for skills development.
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