



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	<i>Preparation for the Competitiveness Council meeting (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space) on 9 and 10 June 2022</i> Resilience and competitiveness of the EU Space Programme <i>Policy debate</i>

Delegations will find attached a background note for the general policy debate of the Competitiveness Council (Space) on 10 June 2022.

**MEETING OF THE COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL (INTERNAL MARKET,
INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND SPACE) on 10 June 2022**

SPACE part

Policy debate

Resilience and competitiveness of the EU Space Programme

Background

1. The Council is invited to adopt draft conclusions on the Copernicus programme by 2035, based on three pillars: the Green Pact, the digital transition and security in support of a more resilient Europe. These conclusions propose recommendations and guidelines for the future of the Copernicus programme, highlighting in particular the programme's contribution to climate issues, the inclusion of new actors in the space economy to supplement the space architecture and make it more resilient, and the programme's contribution to the EU's security challenges.
2. The Council is also invited to adopt draft Conclusions on an EU approach for space traffic management, built around three pillars: strengthening EU surveillance capacities and tracking capabilities for objects in orbit; coordinating regulation and standardisation; and strengthening the EU's voice on the international scene to promote this common approach.

3. In February 2021, the Commission adopted a Communication on an Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries, referring to two new Commission flagship projects in the field of space traffic management and secure connectivity. In particular, the heads of state meeting in Versailles in March 2022 reiterated the need to invest more in strategic support capabilities such as cybersecurity and space connectivity. In addition, the Commission and the European External Action Service are preparing a space strategy for security and defence.

The new challenges of resilience and competitiveness

4. The European Union has developed world-class space programmes that provide sovereign European services in the fields of earth observation and satellite navigation. The European Commission integrated them into a space programme in 2021 and added two new components: space surveillance and governmental communications. In February 2022, the Commission proposed a new secure, low-latency satellite connectivity programme, which is currently under discussion and could complement the European space infrastructure. Through the services they provide, for example by making it possible to acquire more autonomous positioning or monitoring capabilities, to fight against climate change, or even to ensure guaranteed and secure global access to satellite telecommunications, which is essential in crisis management situations, these programmes make an important contribution to the resilience of the European Union. They rely on a globally competitive, world-class European industry.

5. Though a strategic area for the proper functioning of the European economy and for security, space is becoming increasingly contentious and congested. Two complementary approaches have emerged: reviving a space race financed by space powers, and increased involvement of private actors with roadmaps that complement the ambitions of these powers. To contend with this environment, the EU must position itself and rapidly reconcile the issues of resilience and competitiveness, which must therefore be considered together.
6. The resilience of the EU Space Programme depends first and foremost on autonomous, secure and affordable access to space and on mastering space technologies. There is no European space policy without autonomous European access to space. We must strengthen competitiveness, flexibility and responsiveness in this area. More generally, the EU's dependence on third countries for launch solutions, key technologies and critical supplies (processed and advanced raw materials, components) can weaken the EU's efforts at promoting its security and independence and, consequently, the level of autonomy of the EU's systems with global coverage in terms of satellite navigation, earth observation and satellite communication. Our efforts to achieve technological non-dependence should be strengthened, in particular through Horizon Europe and by accelerating work to secure access to critical raw materials, value chains and supply chains crucial to the Space Programme, particularly in strategic areas, which may be subject to external pressure. Resilience implies short-term commitment and costs that need to be borne, or the EU will risk paying the price of its dependence on other powers.

7. The Council is invited to explore ways to improve the monitoring and protection of EU space infrastructures and to ensure their resilience. Space infrastructures are increasingly exposed both to accidental risks, such as collisions with other satellites or debris and radio frequency interference, and to intentional threats such as in-orbit attacks or jamming. With a view to further protecting space infrastructure, we could develop specific technologies or payloads, adopt a security, sustainability and prevention approach in the design of new space systems and throughout the evolution and life cycle of existing Space Programme components/systems, or integrate new technologies. These additional missions will contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of a European offer at an optimal level.
8. The emergence of new actors in Europe – the 'New Space' – is a major opportunity for the competitiveness of our industry and the future resilience of our programmes. Building in particular on the Commission's work under CASSINI, we need to explore ways to maximise the potential of new innovative technologies, services and products and the industrial processes of these new actors, and to integrate them decisively in the development of new infrastructures and the modernisation of existing ones or in the development and delivery of new services.

9. With the Space Programme, the EU has particularly effective, unique and world-class space assets. We should explore ways to enhance their contribution to security and defence, and assess the needs and conditions for the development of specific services with adequate governance models that respect the security interests of the Member States. Furthermore, the Council and the High Representative have the competence, under the Council Decision on joint action (CFSP Decision 2021/698), to respond to threats or attacks on EU critical space services. Feedback on the implementation of this Decision in the context of the war in Ukraine may lead to changes in this decision to improve the EU's response to increasing threats and ensure close coordination with the Member States. With that in mind, we need to reflect on these issues in order to contribute effectively to the work on the Space Strategy for Security and Defence.

Question

What measures should the EU and its Member States take to strengthen the resilience of the EU Space Programme and reconcile it with the challenges of competitiveness?
