



**European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC) 2021  
Plenary Session  
Monday 10 May 2021 – 10:00-16:00 CEST**

**Summary**

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Norwegian Presidency of the European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC) hosted the first fully digital EISC Plenary Session on the topics of “Space and the Arctic” and “The development of national space laws”. It brought together the EISC delegations from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland and Spain, guest delegations from Finland and Iceland as well as high-level space agency representatives and industry experts.

The Session started with welcoming remarks from the Norwegian Presidency by the Norwegian MPs Ms Åsunn Lyngedal and Mr Kårstein Eidem Løvaas, as well as by Ms Tone Wilhelmsen Trøen, President of the Norwegian Parliament. Ms Wilhelmsen recalled the interest of Norway in both space and the Arctic, and underlined the similar characteristics between the two domains when talking about cooperation. President Trøen underlined Norway's commitment to European space cooperation.

**Keynote addresses**

Following this introduction, high-level speakers presented the current status of space activities in Norway and Europe. Ms Iselin Nybø, Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry, described membership in the European Space Agency (ESA) and participation in the European Union (EU) programmes as the two pillars of the Norwegian space activities. Therefore, Norway will continue to invest in both organisations and call for a good relation between them. The Minister also emphasised that a common European vision for space is vital for the competitiveness and strategic autonomy of the continent.

After Ms Nybø's keynote, Mr Josef Aschbacher, the new Director General of ESA, presented the vision of ESA for the upcoming years. “Agenda 2025” outlines five main priorities:

1. Strengthen ESA-EU relations;
2. Boosting commercialisation for a green and digital Europe;
3. Develop space for safety and security;
4. Address critical programme challenges;
5. Complete ESA transformation.

ESA DG also showed examples where the Agency cooperates with Northern countries to tackle challenges in the Arctic through space (e.g. on climate change issues).

Mr Matthias Petschke, Director at the DG DEFIS, European Commission, then took the floor to present the space activities of the EU. A new EU Space Programme was adopted in April 2021, and will allow to serve

the political priorities of the Union (e.g. Green Deal, Digital Agenda). More precisely, the Programme will help to reach several objectives:

1. Get high quality and up to date data;
2. Maximise the socio-economic benefits provided by space;
3. Implement synergies with other EU programmes, such as Horizon Europe;
4. Enhance the role of Europe as a global actor;
5. Protect European space assets.

Mr Petschke also presented the usefulness of the EU Space Programme's components for the Arctic region.

The exchange with the audience and moderators that followed the keynotes, highlighted to which extent the Arctic infrastructure can benefit space activities as well as the importance for the EU to interact with third parties in Europe (e.g. Norway, the UK) and beyond.

### **Development of National Space Laws**

The second part of the Session focused on the creation by states of laws regulating space activities.

Prof. Irmgard Marboe, from the University of Vienna, introduced UN actions promoting the development of national space laws as well as the reasons that may encourage states to enact these laws (both based on international space law and national interests). She also highlighted the commonalities and differences that can be found among the space laws developed by European states.

Prof. Alla Pozdnakova, from the University of Oslo, then provided a concrete example by explaining the process behind the formulation of the new Norwegian space law, which has still to be adopted by the Parliament. It was emphasised that the law takes a functional approach, focusing on the activities themselves rather than on abstract definitions, and that it aims at remaining flexible to be able to adapt to future evolutions in the space field.

The Q&A session revealed that harmonisation of space laws, including at European level, is difficult, but some endeavours are currently conducted to promote this objective.

### **Space and Satellites in the Arctic**

The third part of the Session gave the floor to Norwegian actors and their operations in the Arctic. Mr Christian Hauglie-Hanssen, Director General of the Norwegian Space Agency, reiterated the commitment of Norway in ESA and EU space activities and the pragmatic approach of the country to space. Mr Kjell-Ove Orderud Skare, program Director at Space Norway, identified the lack of satellite broadband in the Arctic as a major issue for activities in the region and presented the projects of Space Norway to solve it as well as the importance of cooperation in these efforts. Mr Rolf Skatteboe, CEO of KSAT, explained how his company can help to monitor activities in Arctic (e.g. through radar satellites for ship detection), and how ground stations in the Polar regions are important in downloading data on a regular basis. Finally, Mr Odd Roger Enoksen, Executive Manager of the Andøya Space Center, gave a presentation on the status of the Andøya spaceport, which plans to launch small satellites from 2022. Partnerships with New Space actors have already been established and discussions with other companies are underway; moreover, a close relationship with ESA is in place, the objective being to help boost the space industry in Europe.

## **National reports and resolution**

The delegations of EISC provided national statements with reflections on the development of space policy and the space sector in their respective countries. National statements were provided by Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany and Poland. The EISC 2021 resolution, addressing the main topics in the conference, was unanimously adopted by the delegations present.

## **ESA-EISC Space for Sustainability Award**

The Prize Ceremony for the “ESA-EISC Space for Sustainability Award” took place at the end of the EISC Plenary Session. The two awarded projects were “SedimenTerra” and “Containing Wildfires with Satellites”, whose presentations demonstrated the usefulness of space systems for different kinds of activities on Earth.

The Session ended with closing statements from Ms Åsunn Lyngedal and Mr Kårstein Eidem Løvaas as well as a virtual visit of the Norwegian Parliament.