15th EISC, Belgium Presidency

Monday March 25th 2013

Opening address by Senator Dominique TILMANS,
Chair of the Belgian Space Working Group and Chair of the 15th EISC

"Congratulations! You made a really good choice to join us in Redu and Transinne for the 15th European Interparliamentary Space Conference.

We will do everything so that you have a great time here!

Dear Colleagues and friends, members of the national Parliaments and the industrial, academic and institutional representatives of Poland, Germany, UK, Spain, Romania, Luxemburg, Russia, Italy, Austria, France, Armenia and Belgium; I would like to welcome you all and take the opportunity to welcome in particular :

Ladies first: Ms. Anne Laffut who is the mayor of Libin, the city of Space.

- Mr. Philippe Courard, Minister of Science Policy
- Mr. Bernard Caprasse, Governor of the Province of Luxembourg,
- Mr. Vittorio Prodi, Chair of the Sky and Space Intergroup at the European Parliament
- Mr. Philippe Mettens, Chair of the Directors Committee at the Department of Science Policy
- Ambassador Eric Beka, High Representative for Space Policy of Belgium
- Mr. Georges Cottin, Secretary general of IDELUX (Economic development agency of the Province)

And of course the many representatives of ESA : Mr. Schrogl, Head of ESA Policies Department, Mr. Galardini, head of ESA Redu, Mr. Marée, Mr. Barbolani, Mr. Galeone and I conclude with two women in space : Mrs. Giannopapa from ESA and Mrs. Simonetta Di Pippo, founder of the initiative "Women in Aerospace Europe".

Before we begin our activities, I would like to make a short overview on what Space represents in Europe:

Space is:

1. A European annual budget "Horizon 2020" of 1.750 billion of euro, + ESA annual budget of 3 billion Euros contributed by each single Member State (the European subsidies not included)

2. 32.000 to 35.000 jobs in Europe (2011)

3. A multiplier effect in the economy: every €1 invested in space returns an average of €10.

4. 10 Euros per European citizen on an annual basis for institutional investments and 1 euro per European citizen annually for human spaceflights

5. Innovation and competitiveness, which boost economic growth. Too many ignore that space can also contribute to re-industrializing our economy.

6. The average age in space jobs is 47 year old. Hence the necessity of boosting young people's interest in space: not only engineers, but also the holders of non-university degrees in the technical and industrial field

7. Our safety, convenience and healthcare like telemedicine (that we know less): it's operations performed at distance, diabetes controlled by smart phones, patients monitored at home, ambulances connected to hospitals by satellite. But Space is also what we know better: weather forecast, GPS, cellular phones, television, financial transactions, aerial and maritime navigation.

Yes, dear colleagues, Space is not only about technological challenges, but also about major challenges for our society: climate change, resource shortages, health, ageing, education,…

Getting back to our Workshop. As you know, we have decided to dedicate this EISC Presidency to a better involvement of younger generations in space careers.

Our workshop is focused on small satellites missions and the plenary session of October will definitely address how we can put space students at the center of an industrial project.

Small missions and Cube Sats

If we consider the USA's lead on Europe for the past 25 years, we can be happy that the ESA Ministerial Conference of November 2012 has launched a new program called Small Mission Initiative, which was requested by Switzerland, Luxembourg, Romania, Poland and Belgium. However, ESA has already anticipated small missions projects since the ESEO project is already the second micro-satellite mission within ESA's Education Satellite Programme (we will see it with the Prof. Tortora).

We call them Cube Sats, Nano sats, mini satellites, micro sats, pico satellites, satellite on a chip, ultra small missions,...

Their size can vary from that of a laundry machine to a postage stamp! Those technological and innovative wonders, this high tech, unlike big satellites, became fortunately in Europe accessible to dynamic, imaginative and high skilled young professionals!

Those Small Missions cost 1 million to 50 million Euros. Inexpensive when compared to the price of 330 million Euros for their bigger equivalents.

- They do not create space debris because they disintegrate in the atmosphere
- They are stable and agile, polyvalent and smart
- The time to market is short
- They develop current technologies
- They develop and stimulate competences/skills and they contribute to the generation of incubators
- Their miniaturization opens a potential unseen before
- They allow to test the reliability of instruments before integrating them on bigger satellites
- Of course, they don't replace big satellites, they are complementary!

My questions during our workshop will address the plusses and minuses and the limits of Small Missions and CubeSats. Are they a real opportunity for students but also for Europe and Space?

I give the floor to my colleague, Senator Cécile Thibaut, she will introduce the 4 keynote speakers.

I wish you all a fruitful Workshop!"