

Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou, Member of Parliament Greece, Chairperson of the Environment Committee of the Greek Parliament

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

as the Chairperson of the Environment Committee of the Greek Parliament, it is my great pleasure to be here in Brussels at the European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC). As it is the first time I am participating in EISC I would like to say some words about Greece, space and education.

Greece participates actively in all space related intergovernmental and European organizations. In 1985 Greece became a member of INTELSAT and INMARSAT; in 1986 of EUMETSAT; and in 1987 of EUTELSAT. In 2001 Greece signed a cooperation agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA) and in 2005 became ESAs 16<sup>th</sup> member state. Greece launched its first telecom satellite in 2003.

Greece and in particular my committee, the Environment Committee, recognizes the strategic importance of space technology and applications for the environment and the economic development of Greece. My Committee invited last February representatives from the European Space Agency, industry, research institutes, and a number of ministries: foreign affair, defense, interior, development, transport, education, and shipping. The meeting was organized to exchange view on how space technologies and applications can support a number of policy areas for economic and social development such as climate change, agriculture, regional development, shipping and fisheries, security and defense.

The space activities of Greece focus on the following main areas: earth observation and its applications to meteorology, climatology, geology, geotechnical engineering, agriculture, land use, etc; space physics & astronomy; satellite communications; software development; microelectronics; and generic technologies and applications. Greece recognizes the importance to support young professionals and has set up through its state scholarships foundation a national trainee programme in collaboration with the European Space Agency. This programme is successfully operating since 2009 and until today about 15 young professionals have directly benefited from it. They have found jobs in the space sector and most of them are strengthening with their skill set the Greek space industry and academia.

Greece will take up the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in 2014. Space related issues are included in the Greek Presidency Agenda with emphasis on completing the legislative procedure on COPERNICUS the former Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) and the Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST). Greece is planning to organize a conference Copernicus with the title "Empowering satellite applications for society and the environment" on the 12-13 May in Greece. I would like to invite you all attend this conference.

These ladies and gentlemen these are few of the activities that Greece is engaged in regarding space and promoting young professionals in the space sector.