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1. The problem of European space governance

The *Lisbon Treaty* represents a turning point in the development of the European space sector, embracing the roles played by the public sector actors - the European Union, the European Space Agency and the National Agencies of the Member States.

An analysis of the Lisbon Treaty text does not suggest any easy solution as it provides for complementary competencies among the European Union and the Member States, which must be suitably harmonized.

The possibility of the European Union “coordinating its exploration and exploitation” may be interpreted both very broadly and very narrowly.

The relationship with the European Space Agency is of fundamental importance.

The industrial policy of the European Union is mainly oriented towards avoiding market distortions and towards promoting competition.

The industrial policy of the European Space Agency is instead largely focused on encouraging the competitive development of the industrial capacity of the various countries through mechanisms guaranteeing a trade-off between financial contribution and economic return in terms of contracts and industrial orders (‘fair return’).

It is a matter of harmonizing these two approaches in order to avoid organizational duplication through the establishment of another agency by the European Union.

The European Union must be enabled to use the European Space Agency (‘implementing ESA’), differentiating the operating mode as a function of the resources deployed: ESA implementing by the European Union drawing on EU funds must be subjected to specific EU rules favouring competition; conversely, ESA implementation by the participating Member States using the funds allocated to them must follow the accepted conventional rules such as that of ‘fair return’.

Nor should it be overlooked that the European Space Agency represents the focus of the combined implementation of European strategies by the National Space Agencies in compliance with the political directives adopted by the European Council of Ministers in this sector and that this architecture has performed efficiently in that it has allowed the European space activities to develop.

It is therefore a matter of establishing new equilibria among the European Union, ESA and the national agencies without jeopardizing the present mode of functioning of space policy management.

In essence, it is a question of exploiting previously acquired national knowhow and of developing fresh skills to complement the specific knowhow already possessed by Europe, at the same time ensuring close cooperation is maintained between the national agencies and the ESA in the implementation of quality programmes and involving quality roles and the return on investments made by the individual countries. The European Space Agency must be transformed into the Agency of European Union Space Policies.

The European Union has earmarked some 700 million euros per year out of the 2007-2013 budget. These funds have been allocated mainly to the Galileo satellite navigation programme, to the 7th research and development framework programme and to the start-up phase of the GMES programme.

The aim is to increase these resources substantially as a function of the enhanced role now being played by the European Union in the space sector.

2. European intervention priorities.

Europe must focus on three sectors:

- services offered to the citizens and the pursuit of public policies in support of businesses and public administrations: included in this category are Galileo, GMES, climate change monitoring projects, broadband access, etc.
- the development of the scientific sector in order to boost the knowledge base, including access to orbiting infrastructures (International Space Station), support for innovation, and support for the delivery of scientific data

- strengthening Europe's world position involving access to space, exploration, critical technology and the support of European industry conditions.

I should like to make a few brief observations concerning these topics.

2.1 One first issue is that of the **relationship between public intervention and industry**.

Public intervention must be pursued for the purpose of guaranteeing competitiveness and access by all countries to the space programmes, at the same time respecting the need to protect competition.

One typical sector in this connection is that of space launchers.

In this strategic sector, which is linked to the independent access by Europe to space, it is necessary to reappraise the effectiveness of past policies that have led to situations of economic non competitiveness at the European level since the larger European industries in this sector are operating at a loss and have constantly to demand that shareholders make good their operating losses.

In this connection no forms of State or European Union aid are to be recommended in support of businesses and corporations. What is instead needed is action at the industrial level to ensure that companies operating in the launcher sector can at least break even.

Conversely, support must be accorded to ESA programmes developed to achieve the diversification of launcher supply and to adjust to market conditions in which small size launchers are required, such as the ESA programme to develop a medium category Vega launcher.

The programme, implemented under the leadership of Italian industry, is now nearing completion and the inaugural launching at the Kourou base in French Guyana is planned for 2011. This is in spite of the complex vicissitudes of the past few years in which a common purpose was often lacking at the European level, particularly in the respective national legislations of the participant countries.

2.2 One further issue is the **role of the International Space Station (ISS)**, in view of the extension of its activity until the year 2028.

The Space Station has now been completed and its full scientific and applicational implementation is now a priority activity in order to optimize the expected returns on the investments made.

Through the Italian Space Agency Italy has been the interpreter of a proposal to allow the extension of the group of countries intending to participate in the initiative to include also those that have made no financial contribution to the development of the Station in the past.

This participation, which could allow the further development of the Station's role as well as bilateral collaboration among the countries concerned, might well be supported by a financial participation by the European Union. The latter could consequently thus require that the management panel of the countries and agencies currently managing the ISS be opened up to new members.

2.3 Another important issue in the recent space policy debate is **space security and the development of antisatellite systems**, for which China and the United States have recently developed applications.

In my view, Europe has no interest in being involved in space races of this kind, for a two-fold reason.

In the first instance, because it is necessary to concentrate the limited resources available on the priority development of the European programmes indicated above.

Secondly, in order to maintain the approach to space as a place free from scenarios involving a technological confrontation for military purposes.

In recent years space has emerged as an extremely effective and fruitful means used by international diplomacy for the development of international and bilateral collaboration among the various countries. Space's role as a tool for peace and international collaboration needs to be maintained and boosted, avoiding the use of initiatives liable to upset these prospects.

3. Space programme priorities

Planned aerospace activities must today follow two lines of approach.

- Managing and boosting the presence of European countries in the knowledge society, linking together the scientific and industrial sectors.
- Making available infrastructures suitable for answering the social and economic needs expressed by citizens, as well as by the corporate world and public administrations.

In the first case, it is necessary to promote and expand scientific knowledge.

The topics and priorities related to scientific research and space programmes are identified at the international level through an intense exchange of ideas and joint work by scientists the world over. No space agency, even NASA, can go it alone, also because the development of space research entails the implementation of costly, complex, high profile missions able to produce huge quantities of data, the processing of which necessitates the combined efforts of many different multidisciplinary sectors belonging to different areas of the international scientific community.

It is thus necessary to perfect the synergism among the scientific communities of the various countries regarding data analysis and interpretation in order to allow rapid and unhindered access to the databases related to a number of tools and missions using data fusion techniques which represent the cutting edge for the development of the end products of scientific analysis.

ESA is implementing the BepiColombo mission aimed at the study of Mercury as well as the ExoMars missions together with NASA involving Mars landing and exploration. Italy is heavily committed to these two missions as far as both the construction of the probes and of the on-board instruments are concerned.

The role played by the National Agencies in this field is of fundamental importance, both in liaison with ESA, through the Cosmic Vision programme in which the national agencies act in support of the scientific communities selected in the field of European space exploration initiatives, and in the form of bilateral initiatives to develop scientific instruments, to conduct experiments and during the phase in which the results are analysed.

In the second case, space policy today has the primary task of working towards providing the infrastructures needed to perform essential functions benefiting the citizens, the corporate world and the administrations.

Italy is strongly committed from this standpoint through the initiatives of the Italian Space Agency in one essential sector – that of Earth observation.

By means of the Cosmo-SkyMed optical and radar observation system, for which the fourth satellite is about to be launched, Italy is involved in investment in the development of advanced technologies capable of providing high value added services.

In keeping with European trends towards infrastructure promotion, with Galileo and GMES in the forefront, this programme may also be considered an example of fruitful collaboration in the field of dual-purpose technology since both the ASI and the Defence Administration have been involved in the programme with an extremely satisfactory outcome.

At the national level, the dual-purpose (civilian and military) Cosmo-SkyMed observation system using X-band synthetic aperture radar (SAR) represents a strategic infrastructure for Italy to the extent of demanding from the outset the required maintenance and updating in view of the conclusion of operating life of the satellites, expected to end in 2014/2015. ASI efforts will culminate in the launching of at least two new generation satellites every seven years starting from the beginning of the operating life of the first previous generation satellite. The system is designed for collaboration with other satellites, for instance the Argentine SaoCom L-band data satellite as well as with the C-band SAR radar and altimetric data which will become available as the ESA Sentinel 1 and 3 satellites come into service over the next few years.