

GUEST SPEAKER: Liana Dumitrescu, Chairwoman of the European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC)
27 October 2010

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the President of the European Interparliamentary Space Conference – EISC – it is my great pleasure to be here in Brussels. You might be surprised to see the representative of a national parliament here, but this fact shall demonstrate the important role of national parliaments for space activities in Europe. This has been true in the past and this will be true also in the future under the Lisbon Treaty.

In 1999, the European Interparliamentary Space Conference was created as a tool for interparliamentary cooperation in the space field. The EISC provides a forum for debating the European Space Policy and analyses the major issues at stake in the European space sector. It aims at facilitating the information exchange on national and European space activities and the promotion of the mutual understanding of national space policies.

EISC brings together national parliamentary representatives with particular interest in the space sector, the Belgian, British, Czech, French, German, Italian, Luxemburg, Romanian, Spanish. It is my aspiration that EISC assumes the role of a “common voice” of National Parliaments for space in Europe. It will not necessary become a formal and legally founded entity but I chose this term in order to showcase the perspective of EISC and the ambition, this institution should have.

EISC is in this context a kind of “sister” to the European Parliament. Both have important roles to play in the way, space activities are to be promoted and governed. EISC has also a kind of “natural” pendant in the European Parliament with the Intergroup Sky and Space. This is why I was very pleased that MEP Prodi followed my invitation to address this year’s EISC a few days ago in the format of a video message as he had to be here in Brussels for preparing the present conference.

Returning to EISC’s activities, I can briefly touch upon a few points, which were highlighted in the format of Conclusions at the 12th Plenary Conference, Romania organized last Monday and Tuesday (25/26 October 2010) in Bucharest. These Conclusions are meant to be an instrument for the members of EISC first to address European actors like the EP, the Council, the Commission and agencies and also to be used in the internal deliberations on shaping space policies and engagement of member States in European endeavours. I will also provide the Conclusions to the upcoming European Space Council.

In the Conclusions it was emphasised that space programmes and public space infrastructures allow for the execution of public policies and to sustain science, innovation and economic growth; furthermore they are useful tool to support international relations as a soft power.

I would also highlight that EISC recognises the need for open innovation in the space sector by cooperation with the non-space sectors which can be facilitated by the launch of innovation partnerships between the Member States, ESA and the EU

through the development of key enabling technologies to shape the future space industries as described in “Europe 2020”.

In the course of our debates we also recognised the importance of space exploration as a long term global endeavour and the importance of European cooperation within the ISS as a symbol of international cooperation and we call upon all European actors to support efforts to sustain the ISS at least until 2020 as a key tool for advancing human knowledge in science.

EISC further stresses the need of a balanced distribution of industrial capacities in Europe, in all the segments involved in space activities. EISC recognizes therefore that the interest of all Member States in investing in space programmes and the relevant industrial policy should be effectively preserved with adequate rules for all the key actors in the space sector.

It is particularly important to note that EISC supports the maintenance of an autonomous, independent, affordable and economically competitive access to space.

EISC calls upon the Member States through ESA, and the European Union to provide sufficient financing beyond 2013 for Europe’s two Flagship Projects: Galileo (EGNOS) and GMES.

During the discussions it was recognised the growing importance of space based assets to national, European and international security agendas, and calls on all European space actors to take note of the discussion we had on space security at our conference. Furthermore, the Member States, European Union and ESA are encouraged to continue the development of the Space Situation Awareness programme.

Additionally, it was underlined that space based information and applications can significantly contribute to the enhancement of civil protection and in particular disaster management and emergency response as well as climate change monitoring.

These, ladies and gentlemen, are a few but particularly notable conclusions we drew at the Bucharest plenary meeting of EISC two days ago. I very much appreciate that I was invited to present the national parliament’s views on the currently debated issues of European space activities and policies. With this I would like to draw your attention not only on the substance of our proposals but also to note and keep in mind the important role, national parliaments – the representatives of the people in the member States - do play in shaping, budgeting and regulating space activities in Europe.

Additional Information regarding EISC: <http://www.eisc-europa.eu/>
The EISC XII Conclusions can be downloaded from: http://www.eisc-europa.eu/images/stories/documents/XII_European_Interparliamentary_Space_Conference-261010.pdf
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