



European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC) 2022

Workshop

Thursday 17 March 10:00 – 17:30 CET

Summary

On March 17th, 2022, the French Presidency of the European Interparliamentary Space Conference (EISC) hosted the EISC workshop online on the development of reusable (micro)launchers as well as space traffic management and space sustainability. It brought together the EISC delegations from Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland as well as other stakeholders from space agencies and the industry.

The Session started with welcoming remarks from the French Presidency by Mrs Sophie Primas, chairwoman of both the Senate's Economic Affairs Committee and the Working Group for Space Policies and Mr. Claude Raynal, chairman of the Senate's Finance Committee. Mrs. Primas recalled the importance of discussing Europe's autonomous access to space as well as sustainability in space. She outlined that the war in Ukraine and its consequences on the space sector shed a light on the lack of European strategic autonomy and revealed our dependences in the fields of launchers in a time of transition between Ariane 5 and Ariane 6. In this context, developing reusable launchers and micro launchers for economic, geopolitical, and environmental reasons need to be discussed. Mr. Raynal highlighted that the workshop's discussion was aligned with the work of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU and the interparliamentary conference on digital and space.

Following this introduction, CNES President Philippe Baptiste gave a keynote speech outlining the priorities of the French Space Agency. He indicated the need to accelerate the development of Ariane 6 in the current geopolitical context. However, he also emphasized the need to develop mini and micro launchers in parallel of Ariane 6 to respond to new markets for small satellites and quick and flexible launches. He also underlined the need to better monitor and catalogue debris and create synergies between institutional and commercial SSA capabilities.

The development of European and reusable micro-launchers as a mean to guarantee a sustainable access to space

The first session, moderated by Sophie Primas, brought together Morena Bernardini, Strategy Vice President at ArianeGroup; Stanislas Maximin, CEO of Venture Orbital Systems; Alexandre Mangeot, CEO of Hybrid Propulsion for Space; François Maroquene-Froissart, CEO of Sirius Space Services.

Mrs. Morena Bernardini explained ArianeGroup's role in providing Europe with an autonomous and sustainable access to space. She underlined that Ariane 6 and the future micro-launcher Maia are two complementary initiatives that are developed in parallel and respond to different needs and markets. She also underlined that autonomous access to space is not just about launching satellites on European launchers from European territory, it is also about re-organising a more autonomous European supply chain.

Mr. Stanislas Maximin outlined the lack of financial means and capabilities in Europe and Europe's delay in the field of access to space both in terms of commercialisation and technological development.

Mr. Alexandre Mangeot summarized the work of his start-up, which aims at developing hybrid propulsion. His company is looking to develop a test bench in 2022, a suborbital launcher in 2024, and an orbital launcher by 2025. They are looking to provide reactive launch services for the urgent needs of the Armed Forces with a launch delay of three days.

The debate between the guest-speakers and the audience focused on the availability of private and public funding in Europe, the differences between France and Germany in terms of public financial support, as well as the European preference.

Space traffic management, protection of the Earth's orbital environment and development of sustainable uses of space

The second session was introduced by Mrs. Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam, member of the Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee. The discussion was moderated by the French Senator Jean-François Rapin, chairman of the European Affairs Committee, and brought together Eva Berneke, CEO of Eutelsat; Pierre Omaly, Space Debris Expert at CNES; Julien Cantegreil, CEO of SpaceAble; Romain Lucken, CEO of Share my space, and Guillaume de la Brosse from the European Commission.

Mrs. Eva Berneke explained the role of Eutelsat in mitigating debris and outlined her support for the European strategy on STM. She also called for a strong European regulatory approach that could be based on the French space law in order to require operators to limit debris. She added that requiring operators to be certified under European norms could educate the whole ecosystem to be responsible.

Mr. Pierre Omaly provided a comprehensive overview of the current challenges and opportunities in the field of STM in Europe. He particularly highlighted that 84% of collision alerts come from non-maneuvrable objects and that 50% of anti-collision manoeuvres are related to debris from the Iridium-Cosmos collision of 2009. He emphasised the need for better SSA data as debris of less than 10 cm are not catalogued by radars but can still destroy heavy satellites.

Mr. Julien Cantegreil explained the development of the SpaceAble platform, which provides SSA and space weather data to operators using AI to maximize information analyses, blockchain to certify the accuracy of the data, and cryptography to secure the data. SpaceAble is also developing an "inspector satellite" for in-orbit inspection and is now looking to provide services to the defence sector.

Mr. Romain Lucken explained the work of his start-ups, which produces, manages, and enhances orbital data for SSA. He also underlined the role of his start-ups in the Paris Peace Forum's Net Zero Initiative for space sustainability.

Mr. Guillaume de la Brosse outlined the priorities of the European Commission such as the European secure connectivity initiative, the modernisation of the existing programmes such as Copernicus and Galileo, the consolidation of launchers and the development of micro-launchers, and the support to New Space Actors.

The debate between the guest-speakers and the audience focused on the protection of strategic interests and know-how and the control of foreign investment as well as the regulatory framework for start-ups.

National statements

The delegations of EISC provided national statement regarding access to space and space sustainability. National statements also focused on the consequences of the war in Ukraine on bilateral and international cooperation in space. National statements were provided by Austria, Germany, France, and Poland.

The session ended with closing statements from by Mr. Kai-Uwe Schrogl, Special Advisor for Political Affairs to the Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA), and Mrs. Sophie Primas, chairwoman of both the Senate's Economic Affairs Committee and the Working Group for Space Policies.