

ESA Statement at the 59th session of the UNCOPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Agenda item 4. 'General Exchange of Views'

16 February 2022



1. Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your recent appointment to chair this Subcommittee. Let me also recognise and thank Ms. Natalia Archinard for having chaired the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee during the last two years in a highly professional manner under the most challenging circumstances.
Furthermore, the European Space Agency expresses its sincere appreciation to Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo for her extraordinary dedication to evolve and expand the work of the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs over the last years. We wish Ms. Di Pippo all the best for her future endeavours.

2. Distinguished delegates, ESA delivered, thanks to its Member States continued investments, important space-related milestones in 2021. Let me highlight few of these to illustrate the range and impact of ESA's activities:
 - In July ESA launched Eutelsat's Quantum satellite on board an Ariane 5 from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana. Quantum is pioneering a new generation of sophisticated telecommunications satellites that can adapt to changing demands during their 15-year lifetimes.

 - On 5 December 2021, the 27th and 28th Galileo navigation satellites were successfully launched. The Galileo constellation offers multiple critical services and a metre-scale accuracy to global users. Work on the second generation of Galileo satellites is already proceeding. First launched will take place in 2024.

 - BepiColombo, our mission to planet Mercury that ESA carries out together with JAXA, is good underway and delivered first pictures of Mercury during its first flyby. Five more gravity-assists maneuvers will be performed before entering Mercury's orbit in 2025.

 - On 9 November ESA astronaut Thomas Pesquet returned safely back to earth following a three and a half months stay on board the International Space Station. Thomas performed four space walks to install new solar array equipment and upgrade the power system.

 - Shortly after Thomas Pesquet's return the next European flew to the ISS. On 11 November Matthias Maurer launched to the ISS on a SpaceX Crew Dragon starting his mission Cosmic Kiss.

 - As a Christmas present, so to speak, an Ariane 5 launched the NASA-led James Webb Space Telescope on December 25. NASA, ESA and the Canadian Space

Agency have collaborated since 1996 on the design and construction of this remarkable scientific endeavor.

3. Distinguished Delegates: Space also requires political decisions and visions to tackle societal challenges and to lead the way for a sustainable use of space in coming decades. Let me therefore briefly highlight the following institutional news:

- In June, ESA and the European Union signed an agreement to jointly work on the European space programme. The Financial Framework Partnership Agreement marks an important step forward in the relationship between ESA and the EU.
- In his Agenda2025, ESA Director General set out a vision for how Europe could seize the opportunity of the current revolution in space activities to help make a green, digital, safe and inclusive world. The Agenda highlights strategic priorities for ESA.

Based on recommendations by a High-Level-Advisory Group, ESA, its Member States and the European Union identified three Accelerators that will tackle the main societal challenges in Europe and globally:

- Space for a Green Future
- Rapid and Resilient Crisis Response
- and-Protection of Space Assets.

The Accelerators were chosen on the basis of societal needs, the urgency to act and the relevance of space-based solutions to the problems they sought to address.

Two Inspirators were also identified to inject new exploration ambitions – a proposed Icy Moon Sample Return mission and a consideration in Europe to grow investments in human exploration.

- To ignite Europe's bold space ambitions, EU and ESA Member States Ministers meet today at Europe's Space Summit in Toulouse to discuss new initiatives. This meeting is expected to be an occasion to collect a strong political support for new EU space-related initiatives, for the Accelerators responding to urgent societal needs starting with the Green Future and for the Inspirators.

4. For 2022 ESA and its Member States are expecting further milestones and highlights of which I will mention just a few:

- This year we are expecting Vega-C's inaugural flight, ESA's new small launcher.
- We will also witness the first flight of Europe's new large launcher Ariane 6 towards the end of year.
- Furthermore, the maiden flight of NASA's Space Launch System and Orion will also feature ESA's role in the Artemis programme with the European Service Module providing electricity, water, oxygen and nitrogen to Orion.
- In September we are expecting the launch of the second joint ESA-Roscosmos ExoMars mission delivering a Russian platform and a European rover to the Martian surface to study whether life has ever existed on Mars.

Distinguished delegates: Thank you very much