

**Preliminary comments from the Belgian delegation to the HLSPG  
on the document: 'Framework for building up a European Space Policy'**

**(distributed at the HLSPG meeting on 15.03.05)**

1. To date, the ESA Convention has defined the ESA's mission as "to elaborate and implement a long-term European space policy...". In future, following ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, the EU will elaborate a "European Space Policy". In our opinion, it should be possible to find a place for the respective missions of the ESA and the EU in the upper quadrant of the matrix presented in the document.
2. The Space Council of 25 November 2004 defined the European Space Programme (ESP) as a "broad and flexible common framework...". We are therefore calling for greater attention to be paid to the role of the Member States (at the national and intergovernmental levels) in defining and implementing the ESP. The approach should be resolutely more federal.

We propose that the first box of the 'programmatic level' under item 1 'Structure' of the document should be supplemented accordingly.

3. The signals received to date from the Commission amply demonstrate that the EU intends to position itself above all else as a potential user of space. Moreover, the matrix presented in the document clearly shows that the Commission is arguing essentially in terms of applications and exploitation.

In the EU's mind, the ESP should therefore formulate adequate action for this in response to the needs for space solutions in support of European policies. This formulation should be commensurate with the resources the EU intends to assign to this. In the ESA's view, the ESP should involve the integration of financial and technical resources aimed at formulating, in the form of activities and programmes, a response to the needs of its "clients" while taking account of the overall *acquis* (experience and savoir-faire). Our proposal is that this latter notion be added within the ESA 'space policy' framework under item 4 'Responsibilities' of the document.

4. The facts and the reality of the actions taken by the European Commission are proof that the EU remains just another client for the ESA, albeit one with an immense potential and an inescapable political dimension, but whose commitment and contribution should not constitute a condition precedent for the implementation of new ESA programmes. It is imperative for the latter to be supported by funding which is open to EU contributions but independent from these.
5. Any vision should clearly be backed by a strong and consistent budgetary policy. Hence our wish to receive the orders of magnitude, which will be proposed by the Commission for the various space activities identified in the document presented to the HLSPG, at the earliest possible opportunity.
6. The Commission's intentions as regards "*communications*" require clarification.
7. Belgium is not convinced at this stage that the legal wording for the JU is the best solution for future GMES development and exploitation.
8. As soon as the ESP has been defined, it would also be necessary to reflect on a substantive contribution on the part of space tools for the benefit of the European Union's security and defence policies. In order to do this, we propose that support be taken from the work of the SPASEC group.

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