

Strategy

In 2002, developments in the strategy domain took two main directions: a greater rapprochement with the European Union, and important advances in the Network of Technical Centres initiative.

In proceeding with the monitoring and implementation of the European Strategy for Space (as adopted jointly by ESA and EU Councils in November 2000), ESA pursued numerous activities jointly with the European Commission. The ESA/EC Joint Task Force continued its work of bringing the two organisations closer together for the benefit of Europe's citizens. The next step in this cooperation was taken with the opening of negotiations on a framework agreement between ESA and the European Community. This agreement should transform the present ad-hoc structure of the Joint Task Force into a stable basis for future cooperation. Another initiative of ESA-EC cooperation was the preparation of the Green Paper on space, which was begun late in the year and will continue into 2003.

2002 was also a year in which the European security dimension evolved in many respects and ESA has not been unresponsive to these changes in the overall European context. Informal consultations whereby Delegations could express their views and visions on such issues as civil security and multiple use accompanied the more programmatic discussions during the year.

ESA produced the first issue of the European Space Long-Term Plan (ESLTP), which summarises in a single document the existing programmatic planning of the Agency, the European Union, national agencies and other European public players. It is an important tool for helping decision-makers to assess the global coherence of the objectives, the programmes and the way in which they are implemented, and it represents a first valuable step towards an integrated European space programme.

The 2002 version of ESA's now annual analysis of 'The European Space Sector in a Global Context' (available from ESA Publications Division as ESA BR-197) puts Europe's space-related affairs into a more general context, by reporting on major geopolitical and economic changes and events that occurred during the year.



The activities of the Network of Technical Centres Initiative followed three main lines: pilot networks, new programmes, and reassessment of the long-term vision for the initiative. Intense effort was devoted to the four existing pilot projects (Project Reviews, Flight Operations, Space Debris and Test Facilities) in order to measure the substantial progress achieved against the approved assessment criteria (transparency, complementarity, reciprocity and non-discriminatory access), and to evaluate the cost savings. Considerable progress was also achieved in terms of interconnecting the networks and the new programmes.

In the reassessment of the long-term vision for the Network of Centres Initiative, a wide consensus was reached at an informal workshop organised at Heads of Delegation level, fully confirming the 1999 Plan of Action and identifying the objectives, principles and criteria for complementing the original goals.