

International Relations



Mrs Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Luxembourg's Minister for Culture, Higher Education and Research, and Mr Jean-Jacques Dordain, ESA's Director General, signing the Agreement on Luxembourg's accession to the ESA Convention, in Paris on 6 May



Mr Dimitris Sioufas (right), Greece's Minister for Development, and Mr Jean-Jacques Dordain, ESA's Director General, after signing the Agreement on Greece's accession to the ESA Convention, in Paris on 19 July

Two New Member States for ESA

Luxembourg and Greece signed the Accession Agreement to the ESA Convention on 6 May and 19 July 2004, respectively. They then become ESA Member States as soon as their internal procedures of ratification have been completed.

For each country, a Joint Task Force (ESA/Luxembourg and ESA/Greece) will be created and remain active for six years starting from the date of accession. The Task Force's mandate will be to advise the Director General on the implementation of the special transitional measures concerning industrial policy that are defined in the Accession Agreement.

Relations with the 10 new EU Member States

On 24 November, the Czech Republic became the second European Cooperating State of ESA, after Hungary on 5 November 2003. Within the framework of the Plan for European Cooperating States (PECS), the two countries are now able to take part indirectly in the Agency's programmes. Romania has recently expressed its wish to enter into negotiation with a view to joining PECS, and Poland will certainly soon follow this scheme.

Relations with Space-Faring Countries

Canada

The 25th anniversary of the cooperation between ESA and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) was celebrated during the IAF Congress in Vancouver in October. In July, Telesat Canada's Anik F2 satellite, equipped with a Ka-band transmitter financed by CSA, was launched by an Ariane-5.

United States

Further to President Bush's 'Vision for Space Exploration', the NASA Exploration Systems Mission Directorate hosted an 'International Workshop on Creating New and Sustainable Space Exploration' in Washington in November, bringing together some 19 space agencies from around the World. The main objectives were to provide a forum for NASA and other space agencies to exchange information on their individual plans and capabilities for the human and robotic exploration of space, and to begin discussions on interests and mechanisms for potential cooperation on exploration systems.

After more than four years of intensive talks, the European Union and the United States concluded an agreement on Galileo and GPS regarding the promotion, provision and use of the two satellite-based navigation systems and related applications, thus providing a framework for the interoperability of the two systems.

The great success of the NASA/ESA/ASI Cassini-Huygens mission highlighted the importance of international cooperation and strengthened the existing links between the two agencies.

Russian Federation

The Agreement between ESA and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation and Partnership in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes entered into force on 15 October. In the framework of this general agreement, ESA's Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain and the Head of the Russian Federal Space Agency Anatoly Perminov subsequently signed an Agreement for Long-term Cooperation and Partnership in the Development, Implementation and Use of Launchers. This Agreement paves the way for cooperation between ESA and the Russian Federation based on two pillars: the exploitation of the Russian Soyuz launcher from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana, and cooperation, without exchange of funds, on research and development in preparation for future launchers.

The Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiaobao receiving a small gift from ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain, in the company of ESA astronauts Frank De Winne (far left) and André Kuipers, during the Chinese Delegation's visit to ESTEC in Noordwijk (NL)



Japan

The 29th ESA/Japan Annual meeting, which took place at ESA Headquarters in Paris on 26/27 October, provided an opportunity to review the overall ESA/Japan cooperation. During the year, ESA and JAXA pursued their collaboration on the JAXA ASTRO-F mission, after reaching an agreement on the legal instruments to cover the cooperation. In addition, ESA and JAXA concluded a Letter of Agreement to formalise cooperation on the BepiColombo mission.

China

On 9 December, on the occasion of the European Union - China Summit in The Hague (NL), Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited ESTEC in Noordwijk. He was accompanied by the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Science and Technology, the Minister of Commerce and the Minister of Agriculture. Two days beforehand, on 7 December, Mr Sun Laiyan, recently appointed Administrator of the Chinese National Space Administration (CNSA), visited ESA Headquarters in Paris to discuss further possibilities for cooperation between China and ESA.

Both of the Double Star satellites have now been launched. The DRAGON Earth-observation programme is successfully moving forward. Together with the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, ESA organised a DRAGON Symposium on Envisat data in Xiamen on 26 - 29 April, which brought together more than 150 European and Chinese scientists.

An Agreement was signed in 2004 between the Galileo Joint Undertaking and the Chinese National Remote Sensing Centre regarding cooperation on the Galileo Programme.

India

ESA and ISRO are discussing the possibility of European institutes participating in the Indian Chandrayaan-1 mission.

The Chairman of ISRO, Mr Madhavan Nair, visited ESA's Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain in June.

Relations with Emerging Space Powers/Countries

Latin America

On 19 May, the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil notified ESA of its acceptance of the prorogation, from October 2004 until October 2012, of the Cooperation Agreement pertaining to the use of the Natal tracking station, which is a key station for the tracking of Ariane-5.

Asia and Oceania (excluding Japan, China and India)

Together with the United Nations and the Governments of Switzerland and Austria, ESA organized a Workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal, on space technology for sustainable development in mountain areas, hosted by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). As the first in a new series of activities dedicated to sustainable development in mountain areas, this Workshop provided the opportunity to present and discuss the usefulness of remote-sensing applications, satellite communications and global satellite-navigation systems for sustainable development in mountain areas.

First contacts have been established with representatives from the Korean Aerospace Research Institute in order to investigate potential areas of cooperation with ESA.

ESA has begun talks with the Government of New Zealand to obtain authorisation for the installation of a mobile telemetry station for tracking Ariane-5 during the launch of the first ATV, 'Jules Verne'.

Relations with the Mediterranean countries and Africa

On 15 July, Turkey signed a Framework Cooperation Agreement with ESA concerning Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes. It will allow cooperation in such fields as space science, Earth observation research and applications, telecommunications, microgravity research and ground-segment engineering.

The European Commission and Israel finalised an Agreement regarding Israel's participation in the Galileo Programme.

A TIGER Announcement of Opportunity offering ERS and Envisat data at cost price to African water-related institutions was issued in mid-2004 and attracted some 100 proposals from across the whole continent. 65 of them were selected for further assessment and discussion at the annual TIGER Workshop held in Pretoria in November, in the presence of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat.

Relations with International Organizations

UNCOPUOS (United Nations Committee On the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space)

ESA continued to coordinate European views in the COPUOS as well as its subsidiary bodies.

UNOOSA (United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs)

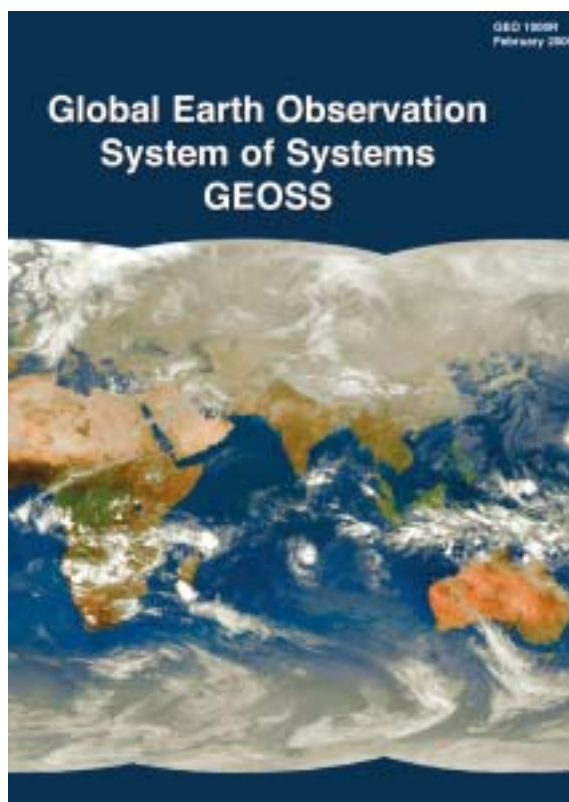
In 2004, the UN, through OOSA, officially associated itself with the activities carried out under the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, and is now an authorised user of the Charter and can therefore request satellite imagery by this mechanism. During the year, the Charter was triggered nine times by UN organisations through OOSA.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

ESA continued to support the Open Initiative on the Use of Space Technology for the Assessment of World Heritage Sites, under the World Heritage Convention. The Agency participated, for instance, in a UNESCO/ESA/Argentina/EURISY Expert Meeting for World Heritage Site Managers in Latin America, held in Cordoba, Argentina.

GEO (Group on Earth Observations)

The EO Summit at Ministerial Level held in Tokyo in April adopted the Framework Document defining the fundamental elements to be included in the 10-year Implementation Plan for what will henceforth be called a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). It also established an Implementation Plan Task Team of experts to finalise the plan in time for the next EO Ministerial Summit scheduled to take place in Brussels in February 2005.



The GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan Reference Document, produced by ESA Publications Division

CEOS (Committee on Earth Observation Satellites)

Under the chairmanship of China, ESA continued to support the CEOS efforts to optimise the benefits of global Earth-observation missions through cooperation.