

Towards New Horizons

— The ESA Council Meeting in Brussels

Introduction

At the invitation of Mr Yvan Ylief, the Belgian Minister for Science Policy and Chairman of ESA's Council at Ministerial Level, the most recent meeting of the ESA Council took place in Brussels on 23 and 24 June. Key agenda items at this Meeting, which represented a critical step in the preparations for the next full Council Meeting at Ministerial Level, were the discussions on greater coordination between ESA and the European Community and the starting of new ESA programmes in the fields of launcher development, Earth observation and satellite navigation.

The Meeting was preceded by a ceremony to mark the 25th Anniversary of the 1973 European Space Conference, which also took place in Brussels, under the Chairmanship of the then Belgian Minister for Scientific Policy, Mr Charles Hanin, and which laid the foundations for the formation of the European Space Agency. During this celebration, the Ministers present expressed their recognition of the range and the extent of the achievements of ESA's space programmes over the past 25 years and the Agency's successes in space science, in satellite communications, in Earth observation and with Ariane – successes that have placed Europe among the World's leading players in space. They also reaffirmed their continuing loyalty to the future role of ESA as the focal point for Europe's space efforts.

Decisions taken in Brussels

The first of the Resolutions to be adopted by the June Council (ESA/C/CXXXVI/Res. 1) is a reflection of the need to strengthen further the synergy and increase the complementarity between ESA and the European Community in their respective spheres of competence in the space domain, thereby enhancing the efficiency of government investment in space systems and technology for the benefit of European users and industry. This *Resolution on the Reinforcement of the Synergy between the European Space Agency and the European*

Community had been endorsed a day earlier, on 22 June, by the European Union's Research Ministers meeting in Luxembourg under the chairmanship of John Battle, the UK Minister of State for Science, Energy and Industry. It opens a new era of cooperation between the two organisations. It calls for the further strengthening of relations and encourages more initiatives at strategic level for developing a common vision, particularly in the fields of telecommunications, navigation and Earth observation, to enhance the effectiveness of public investment in these programmes for the benefit of both users and European industry.

In a second Resolution (ESA/C/CXXXVI/Res. 2), Council sanctioned exceptional measures that should allow the Agency to deal more effectively with the financial risks associated with its programmes. In adopting this *Resolution on Modifications to the Financial Regulations Required for the Purposes of Setting Up an Accompaniment Fund*, the Council also welcomed the measures taken by the Director General to adapt the Agency to the new realities, inviting him to continue to pursue his efforts for increased efficiency in conducting Europe's space programmes and strengthening support to European industry in order to further enhance its world-wide competitiveness and market share.

The third Resolution adopted in Brussels (ES/C/CXXXVI/Res. 3) was the *Resolution on Immediate Measures and Preparatory Steps towards the Council Meeting at Ministerial Level Related to the Agency's New Programmes and its Evolution*.

This Resolution contains five elements:

Chapter I:

– *Towards the establishment of an overall European space policy*, whereby the Delegations and the Director General will strive jointly to formulate a coordinated European Space Policy for presentation to the next Council Meeting at Ministerial Level.



Chapter II:

- *Evolution of the European Space Agency*, relating to the improvement of ESA's overall efficiency in terms of improved decision-making processes, further savings in internal costs, the use of performance indicators, and the containment of costs at completion of new programmes.

Chapter III:

- *Efficient use of public resources in Europe*, covering the elaboration of guidelines for reciprocal use of ESA and national facilities for national and ESA programmes, and enhancement of European expertise by establishing conditions for mobility of staff between national centres, ESA and other institutions.

Chapter IV:

- *Programmes of ESA*, sanctioning the start of four new activities in the areas of space transportation, Earth observation and satellite navigation, namely:
 - the first step in the development of a more powerful version of Ariane-5, to ensure its continued competitiveness on the international launcher market
 - the first step in preparing the development of a small launcher known as VEGA
 - the definition and start-up of activities related to the Living Planet Programme in Earth Observation
 - the initiation of the first step of the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS-2), leading to the choice of the best system and associated technology for a European initiative in the context of a strong European coordination.

Ariane-5 Plus, to ensure its continued competitiveness on the international launcher market

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Chapter V:

- *Mandate of the Council Working Group for the Preparation of the Council at Ministerial Level*, which invites the Council Working Group to continue the preparations, focusing its analysis on the areas described in Chapters I to IV.

The texts of the various Resolutions are reproduced in full in the following pages. 

Celebration of 25th Anniversary of the 1973 European Space Conference



Panel Session focussing on ESA's achievements, including some of the Delegates who had attended the 1973 European Space Conference: from left to right: Mr Yvan Ylieff, Mr John Battle, Mr Antonio Rodotà, Mr Hugo Parr, Mr Michel Bignier, Prof. Massimo Trella, Mr Jan Stiernstedt, Mr Peter Creola and Mr Charles Hanin



Mr John Battle, UK Minister of State for Science, Energy and Industry and Chairman of the European Union's Research Council, addressing the assembled guests and representatives of the media during the opening of the 25th Anniversary Celebration, at the UGC Cinema in Brussels



Mr Michel Bignier (centre), former Director of ESA's Spacelab Programme, discussing Spacelab's role as a key to future European and trans-Atlantic cooperation



Rounding off of the Panel Session by Mr Charles Hanin, former Belgian Minister of Scientific Policy, and Chairman of the 1973 European Space Conference

Brussels Participants



Minister Yvan Ylieff, Chairman of the ESA Council at Ministerial Level, and Representatives of the ESA Member States who participated in the Brussels 25th Anniversary Celebration, gathered in the foyer of the Hotel Metropole, with a model of Ariane-5 as a backdrop

The 136th Council Meeting in Session



The Brussels Council Meeting in session in the Salon Excelsior of the Hotel Metropole



From left to right:
Mr Daniel Sacotte,
ESA's Director of
Administration,
Mr Antonio Rodotà,
ESA's Director General,
Mr Hugo Parr, Chairman of
ESA Council, and
Mr Karl-Egon Reuter, Head
of the ESA Cabinet

25th Anniversary Dinner

Mr Yvan Ylieff, Belgian Minister for Science Policy and host for the 136th Meeting, invited the Council Delegates and other participants to a celebratory Dinner on the evening of 23 June in the 'Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée' in Brussels



Mr Yvan Ylieff addressing his assembled dinner guests

The Post-Council Press Conference



Following the highly successful outcome of the 136th Council, Mr Yvan Ylieff (centre), the Belgian Minister for Science Policy, Mr Hugo Parr (right), Chairman of the ESA Council, and Mr Antonio Rodotà (left), ESA's Director General, held a Press Conference at the Hotel Metropole, which was attended by more than 40 representatives of the international press, television and other media

