



Recommendation 844 (1978)¹

European Space Agency

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Noting that the year 1977 was an extremely active one for the European Space Agency (ESA), characterised by the first Council meeting at ministerial level, and by the fact that the Agency launched four satellites, of which two, GEOS and OTS, did not go into orbit because of the failure of the US Thor Delta rocket, while the two others, ISEE-B and Meteosat, were successfully launched with the same type of rocket ;
2. Hoping that the present system of Council meetings at ministerial level will facilitate the taking of decisions of importance for the future of space activities in Europe ;
3. Believing that postponement of a decision on a co-operation project can be tantamount to failure of the whole project, although it may in the end be formally agreed ;
4. Taking into account the experience acquired at the first Council meeting at ministerial level, hopes that when preparing the next Council meeting the objectives of the meeting are clearly defined in advance ;
5. Taking into account the importance of satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the European scientific community, notes with satisfaction the approval during 1977 of the two new scientific programmes - the Space Telescope and the Solar-Polar - to be undertaken in collaboration with NASA ;
6. Having regard to the Assembly's repeated appeals to find markets for Europe's space products, notes with satisfaction that the successful launch of the Meteosat meteorological satellite has been the signal for renewed expressions of interest in this European programme from many non-member states, including many in Africa and Asia ;
7. Taking into account the conclusions of the Toulouse parliamentary hearing on remote sensing held in March 1978, expresses the opinion that a European remote-sensing satellite would logically have been the next step after Meteosat, and that the implementation of a European remote-sensing satellite programme should be undertaken without delay ;
8. Welcoming, in the meantime, the setting-up of the Earthnet network, designed to receive, store and distribute within Europe the output of the American remote-sensing satellites, Landsat and Seasat ;
9. Welcoming the continuation of the Marecs (formerly Marots) maritime satellite programme and the Council decision of spring 1978 in favour of a second maritime communications satellite (Marecs B), as well as the prospect of seeing these satellites form the essential nucleus of a worldwide network of maritime satellites ;
10. Welcoming the successful OTS-2 launch on 11 May 1978 as a first basis for an operational European communications satellite system, hopes that this success will foster the acceptance of Europe as a major supplier on the growing world communications satellite market ;

1. Assembly debate on 2 October 1978 (14th Sitting) (see [Doc. 4217](#), report of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 2 October 1978 (14th Sitting).



11. Welcoming in this context the important decision of the ESA Council in the spring of 1978 to undertake the production of two operational satellites for intra-European telephone, telegraph and telex communications and television relays (ECS 1 and 2).
12. Recalling the Assembly's repeated appeals for the better organisation of space satellite users, welcomes the formation of Eutelsat, providing a valid partner for the ESA Executive in determining user needs in an operational European communications satellite system, and the development of relations between ESA and the European Broadcasting Union ;
13. Noting with great satisfaction that the Spacelab programmes made satisfactory progress in all aspects during 1977, and the decision on 4 March 1978 to the effect that the Spacelab engineering model will be delivered by mid-1979, and the flight unit to NASA in two shipments, in autumn 1979 and in early 1980, in order to satisfy requirements for the first two Spacelab missions scheduled for December 1980 and April 1981 ;
14. Noting with satisfaction that the development programme of Ariane, Europe's main launcher, of which the first test flight is scheduled for 1979, continued according to plan during 1977 ;
15. While welcoming the Council decision in December 1977 enabling the so-called "promotion" programme of six operational launchers to be undertaken by the Agency, regrets that no agreement was reached at the time on the method of pre-financing this production ;
16. Recalling its repeated calls for a dynamic sales campaign for Europe's launchers and satellites, notes that potential users showed considerable interest in Ariane during the year 1977 ;
17. Noting with great satisfaction the milestone agreement of 26 April 1978, embracing the financing of the whole of the first series of five operational launchers to be available for the scientific satellite Exosat I to be launched early in 1981, Marots-B to be launched in mid-1981, ECS-1 to be launched at the end of 1981, the French earth observation satellite Spot, and the fifth operational Ariane to be held in reserve ;
18. Noting with regret that ever since the start of joint European space activities in the early 1960s, the organisations concerned (ELDO, ESRO, ESA) have been battling with financial problems because governmental delegations have not been able to vote the budgets in accordance with established and normal practices, hopes that the positive budgetary decisions of 1 March and 26 April 1978 will open a new period in the life of ESA, making it possible to take regular medium-term financial decisions,
19. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member governments concerned to take steps :
 - a. to ensure that the two new scientific programmes - the Space Telescope and the Solar-Polar - will be continued without delay, in order to satisfy the legitimate interests of the European scientific community ;
 - b. to see to the rapid launching of a European remote-sensing satellite programme, making sure of its satisfactory co-ordination with existing national programmes in the same field ;
 - c. to transform the optional Earthnet programme into a European Space Agency mandatory programme ;
 - d. to ensure that the Marecs maritime satellite programme can form the basis, within the Inmarsat system, of a global maritime satellite system ;
 - e. to promote the use of the Ariane launcher not only for European programmes but also for the programmes of countries outside Europe and of international organisations - in particular Intelsat ;
 - f. to ensure the taking regularly of long-term or at least medium-term financial decisions with respect to the appropriate future level of ESA activities ;
 - g. to prepare for the long-term planning of space activities in Europe, especially in new fields such as the production of solar energy by satellite.