Resolution 426 (1969)[1]

Reply to the 4th general report of the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Welcoming the fact that, as after years of hardships ESRO came into full operational status in 1968, the year can be described as the most momentous in ESRO's five-year existence ;

2. Noting with great satisfaction that, as repeatedly proposed by the Assembly, the ESRO Council agreed to the extension of activities to include not only scientific satellites as in the past but also an application satellite programme ;

Satellites

3. Noting with great satisfaction the successful launching and operation in 1968 of ESRO's first three satellites in one year - ESRO I, ESRO II and HEOS I ; convinced that this success will have a positive and stimulating effect on a homogeneous European scientific community ;

4. Noting that while 1968 was preponderantly a year of success, disappointment also occurred insofar as the Large Astronomical Satellite (LAS) project had to be terminated and the TD 1/TD 2 project had to be given up in its original form ; welcomes the fact that the TD 1 satellite will be built and constitutes a project of the greatest complexity, fully comparable with the most complex US satellites ;

5. Welcoming the fact that the ESRO Council was able to take a positive decision on the organisation's future programme to the effect of planning the production of five satellites, HEOS A2, ESRO IV, ESRO Ib, COS-B, GEOS ; notes that the two last satellites (COS-B and GEOS) are the first ESRO scientific projects which allow for the possible use of the Europa II launcher ;

Sounding rockets

6. Noting with satisfaction that the sounding rocket programme continued with an increasing technical success rate ; is of the opinion, however, that the successful firing of 20 sounding rockets compares unfavourably with the planned launching of 40 - 50 ;

7. Reiterating its belief that it should be the task of ESRO to build up its own expertise and to foster the growth in European industry of a technological space capability ; welcomes the fact that of the 36 payloads prepared for launching , 23 were integrated by industry and 13 by the European Space and Technology Centre (ESTEC) ;

Organisational and financial improvements

8. Welcoming the re-institution of the practice laid down in the Convention of agreeing on the level of resources for three-year periods ;

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1. Assembly debate on 3 October 1969 (15th Sitting) (see Doc. 2643, report of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 3 October 1969 (15th Sitting).

9. Welcoming the return to voting on the Budget by two-thirds majority as foreseen in the Convention ;

10. Welcoming the introduction of a reform giving substantial extensions of the power delegated to the Director General and the granting of authority to the Director General to commence projects which will be extended beyond 1971 ;

11. Convinced that these improvements will lead to more efficient management and have removed some of the obstacles which have limited effective long-term planning and have provided the organisation with a new machinery of decision-making better fit to solve any unforeseen crisis situation, hopes that these improvements and the experience gained will be taken over and further developed by a unified space organisation ;

Phased planning and industrial policy

12. Welcoming the agreement in 1968 on the general guide-lines for the introduction of a system for phased planning, believes that full success can only be assured through the improvement of the technique of forecasting, and of modern management methods at all stages of the planning process ;

13. While welcoming the decision of the ESRO Council of December 1967 to instruct the Director General to proceed to the development of an industrial policy, regrets that the year 1968 was only "used to create the instruments of the establishment and the control" of such a policy ;

14. Believing that an industrial policy should inter alia aim at achieving selective specialisation among the advanced industries in member states as one way of solving the issue of geographical distribution of contracts, and that an industrial policy can only be effectively established and executed in close consultation with European industry ;

15. Convinced that the experience gained in ESRO in phased project planning of satellite projects and in the conduct of an industrial space policy can be used in introducing industrial policy in other sectors of Europe's technology,

16. Resolves to invite the ESRO Council :

16.1. to accelerate its work on the development of an industrial policy which should aim at the balanced development of technologies in member countries and not be based solely on considerations of "fair return" ;

16.2. to support the efforts of the Director General to introduce an efficient system of phased project planning based on improvement in the technique of forecasting and of modern management methods at all stages ;

16.3. to authorise the Director General at an early stage in the project evaluation chain to take an active part in the formation of the industrial set-up in order that a mutually fruitful dialogue between the organisation and industry can be started from the very outset of a project ;

16.4. to work towards a common European space policy in which scientific and applications work is harmoniously balanced and which includes the earliest and the most frequent possible use of a European launcher.