Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 788 (1983)[1]

Future of the European space programme

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the consistent interest that it has shown, as reflected in Recommendations 844 (1978) and 896 (1980), in the development of a substantial and distinct European space capability ;

2. Conscious of the specific human needs which can be met and of the scientific, technological, industrial and commercial benefits which can be obtained from an active space programme ;

3. Aware of the dramatic progress which has been made in space research, development and applications over the last twenty-five years by the Soviet Union and the United States in both the civil and military fields and by Europe in the civil field ;

4. Noting the strenuous efforts to develop space applications on the part of Japan, Brazil, India and other non-European nations and the growing resources which they are applying to their space programmes ;

5. Appreciative of the cardinal role which the European Space Agency (ESA) has played in the promotion and development of space research, science and technologies within Europe (particularly for the smaller countries), towards which national capabilities should be an essential constituent rather than a factor for wasteful duplication and competition ;

6. Believing that the potential for European achievement in the space field will never approach that of the United States and Soviet Union unless the funding which their space programmes receive for military purposes is matched, in Europe, by commensurate additional expenditure on national European and on ESA-sponsored programmes ;

7. Convinced that the historic and special relationship enjoyed by European nations with many developing countries lends particular importance to the evolution of a European space applications programme of mutual benefit to those countries and to Europe - for example in such areas as remote sensing and meteorological satellites and telecommunications and broadcasting satellites ;

8. Welcoming the co-operation which already exists between the United States and Europe in numerous space programmes - most notably Spacelab and other important aspects of the reusable shuttle project - but wishing that such collaboration in the future should become a very much more equal partnership ;

9. Recognising the stimulative effect upon the depressed economies of Western Europe of creating additional highly skilled employment and of developing many new technologies and processes as well as a wealth of commercial applications, which makes space activities a very appropriate area for governmental financial support in Europe ;

10. Determined to ensure the resolution of difficulties for the Europan space programme, such as the failure of the Ariane launcher in September 1982, and engaging the commitment of the Assembly of the Council of Europe to the fulfilment of its key role of maintaining, in spite of setbacks, public and governmental support within Europe for an active space programme ;

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1. Assembly debate on 24 January 1983 (21st Sitting) (see Doc. 4995Doc. 4995, report of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 January 1983 (21st Sitting).

11. Understanding that in many aspects - such as telecommunications, remote sensing and space transport - space technology has progressed from the phase of research through that of technical development to the stage of practical applications, and wishing to encourage the growth of enterprises such as Arianespace, Spot-Image, Eumetsat and Eutelsat, which can profitably and beneficially exploit those space capabilities which have been evolved so far ;

12. Perceiving the importance of developing a long-term European space strategy, for which considerable forward financial planning and budgetary provision are essential on the part of governments, necessitating a more regular and committed involvement by Ministers in the higher direction of the European Space Agency ;

13. Confirming that no great endeavour is sustainable unless it engages the will, the mind and, above all, the spirit of mankind ; that the exploration and utilisation of space constitutes for the remainder of this century and beyond an inspiring challenge and historic opportunity ; and that the realisation for Europeans of the full scientific, technological and commercial potential of space demands political leadership of the highest order if the necessary human and financial resources are to be mobilised,

14. Calls on the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe :

a. to agree that an expanded and distinct European space programme constitutes a common technological, political and industrial objective of the highest importance for which adequate economic resources must be allocated on a long-term basis ;

b. to provide clear support to the sponsoring role of the European Space Agency for the research and development phases of most major space programmes in Europe, to require the more regular participation of Ministers in the work of the Council of the European Space Agency in order to promote systematic progress towards European space co-operation, and to invite the full participation in the work of ESA of those nations currently in associate membership ;

c. to make a concerted substantive contribution to the development of communications infrastructures in the context of World Communications Year 1983 ;

d. to promote, through diplomatic channels and government-to-government as well as through commercial contracts, the interest of developing nations for co-operation with Europe in space technology which would be of benefit to both sides ;

e. to continue the development of the Ariane launcher up to and including the various versions of Ariane-4, and to initiate project studies on successor launcher systems including re-usable as well as expendable vehicles ;

f. to agree that successor remote sensing satellite systems to follow the French (CNES) SPOT project and the ESA ERS-I project should be pursued in a co-ordinated manner and, if possible, constitute a large comprehensive European remote sensing programme, and to encourage commercial and consultancy relations between Europe and other countries in the management and exploitation of their natural resources through remote sensing satellite systems ;

g. to ensure maximum return from European participation in Spacelab and other United States shuttle-related programmes ;

h. to seek the agreement of the Administration of the United States and the support of Congress for more stable and longer-term funding arrangements for joint United States/European space programmes ;

i. to preserve the momentum of European space science experimentation through the maintenance of at least the present proportion of the ESA budget allocated for the purpose ;

j. to encourage, through the support of national space projects which do not conflict with the objectives of the European Space Agency's agreed programme, the market and commercial orientation of space-related industries ;

k. to give the European Space Agency the objective of making possible in its future programme an independent European manned presence in space in the 1990s, in order to capitalise on experience already gained by French astronauts in the Soviet Salyut missions and by European scientists from their flights in Spacelab.