



Resolution 899 (1988)¹

European space policy: towards an autonomous manned space capability for Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Noting the decisions taken by the Ministers of the European Space Agency (The Hague, 9 and 10 November 1987), including the development of an autonomous manned space capability for Europe ;
2. Noting that, from the late 1990s, these decisions should lead to a semi-autonomous capability based on : a. an advanced version of the Ariane rocket, and -subject to reassessment and further decisions in three years' time -b. the Hermes re-usable space vehicle, and c. participation in the United States space station through the Columbus project (involving inter alia the attachment of a manned capsule) ;
3. Noting that Canada and Japan are also partners in the United States space station programme, and that opportunities for co-operation with the well-established space station activities of the USSR are already being exploited ;
4. Noting that part of the rationale of the United States and USSR programmes is the possibility of manufacturing alloys, crystals and pharmaceuticals in conditions of virtual weightlessness (microgravity), and that some of these products are likely to be of strategic industrial significance ;
5. Noting furthermore that the cost of achieving manned space capabilities for the above purposes, as well as for others, will also be offset in part by opportunities for repair and maintenance of satellites in orbit and by scientific advances (materials and fluid physics, human physiology, etc) ;
6. Noting :
 - 6.1. that, in the fifteen years since governments took the decisions to build an independent European launch capability in the shape of the Ariane rocket and to develop the Spacelab module for flight on the United States shuttle, the European space industry has competed with increasing success on the world market for communication satellites and satellite launches ;
 - 6.2. that the markets for communication satellites and satellite launches are expected to stabilise in the 1990s, and that competition therein is expected to become more intense with the entry of Japan, China and possibly the USSR ;
 - 6.3. that important markets for Earth observation services and for microgravity-manufactured alloys, crystals and pharmaceuticals are expected to emerge, though the time-scale is still uncertain ;
7. Believing that the necessary investments (both public and private sector) should be made today to keep open the option for European industry to play a part in the development and profitable exploitation of these markets ;

1. Assembly debate on 5 May 1988 (6th Sitting) (see [Doc. 5838](#), report of the Committee on Science and Technology, Rapporteur : Mr Wilkinson). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 May 1988 (6th Sitting).



8. Considering that the Long-Term European Space Plan, unanimously adopted (Rome, 31 January 1985) by the Ministers of the European Space Agency and now in course of implementation following decisions taken at The Hague, 9 and 10 November 1987, is a cornerstone of the European technological community, as foreshadowed in the Single European Act (see Assembly [Recommendation 1063](#)) ;
9. Convinced that in the longer term more cost-effective and safe means of access to and return from space must be developed, possibly by horizontal take-off and landing spaceplanes with new modes of propulsion, and that programmes to this end should be included as soon as feasible in the Long-Term European Space Plan ;
10. Aware that the development of autonomous capabilities for Europe in space technology has implications which range far wider than market opportunities and would strengthen Europe's position both in the North-South dialogue and in East-West relations -implications which are economic (communications, weather forecasting, navigation, land use, etc.), cultural (information exchange, broadcasting, education, etc.) and political (see Assembly [Recommendation 957](#)) ;
11. Reaffirming therefore its view, expressed in its [Recommendation 957 \(1983\)](#), that the European space capability will also benefit, though indirectly, those member states of the Council of Europe which are not members of the European Space Agency ;
12. Seeking the strongest and broadest possible political support for the Executive of the European Space Agency in negotiations on participation in the United States' international space station project, in which Canada and Japan also participate ;
13. Approving the fact that the activities of the European Space Agency are by the terms of its Convention "for exclusively peaceful purposes", scientific data arising therefrom being in principle freely publishable ;
14. Noting however that it is more and more difficult to distinguish between the civil, the national security and the military potentials of technological development programmes for, inter alia, satellite communications and Earth observation ;
15. Concerned about the risk that scarce technological resources are being duplicated in satellite communications and Earth observation programmes which are separately conceived and funded by national civil and military authorities ;
16. Bearing in mind the objectives of political dialogue within the Council of Europe, as set forth in Resolution (84) 21 of the Committee of Ministers, and recalling its own [Recommendation 1063 \(1987\)](#) in which the Assembly was desirous that "... questions concerning or arising from developments in scientific and technological relations between member states of the Council of Europe should be the subject of exchanges of views within the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, preceded possibly by informal exchanges with the participation of experts from the member states most directly concerned",
17. Declares its support for the concept of an autonomous manned space capability for Europe ;
18. Endorses the decisions taken by the Ministers of the European Space Agency at their meeting in The Hague, 9 and 10 November 1987 ;
19. Instructs its Committee on Science and Technology to prepare a hearing on the benefits of a European space policy, in order to review the potential for peaceful international co-operation and the implications for international economic competitiveness of long-term investments in space technology ;
20. Instructs its President to transmit this resolution to the Council and Executive of the European Space Agency as an indication of political support on the broadest possible geographical basis for the Long-Term European Space Plan.