Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 663 (1972)[1]

European space policy

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Regretting yet again that, after more than a decade of European space activities, Europe still does not possess a coherent European space programme, although several institutions and organisations play an important part in specific scientific and technical sectors ;

2. Noting that the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO) has successfully constructed a number of scientific satellites and that these have all been launched by US launchers from US launching sites ;

3. Noting that only preliminary research has been undertaken on application satellites ;

4. Welcoming the progress made in recent months towards the preparation and execution of an overall satellite programme with a satisfactory balance between scientific and application satellites ;

5. Bearing in mind the difficulties and crises which ESRO and the European Space Vehicle Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO) have experienced because of lack of long-term planning and adequate budgetary appropriations on the part of governments, and welcoming particularly the sustained efforts made by the two organisations' councils and secretariats in the face of these difficulties ;

6. Noting with regret the failure in November 1971 of the Europa II launching, believing that this was due to the factors mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and urging that this should not put a brake on the ELDO programme, having regard to the fact that while Europe has made only a dozen trials the US undertakes some thirty trials before orbiting an experimental satellite ;

7. Considering that this unfortunate incident must not deter ELDO's work, and convinced that the European countries should increase their financial contributions and their moral and technological support for that organisation, it being understood that the Europa III programme must be carefully and urgently examined ;

8. Welcoming the progress made during the last six months towards joint aeronautical satellite cooperation between Europe and the USA, and hoping that this co-operation will be extended to European participation in the post-Apollo programme, including the availability of US launchers for European regional application satellites ;

9. Regretting the vague and unsatisfactory reply of the Committee of Ministers to Recommendation 617 (1971), from which it is not apparent whether the Committee of Ministers has taken any action on the proposals of the Assembly ;

10. Trusting that the Committee of Ministers will prove right when expressing the view that the Intelsat Agreement of May 1971 "did guarantee Europe the right to operate regional application satellite systems in telephony, telegraphy and data transmission" ;

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1. Assembly debate on 25 January 1972 (23rd Sitting) (see Doc. 3064, report of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 January 1972 (23rd Sitting).

11. Expressing the hope that British entry into the European Communities will ensure a reconsideration of its financial and technological contribution to European space projects,

12. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. invite member governments :

1. to participate to the largest possible extent in the scientific and application satellite programmes elaborated by ESRO, and in particular in the joint aeronautical satellite programme with the USA ;

2. to spare no effort in Intelsat to arrive at an interpretation of the contested clauses which is to Europe's advantage with respect to the operation of regional application satellite systems ;

b. invite member governments of the European Space Conference :

1. to define as a matter of priority the technical, financial and political implications of a possible European participation in the post-Apollo programme, with a view to replying before 1 March 1972 to the letter of the American Government of 1 September 1971 ;

2. to convene, in case negotiations with the USA are not satisfactorily concluded with respect to the availability of US launchers, a new session of the European Space Conference with the object of deciding on the best method of meeting the launching requirements for European application satellites, and of laying down a time schedule for the launching of European regional satellites in telephony, telegraphy, television and data transmission.