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Author: Ms. Natassa Antoniou
Secure World Foundation, The Netherlands

Ms. Agnieszka Lukaszczyk
Secure World Foundation, Belgium

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE GOVERNANCE - DOES IT WORK?

Abstract

Europe has to face challenges of the 21st century such as peace and security issues, climate change, health care, crime, terrorism and fragile ecosystems. Under such pressure, specific actions are needed and space is one of the tools to address these sensitive issues. Europe has been participating in space activities for over 30 years. Since that time, many institutions have been given a mandate to deal with space activities such as the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Commission (EC) and the national space agencies among others.

More specifically, since 1975, ESA has been concentrating its activities on research and development of space systems and in their applications. With the arrival of the new millennium and more specifically during the second meeting of the Space Council in 2005, the European Union together with ESA acknowledged the need for a comprehensive European Space Policy to address all the aforementioned challenges. Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty of December 2009 has reinforced the case of space in Europe by putting it on the political agenda at the highest level. The Article 189 of the Treaty states that the EU has a shared/parallel space competence with its Member States. Additionally to that several Member States engage in space activities through their national space agencies.

Such complex system creates confusion, as governance of space activities in Europe is not clear. This paper will analyze the various European space stakeholders and their mandates to provide better overview of how space is governed in Europe and if the current status quo should be modified.