

26th SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)  
National Space Policies and Programmes, and Regional Cooperation (1)

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FIRST POLISH ACTIVITIES AS A FULL MEMBER OF ESA

**Abstract**

On the 19th of November 2012, shortly before the Ministerial Council, Poland joined the European Space Agency (ESA) as its 20th member. This was the end of a long accession process, which had its beginning twenty years earlier. This was also a start of a new era for the Polish high technologies industry within ESA.

The initial Polish contribution to ESA will be around 30-35 MEUR. This is an "intermediate" size of funding level, allowing for several types of activities at the same time, hardware projects as well. Several optional ESA programmes were already chosen, among them these related to Mars exploration, Earth Observation, Space Situational Awareness and the evolution of satellite navigation technologies.

During the first five years in ESA, until December 2017, Poland will undergo a "transition period", during which some funds will be devoted to strengthen the industry and finding possible "niches" within the Agency. At the end of this period, the Polish space sector should possess several products, components and other assets, which should be competitive on the European and global markets. In fact, the first dedicated Polish-ESA industry incentive call is scheduled to announce selected projects in summer of 2013. After this call, similar ones should follow.

As the first year of presence in ESA is coming to a close, several questions are emerging. What was the interest in ESA and Polish-ESA dedicated calls? Have some "niches" been already identified? Were there already any "success stories"? Were there any topics, which were left outside the scope of activities within ESA? What might be the future development of the Polish space sector and its contribution to ESA? Have any strong bonds with the foreign industry started? Finally, has the Polish space policy been defined and implemented?

This work aims to provide the most up-to-date state of development of the Polish space sector and its near to mid-term future prospects. This work is a continuation of last year's presentation at the IAC 2012 in Naples.