

SPACE ACTIVITY AND SOCIETY (E5)
Space Expectations: How the Public Views Space Activities (2)

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"ILA SPACE PAVILION" - BRINGING SPACE TO POLITICIANS, MEDIA, GENERAL PUBLIC AND CHILDREN

Abstract

The biannual ILA Berlin Airshow (Internationale Luft- und Raumfahrttausstellung) is one of the major air and space shows worldwide. As of 1992, just two years after German re-unification, ILA has been in Germany's capital Berlin and included already the "Raumfahrthalle" or "Space Pavilion". This space pavilion is a joint initiative by the European Space Agency ESA, the national German Aerospace Centre DLR and some 15 space companies, being members of the German Aerospace Industries Association BDLI. Astrium, Europe's number 1 space company is one important actor in BDLI and has been supporting the space pavilion from the beginning.

As all over the world, space activities are tasks of the state and financed to the major part by public funds. Hence, space activities depend on political decisions. Politics meaning members of parliament and their staff, civil servants in the ministries, the staff of governmental space agencies, and political decision makers on the European level, be it ESA or the European Union. In this context public opinion is essential also. Public opinion is to be understood in three directions: political decision makers, the publicised opinion, i.e. the media (TV, radio, print, internet), and the general public. The objective of communications and public relations activities among the space players is to position space activities positively towards these main target groups. ILA Berlin Airshow with its space pavilion offers a unique opportunity to implement space related communication public relations activities. Doing this together as a joint public and industrial initiative bears great potential.

The paper presents the scenario of the space pavilion. The objectives are shown, the target groups are identified, the process of identifying the core messages is presented and the managerial implementation is shown. Examples are presented, in order to show how the given situation influenced the focus and design of the space pavilion. The paper looks at the implementation and elaborates on the lessons learnt. Also, the benefit of such activity for a major space company as Astrium is evaluated. An assessment indicates the potential of this scenario for other regions and situations.