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New Developments in National Space Policies and Programmes (1)

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ESTONIAN SPACE POLICY IN GLOBAL SPACE COMMUNITY: NEW SPACE NATION IS  
EMERGING

**Abstract**

Estonia has long-standing experience in astronomy and space science. History of space science dates back to 19th century (first measurement of stellar parallax (Vega), and the best refractor telescope of this time built in Estonia in 1824). Estonia has over thirty years of experience in the Soviet Union space programs. Estonia participated in preparations for two ESA space missions: Planck and Gaia.

Estonia has had one of the fastest developing economies in Europe. Today, Estonian government is actively looking for new opportunities to bring the economic and public service development to the new level of innovation. Therefore implementation of unique space policy is on agenda. This paper describes the newly born policy and related governance issues.

Adoption of the European Space Policy by both ESA and the EU attracts new members of the EU to approach ESA. Agreement between the Republic of Estonia and the European Space Agency (ESA) concerning space cooperation for peaceful purposes was signed 2007. The purpose of the Agreement was to establish a legal framework for cooperation. The signing of the Agreement was the first step for Estonia on the road to fully integrate into ESA membership and contribute to realization of the European space policy. As a second step, Estonia intends to become a European Cooperating State already in 2010. The negotiations between Estonia and ESA have already started. Additionally Estonia has established multitude relations with different organisations and programmes like GMES, Eumetsat, Galileo and GEOSS.

This paper describes the vision and the strategy for the space efforts in Estonia. Along with a detailed analysis of the present capabilities of the Estonian industry, also scientific institutions related to the space technologies and applications are presented. An overview of the possible measures to be taken to support the enterprises and scientific institutions with the highest potential in the space cooperation will be presented. Estonia has to focus on a set of selected fields of interests, which will also be discussed in this paper.

Drafting more specific strategy about downstream service development for Estonia is currently in progress. Estonia proposes new opportunities for European space communities to establish specific cooperation platforms. The strategy aims to burst innovation in private and public sector. Estonia emphasizes the importance of Baltic cooperation in the development of future space services e.g. boarder surveillance under the Schengen treaty.