

22nd SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)
Space policies and programmes of international organizations with particular regard to the participation of
developing countries (2)

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HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT AND EXPLORATION: WHERE DOES EUROPE STAND?

Abstract

During 2008 Europe confirmed its technical and industrial capabilities in the field of human spaceflight and exploration through the successful deployment of the European laboratory Columbus as part of the ISS and the ATV "Jules Verne" flawless mission. The ESA Ministerial Council in November 2008 paved the way to further developments in the role Europe could play in future global space exploration endeavour. In parallel space exploration has been added among the priorities of the European Space Policy (ESP) and the European Parliament voted a resolution that included human exploration (and even a mission to Mars) as part of the vision to be developed in Europe. From the role in the development of the Global Exploration Strategy (GES) through the involvement of the European Commission, Europe is seeking a suitable role as part of a bold, long-term space exploration endeavour. The paper will present the point of view of a player in the debate and the opportunity that could be seized by Europe if it would make of human spaceflight and exploration a strategic element of its space policy alike other space-faring Nations. The paper will discuss the step made in the course of 2009 and the next ones and will try and describe the European landscape made of national, international and supranational players.