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CONTEMPORARY SPACE EXPLORATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE: A PUBLIC
POLICY COMPARISON

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Abstract

The global political and economic developments during the last several decades have significantly affected space policy and decision-making processes throughout the West. The post-Cold War context has offered new opportunities as well as challenges that must be met in designing and implementing space related activities that include common defense and security, global climate change and environmental protection, telecommunications, and development of new technologies that benefit societies and space communities in Europe and the United States. Because the European Union and the United States have slightly different approaches toward the administration of space related programs (which can partly be explained by the historical and traditional aspects that have affected space exploration in different ways), the paper aims to provide an overview of political and historical aspects as well as present day analyses of the public-policy processes between European countries and the United States. The paper will provide a comparative analysis of the relevant space exploration programs within NASA and ESA. The topics addressed include decision-making mechanisms, budget appropriation processes and administration, and industrial cooperation in space between the United States and European nations.