

HUMAN SPACE ENDEAVOURS SYMPOSIUM (B3)
Overview Session (Present and Near-Term Human Space Flight Programs) (1)

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BUILDING THE FUTURE ON PRESENT ACHIEVEMENTS: THE ROLE OF EUROPE IN SPACE
HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT AND EXPLORATION IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS

Abstract

2011 marks a turning point to human spaceflight and exploration activities worldwide and in particular for Europe.

The successful launch of ATV-2 to a nearly completed ISS where it will be received by a crew including an ESA astronaut reminds us that the pioneering era of building the ISS is over. Its utilisation is now our goal for the benefit of life on earth and our societies.

Europe has demonstrated its industrial and organisation ability to fulfil its role in the ISS partnership and it built on a considerable expertise and experience. A very active scientific and research community have made possible a very comprehensive programme of utilisation of the research facilities onboard the ISS. Vision and leadership animated those who, in representation of Europe, contributed to the establishment of a Global Exploration Strategy and its International Space Exploration Coordination Group (ISECG).

On the basis of this acquired knowledge and know-how, and in a dynamic institutional framework, Europe will define over the next couple of years the level of its involvement in future human spaceflight and exploration undertaking.

Quoting JFK, "I believe that we possess all the resources and the talents necessary to be marshalled for such (...) role": the scope, now, is to prove that we shall afford a new way of acting in space field and go beyond these achievements.

The paper will present Europe's most recent achievements in the field of human spaceflight and exploration and will discuss the alternatives, and their underlying rationale, being considered in Europe to maintain its role in future human space endeavours.