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HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT AND EXPLORATION: AN EUROPEAN PROSPECTIVE AT THE TIME OF
THE LISBON TREATY

Abstract

The International Space Station is a reality, a tangible asset that will tower over human spaceflight and exploration over the next decade.

Policy context are evolving very rapidly in all ISS partners that, with few key exceptions, also represents the biggest space fairing Nations world-wide.

Europe is in a peculiar position: it demonstrated its technical skills and programmatic abilities by fulfilling all its objectives within the ISS participation programme. To accomplish this it created a large and competitive industrial base.

It may be argued that Europe's fragmentation between National and European level adds complexity at decision-making level. The system, managed through the European Space Agency as an optional programme has proven to be successful until now.

With ISS assembly nearly completed utilisation of the ISS is the new focus. At the same time other Nations (US above all) are pressing ahead with plans for further human planetary exploration endeavour.

In this context a new player has been legitimated to be involved in space exploration: the European Union through the European Commission by the entry in force of the Lisbon Treaty and notably its Art. 189.

The paper will present the status of European involvement in the ISS programme and its established plans to prepare for participation in future human exploration endeavours. The paper will also discuss how the different decision-making and funding level (national and European, both intergovernmental and supranational) interact among each other in the field of human spaceflight and exploration and how this may play out in defining Europe's future role in ISS utilisation and its human exploration undertakings.