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A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION, NATIONAL SPACE POLICIES
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Abstract

Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE) have been facing different environments and models of cooperation over the last fifty years of space endeavour. They have had a strong heritage of national space activities though their past cooperation mainly with Russia. Their involvement in international cooperation during the first three decades of human space activities was a crucial element for building their national space capabilities. Over the past few decades due to the maturity of the space sector there has been an additional focus to the use of space as a multiplier for competitiveness and growth mainly though Europe's industrial competitiveness. Thus, this needs to be reflected in the evolution of these countries as space actors. Their current and future involvement in European space endeavours, entails first of all their successful integration to the European Space Agency (ESA) and participation to ESAs and EU space programmes. Some of these countries have already become full members of ESA and others have already signed or are expected to sign a cooperation agreement with ESA. Additionally, many of them have entered in various bi-lateral cooperation agreements with other space actors in global scale. There are numerous studies that have been conducted over the years providing information on past activities in space of Central and Eastern Europe. However, the current evolution of their involvement in space, mainly though ESA, is rapid with very little comprehensive overview and analysis. The proposed paper provides the necessary overview of past and present regional cooperation, national policies and programmes related to space activities in Central and Eastern Europe. The particular countries of focus are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Estonia and Slovenia. The study shows that the past activities of these countries have shaped their skills and present aspirations for their European cooperation and highlight the need to better understand them in the integration process of Europe's activities in space. The analysis is divided in two parts. The first part provides an overview of past activities of these countries mainly though the Interkosmos programme and national activities (inter-national, regional, bilateral). The second part of the article provides a current 'snapshot' of each one of these countries related to their regional cooperation, national space policies and programmes mainly though the ESA. It identifies the relevant policy issues for these countries and provides conclusions according to political, economic, social, technological and legal factors.