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INITIATIVES FROM SPACE MUSEUMS AND SCIENCE CENTERS HELPING TACKLE CURRENT CHALLENGES OF THE SPACE SECTOR.

Abstract

One of the challenges the space sector is facing currently in Europe is the decline in the interest of students for science and its related careers, including space ones. Another one is the underrepresentation of women in the space sector. For instance women represent 21

To face these challenges, we believe that is important to increase space literacy among general public, and to increase public support for space while attracting more female and male students towards space related careers. In order to achieve this, various initiatives are taken, by different stakeholders. This paper will focus on specific actors within the space field: Space Museums and Science Centers. If Space Museums have been for decades now curating heritage artifacts from the space exploration age, and therefore preserving them for the future generations, these, together with Science Centers, which have traditionally had a more “hands-on” approach, are the special places, where science, industry, citizens and students can meet and interact. Their role goes beyond a simple support of the formal educational system since they are players which can address not only students but also adults, and not only to teach but also to engage and interact. After a short presentation of some examples of Space Museums and Science Centers in the world this paper will focus on some case studies of innovative and often collaborative projects these institutions are achieving and how they are effective means to tackle the previously described challenges.