

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Culture – Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

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SPACE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION: THE KEY ROLE OF STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS.

Abstract

The two main problems of the current aerospace market are the shortage of effective public engagement and a lack of a proper informal education system for the development of a well-rounded workforce. EUROAVIA, the “*European Association of Aerospace Students*”, attempts to find reliable solutions to these issues. Founded in 1959, EUROAVIA aims to build a network of European university students involved in aerospace and connect them directly with the space and aerospace industry. Currently, it comprises more than 2000 members from 40 universities across 16 countries in Europe.

This paper explores the processes and the outcomes behind solutions which involve activities organised and supported by EUROAVIA.

We believe that an effective outreach strategy to engage the general public is of major importance.

In this context, local EUROAVIA chapters organise a series of annual events, such as conferences, symposia, and workshops. The association also promotes and organises initiatives like “*SpaceUp Unconferences*”, “*ESA Space Talks*” and “*Space Rendez-Vous*” in collaboration with the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC).

Besides public engagement, the space and aerospace industrial realities have highlighted a notable skills gap with graduating students entering the industry, particularly with hard technical and soft managerial skills.

In the pursuit to narrow this gap, EUROAVIA has developed an ambitious program of partnership and collaboration with aerospace companies and institutions to provide students with the necessary skills and tools to be valuable employees within the industry. EUROAVIA is assuming a growing role in ensuring healthy stakeholder relations to strengthen the aerospace economy and empower youth. A clear example is the *Sloshing Rocket Workshop*, a student competition organised by EUROAVIA and supported by Airbus. Fifty teams were tasked to design a pressurized water rocket and to evaluate the destabilization of the water stored inside. Personnel from Airbus and ArianeGroup collaborated and provided expertise to the students with the aim of introducing and educating them regarding the sloshing phenomenon.

This is a concrete example of how the industry was able to provide students with specific technical skills, hands-on experience and developing the future workforce. Due to budgetary restraints, companies in the space and aerospace industry have disengaged from outreach and collaboration with non-profit student organisations. This is slowly changing with EUROAVIA proactively engaging with industry to narrow the gap of required skills and foster more public outreach.