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AN SME STORY IN ITS QUEST FOR SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THE REDEFINITION OF THE
EUROPEAN SPACE INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE

Abstract

If working for Space is rewarding, grateful and does easily attract talents, each economic actor should be viable and robust to attract private capital. European companies already active or willing to enter in the attractive and booming space sector compete to find their way to sustainability and viability. As first demonstrated in the US, the privatisation of the Space sector should be driven by a clear new European space policy setting the conditions and enablers for attracting the private investors, otherwise, the ROI is too long to reach and the risks too high for them. These conditions and enablers can take different forms, one being the award of long-term important contract to sme having not yet fully demonstrated their capabilities to do the job. These sme may be backed-up while sounding by big players and public agencies. This reshuffling of the cards between active newcomers and well-established big players is not as easy as it may sound at first. Such redefinition / redistribution of the roles and responsibilities and leads amongst the European industrial players whatever their sizes and experience is not exempt of clashes and tension. Competition is fierce and not very fair. This comes from history: Major players are trying to keep sme under control either by working with them as Prime for institutional programs as they used to do for years, this with all the influence this kind of collaboration can generate, and/or by asking them to develop proprietary technologies fitting to their own business plans only, still with public money. Taking minor stakes, to those under economical pressure, in particular post covid is another way to keep their position up and take advantage of national support program. This asymmetrical power relationship between the actors makes sme development on the stake endangering the supply chain and the capability for Europe to develop disruptive technologies. To remain at the forefront and develop a strong european force of Space innovation and a robust and viable supply chain, settling the right conditions and enablers for all space players, in particular SME developing disruptive products and services is a must. Almatech SA is pleased to describe its own sme experience on its quest for sustainability and alliance in this post covid period. The path will be long, still there is a path.