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A EUROPEAN HUMAN SPACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM – DRIVERS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

A renewed political support is growing for the development of a European human space transportation system. This momentum has been steadily building in the past three years, during which several initiatives having been undertaken to evaluate the opportunity that such a program could provide for Europe's wider interests. In response to this growing interest, different expert groups have highlighted the potential of a European human space transportation program and underlined the urgency by which Europe ought to pursue this goal. Most recently, the November 2023 Seville ESA Space Summit laid the foundation for the development of a European LEO cargo spacecraft, with the perspective of a future evolution into a crewed capsule.

Overall, these developments point to a mounting political and institutional interest in autonomous human spaceflight capabilities, which could already take shape into concrete actions in the coming years. It is therefore important to recognise and understand the potential of these initiatives and discern how achieving autonomous human transport could impact Europe as a whole. Through a document analysis of relevant reports, policies, position papers and articles on the subject, the paper will mark the strategic, economic, industrial and social importance of the project for Europe as a global space power.

Keywords: Human Spaceflight; Crew Transportation Systems; Europe; Governmental Programs;