

IAF SPACE EXPLORATION SYMPOSIUM (A3)
Space Exploration Overview (1)

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ITALY'S LEADERSHIP IN NEW SPACE: LUNAR AND BEYOND EXPLORATION THROUGH
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES, AND COMMERCIAL
OPPORTUNITIES

Abstract

The new era of space exploration is defined by shaping the future of the LEO economy and post-ISS initiatives, as well as the resumption of lunar and Martian exploration. Particularly, the renewed emphasis on the Moon entails more than just revisiting our satellite; it involves leveraging international cooperation to establish a sustainable human presence on the Moon and to lay the groundwork for future missions to Mars. Lunar exploration has spurred numerous initiatives across various levels, with the NASA-led Artemis Accords standing out as the most extensive and diverse coalition of countries engaged in lunar multilateral cooperation to date. Today, both Human and Robotic Exploration programs increasingly embrace a global perspective, necessitating broad international partnerships that serve as the cornerstone for shaping a new space governance framework inclusive of emerging spacefaring nations. In this context, Italy, with its rich history of contributions to space exploration, emerges as a leader in the new frontier. It was among the first countries to sign the Artemis Accords, supporting the development of the Lunar Gateway and exploring potential habitat modules and resource utilization, in addition to advancing technological applications such as PNT. Italy balances its approach as the third-largest contributor to ESA and as a partner to the US. Through the proposed New Space Dialogue, the United States and Italy could reinforce their commitment to enhancing space cooperation and fostering industrial collaboration. This paper aims to provide an overview of Italy's strategic approaches to space exploration, both through ESA and NASA, and to explore the diplomatic and commercial opportunities that may arise.