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BETWEEN TRANSATLANTIC AND EUROPEAN COOPERATION: THE CASE OF ITALY AND
THE DECISION TO TAKE PART IN SPACELAB

Abstract

In the late 50s-early 60s, Italy was at the same time one of the main players in organizing Europe's cooperation in ST (e.g. CERN) and space in particular (ELDO and ESRO) but also managed to become the third country in the world to place a nationally developed satellite in orbit thanks to the bilateral cooperation with USA. The paper will present the political and diplomatic context of this two-fold attitude. Subsequently it will analyse the Italian position with respect to Post-Apollo Programme (PAP)US initiative. This led at the decision by the Europeans to embark in the development of the SPacelab as an element of the American Space Transportation System. The paper will present the evolution of the Italian role within the Spacelab program and its impact on the Italian industry in the field of space infrastructure as well as in further bilateral cooperations with the US, while continuing to participate, in European humanspaceflight programmes.