

**9th Annual Space Conference**  
**Opening speech by Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska**

Dear President (Dear Antonio)

Dear Federica

Dear Minister

Dear Jerzy, Jan, Mr Galle

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you today and to open this conference on European Space Policy.

Since starting as Commissioner, I have taken a strong interest in space policy.

This is the third time I participate to this conference since I took office. And it is always a good moment to look back at what we did last year in space, and explain what my intentions are for the next years.

The first time I came to this conference, I clearly said that Space was a priority for this Commission. I believe we have demonstrated this year a clear ambition. Space matters, and it will matter even more in the years to come.

The presence today of Antonio and Federica shows our joint determination to make space a priority. And I thank them for being here with us today, and for their respective support to the space policy of Europe.

## ***Success of 2016***

2016 will remain a key year for Space in Europe

It has been a successful year. We delivered on all of our objectives.

**First, major operational objectives** have been achieved. **Galileo and Copernicus are being developed on time and on budget.**

- Like in 2015, we launched 6 Galileo satellites in 2016. And for the first time, we used with great success the Ariane 5 launcher for four of them. I announced this last year at this conference, and we did it. I was in Kourou for this historical launch. This was a great moment for Europe, showing our determination, our expertise and know-how.
- We also launched 2 Copernicus Satellites.
- Overall since I took office, we launched 12 Galileo Satellites and 3 Copernicus sentinels.
  
- Besides the launches, we renewed a series of important procurements. We have secured the industrial basis and partnership for the next years to continue developing Galileo. The procurement on satellites will be closed soon.

I would like here to thank all the industries who participated in these bids. The quality of their proposals shows the expertise we have in Europe. This is the sign of a strong and competitive industrial base, which I am determined to nurture and protect.

**Second**, both Copernicus and now Galileo are operational.

Most Copernicus services are now operational and they provide already important data, especially when it comes to direct the rescue teams in natural disasters like in the recent earthquakes in Italy for instance

On Galileo, I said last year at this conference that my objective was to launch the initial services in 2016. And we did it! Galileo went live on the 15 December.

This is a major milestone which would have not been possible without the vision, the drive and passion of so many people that worked on Galileo (one of them being of course President Tajani as my predecessor)

With the initial services, we sent a strong message to our international partners:

**Europe is there.** We joined the closed club of providers of navigation services.

Of course, a lot needs to be done before we reach the full operational capability by 2020, but the quality of the services will continue to increase over the next years.

Let me say a few words about one specific issue in this perspective

Every large-scale projects, in particular technology intensive ones, face high risks. Galileo is no exception. And part of our objectives when building such constellation, is to manage these risks.

We have recently experienced problems with a limited number of clocks on board of some of our satellites. But I want to be here very clear:

- Such failure can happen, as we learned also from the experience of other navigation satellites systems. This is why we have 4 clocks on board of each satellite, to cope precisely with clock failures. To work, a satellite needs only one clock.
- All the satellites in orbit to deliver Initial Services are operational, given the existing quadruple redundancy. So there is no impact on the quality of the service.

But we are monitoring closely the situation. As always on technical issues, ESA is leading an in-depth technical investigation on the clock failures, and is already implementing corrective actions together with the industry.

I also decided to set-up a **steering group chaired by the Commission**, with the industry, and ESA to look into the situation and make clear policy and industrial recommendations so to avoid the repetition of such situation in the future.

## ***2016 : Space Strategy***

Ladies and Gentlemen

**The main achievement this year is of course, the adoption of the Space Strategy for Europe.**

With the Space Strategy, we set the vision and the ambition: to remain a space power and to embrace the challenges ahead.

Our objectives are clear

- First, we want to **maximise the benefit of space** for the society and the economy, by creating a **European market for space base applications and services**. For this we need to shift our focus from building the infrastructure to creating the right environment for the space data economy.

We have already started. We want to ease the access to Copernicus data so that more start-ups can access to them, more applications can be created. To that end, we just launched a call for tender for the development of **new data platforms**, which will be industry led. This is an innovative approach, trying also to attract big data companies into the space sector. I am personally committed into the success of these platforms. It could be a game changer in positioning Europe into the data economy worldwide.

- Second, we want to foster a competitive and innovative European space sector, **a new space approach for Europe**.

Public financing will remain central, but we need to foster greater involvement and risk-sharing by the private sector. It requires a real mind-set change. This is happening in other parts of the world, it should be possible also in Europe.

We want to embrace disruptive technological evolutions and promote the emergence of dynamic European eco-systems of space start-ups.

EUR 350M from the Horizon 2020 Programme will be invested over two years in R&D projects that contribute to developing Europe's excellence and expertise.

- **Third, Space is a strategic assets and a central element of Europe's strategic autonomy.**

We are breaking a major taboo at European level. Yes, space technologies and European space Programmes can have and should have a clearer link with our security and defence objectives.

At a moment where it is more necessary than ever to strengthen our collective security and defence at European level, space technologies are key to ensure a high level of resilience and our autonomy to act.

This is why I am particularly glad that Federica is here today. Our cooperation shows how much we take this objective seriously.

We are working together on strengthening European Defence Cooperation. We also presented last year the European Defence Action Plan which announced the set-up of a **European Defence Fund**. The objective is to support the cooperation in defence capabilities so that Europe develops the means to ensure its own security. And Space technologies and capabilities are at the centre of these discussions.

In that perspective, and very concretely, we will:

- Strengthen the Security dimension in Galileo and Copernicus
  - Develop the recent Space Situation and Tracking system into an EU space Situational awareness system to track space debris and protect critical infrastructures
  - Launch in 2017 a Governmental Satellites Communication (GovSatCom) initiative to ensure secured satellites communication.
- But all this ambitious strategy will not be possible without **autonomous access to space**. The priority here is to have the next generation of European launchers (Ariane 6 and Vega C) ready as soon as possible. We are ready to support them by aggregating the launch services of EU programmes and to act as a smart customer. At the same time, it is important we anticipate the next technological shifts so to stay ahead of the innovation curve.

### ***Priorities for 2017***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All these achievements are a game changer and a turning point for the European Union in space.

2016 set the path, 2017, will be the delivery year.

My priorities for 2017 are clear

Firstly, I am committed to implement the actions we announced in the Space Strategy for Europe. We will consult you and draw a clear plan.

I am personally committed to this exercise, especially on several elements:

- The market uptake. Several actions and initiatives will be put forward in order to foster space based applications.
- The focus on Space start-ups
- The synergies with the security and defence dimension.
- The proposal for a GovSatCom initiative
- The work on a smart strategy for launchers
- And an improved governance between all the actors: Commission, ESA, Member States, Parliament and of course the industry

Secondly, we need to continue building and maintaining our space infrastructure. To that end, more Galileo and Copernicus satellites will be launched in 2017. In particular on Galileo, our decision will be driven by one objective now: ensure full operation in 2020.

Thirdly, and maybe the most important, we need to prepare for the future.

**Our vision and ambitions will only materialise if we manage to secure the appropriate resources.** 2017 is a year of preparation to demonstrate the added value and the necessity to invest in space.

The Commission will present after the summer break the **mid-term evaluations of the Galileo and Copernicus programmes** which will pave the way for the financing, governance and evolution of our space programmes in the next multi-annual financial framework.



It is important that these evolutions are market driven as indicated in the Space Strategy. And for this we will consult you.

And of course, we will open clear discussion with the Council and the European Parliament, on the necessary legislative decisions and related appropriate resources.

You can count on my determination to make these a success. But I will need your support

## ***Conclusion***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The objectives of the European Commission in 2017 are to deliver a Europe that protects, empowers and defends.

Space is definitely a key enabler of these objectives.

My wishes for this New Year are inspired by the lessons learned from our EU space programmes.

They are alive and on track thanks to:

- A clear ambition and vision
- A tenacity and continued commitment of all actors involved
- faith in the added value of Europe and in the European ideal
- cooperation and cohesion by all actors involved

And I am determined to follow that direction.

I believe last year we showed the unity and commitment of the European space community.

It is thanks to all actors of the European space community that we could successfully adopt and implement so many proposals and projects last year.

Space is a one of these concrete and positive examples of what we can do together in Europe. No single European country can do it on its own.

I am therefore convinced that together we can make the cooperation in space our collective European success!

Thank you