

Dear Vice-President,

Commissioner,

Minister,

ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to greet you on behalf of the European Parliament. The Parliament continues its patronage over what has become a key event in the European space calendar.

For me as the chair of the Parliament's ITRE Committee, the main question for this conference is "How to help the EU space industry compete globally?" Of course, it is up to the industry to strive for competitiveness, and our role as public sector is limited. What we, as policymakers, have to do, though, is to provide the right and coherent framework in which companies can flourish. The Space Strategy prepared by the Commission is exactly such a framework, and I would like to praise it.

Allow me to make several remarks on key issues. First of all, I would like to point out that we need to strengthen downstream markets for space services. This will also support the upstream manufacturing market. Secondly, we must encourage entrepreneurship - by supporting start-ups and leveraging European funds. Thirdly, we must support innovation by bringing space and non-space businesses together in hubs and clusters. We also need to improve access to space data. And, we need a European approach to space and security. We must not confuse it with "militarisation of space".

In all these 5 points, the Commission has made ambitious promises. But let us remember: it is easier to support innovation and ambitious projects with a large budget. For example, the US National Geo-spatial Intelligence Agency wants to spend tens of millions of dollars to see how to use data from big small-sat constellations. One recent contract that they signed is worth more than the entire annual budget of the EU Satellite Centre!

I would therefore call for three types of action:

First, we need all players – the EU, European Space Agency, and the Member States - to work together to support innovation and industrial competitiveness. We are stronger together!

Secondly, we need to be ambitious with our space budget – as I said last year. Investing in space is good for the European economy; it is also good for European autonomy – and this is even more important in current difficult geopolitical circumstances!

And last but not least, we need to reach out to Europeans. Explain, inspire and educate. Only efforts taken at the European level give a chance to improve understanding of space among the young generations - future employees of innovative industries.

We have to make European space programmes a success. It is one of the few areas that can help us foster confidence in Europe and a sense of European identity.

Thank you very much for your attention!

*Jerzy Buzek MEP*

*Chair, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy*

*European Parliament*