



**Joint Understanding
of the Franco-German “Space Task Force”
on a joint Franco-German vision on reinforcing Europe’s role in space
at the occasion of the upcoming ESA Council at Ministerial level 2019**

France and Germany,

CONSIDERING the success of Europe in space for more than 50 years, enabling it to make maximum use of space systems and technologies on Earth and for Earth, participating in international exploration efforts as well as securing its independent access to space;

RECOGNIZING that this success is built on European undisputed scientific excellence and competitive industry present in all key areas of the space sector, along with the roles and responsibilities of the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Union (EU) and their Member States plus national Agencies;

CONSIDERING that Europe needs to continue to rely on an innovative space industry for its scientific, operational and governmental use of space;

CONSCIOUS that there are opportunities and challenges for Europe in view of the changing industrial and global NewSpace environment as well as a large capacity of space to help Europe reinforcing its global position;

MINDFUL OF the ongoing preparation of the ESA Ministerial Council Space19+ to take place in November 2019 in Seville and of the ongoing preparation of the EU Space Programme in the scope of the next multiyear financial framework (MFF), as well as of the need to continue fostering a competitive European space industry and making increased use of space applications to address global challenges such as climate change and the accomplishment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;

RECALLING the fruitful and close cooperation and interaction at all levels between Germany and France in space affairs, both in regard to bilateral collaboration, such as on MERLIN, as well as at the European and international level;

FURTHER RECALLING the French-German Ministerial Councils, especially the Meseberg process and the collaboration initiated under the Treaty of Aachen as well as the Franco-German governmental space task force (meetings held on 17th July and 20th September 2019);



EXPRESSING their desire to reinforce Europe's role in space and, to that effect, strengthen the close cooperation between Germany and France bilaterally and at the European and international level;

HAVE REACHED the following joint understanding:

- (1) France and Germany are highly satisfied with the work performed in the implementation of the Meseberg and Aachen processes.

The four working groups established at the level of the space agencies DLR Space Administration and CNES relative to (1) space technologies, (2) stimulation of new ecosystems, (3) governance of space activities, and (4) competitiveness of space activities (launchers) held constructive meetings that matured meaningful results. France and Germany particularly appreciate the Conclusion between the DLR Space Administration and CNES regarding the implementation of priority projects on space of the Aachen Treaty, which documents in particular a common understanding on European space governance.

- (2) France and Germany have fruitfully discussed in the space task force a broad range of current and upcoming issues relevant for the future of Europe in space. They draw the following conclusions:

- a. Launchers

France and Germany consider the successful development and deployment of the Ariane 6 as a priority for guaranteeing Europe's independent access to space. The focus is therefore on the completion of the development work and the start of production. In this regard, both countries agree to work towards a preferential use of Ariane 6 European launch services by institutional users as an important contribution to consolidating the exploitation of Ariane 6. They also agree to promote a joint initiative at European level for a corresponding European-wide preferential use policy.

In order to improve cost-efficiency and international competitiveness, a further consolidation of the European industrial structure of the European launcher sector is needed, which is taking into account the interests of both countries. Industry is therefore invited to take measures for an increased global efficiency to be presented in a joint workshop.

France and Germany notice that further discussion is needed on future launcher development activities beyond Ariane 6, taking into account that Ariane 6 is well-positioned for guaranteeing Europe's independent access to space in forecasting future launcher service needs.

- b. Exploration



France and Germany consider that Space19+ will be important for consolidating ESA's role in international exploration efforts. This involves the continuation of Europe's contribution to the ISS according to the current subscription levels as well as engaging in additional exploration activities.

France and Germany agree to devise possible joint exploration activities for visibly expressing their close cooperation in space. In particular they envisage to set up a common robotic mission to the Moon, launched by Ariane 6 and involving also elements of artificial intelligence. Such a mission under Franco-German initiative would demonstrate Europe's autonomy and leadership also in space exploration. France and Germany mutually support the flight of Thomas PESQUET currently scheduled for the end of 2020 as ISS mission commander and an overlapping flight of Matthias MAURER.

As regards ESA's European Exploration Envelope Programme (E3P), which combines the various exploration activities, Germany and France agree that the programme should be set up in a way that the Mars activities (Cornerstone 4) are financially autonomous and can be supervised separately by the Member States.

c. International regulatory matters

France and Germany agree to intensify their exchange on international regulatory matters with a view to reaching common positions bilaterally and at European level. This relates in particular to space traffic management and long term sustainability rules as a condition for the safe and sustainable use of outer space as well as to space resources exploitation, for which further international regulation is needed.

d. EU and ESA matters

France and Germany agree that the implementation of the EU space programme must continue to build on a strong ESA-EU partnership under the current ESA-EU Framework Agreement as the basis for the future Financial Framework Partnership Agreement.

France and Germany also point out the successful role of ESA, in particular to the positive experience drawn from the current Copernicus programme when it comes to the governance of EU funds entrusted to ESA.

The future EU space programme needs to continue to rely on the technical and managerial expertise of ESA in upstream space technology development and also allow for a specific adaptation of ESA rules and procedures.

France and Germany support the ongoing evolution of ESA towards more efficiency and the development of a strong relationship with the EU.



France and Germany agree to support the appropriate implementation of the new EU structure devoted to space, taking into account the civil character of the EU space programmes.

France and Germany will coordinate their respective upcoming Presidencies of the EU Council in view of space matters.

e. Innovation and downstream markets uptake

France and Germany consider that SMEs and start-ups are important drivers for innovation also for the entire space sector. There is currently the perception of a lack of appropriate contractual tools and in particular initial financing in early phases of the business development in order to allow for the development of corresponding markets. Further discussion is needed on how to devise measures for stimulating joint initiatives, for example by coordinating a Franco-German cross-funding of innovative projects amongst commercial entities, research establishments or universities, subject to appropriate legal provisions. An additional possibility could be to combine space contests by opening them to SMEs and start-up from both countries. France and Germany agree to carry out a workshop on open data issues.

- (3) France and Germany agree to implement the above mentioned actions resulting from the space task force conclusions. The working groups will serve as the prime format for this purpose. In addition, appropriate contacts shall be maintained on governmental level.

Signed in Toulouse on 16 October 2019 in English.

For the Federal Government of the Federal
Republic of Germany

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