



FOREWORD

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Space technologies and space-based services influence European citizens' daily life. Even if invisible to them, agriculture, transport, health, banking systems or energy grids, for example, rely on satellites to function. Moreover, space infrastructures enable our societies to address major challenges of the 21st century such as climate change, the scarcity of resources or the security of our citizens. It is therefore not surprising that space has become a priority for the European Union.

Space is a core element of the European industrial policy and it should be seen as the driving force of the European industrial renaissance. It generates knowledge, new products and new forms of industrial cooperation, contributing, therefore, to innovation, excellence, competitiveness, growth and job creation. Indeed, European Earth observation and satellite navigation systems are important assets for our strategy to reindustrialise the EU. Most importantly, they will open up new business opportunities. This is why the financial framework for the period 2014-2020 allocates more than € 11 billion to EU space-related programmes: the largest budget ever.

This is a pivotal year for two European space programmes: Galileo, the EU satellite navigation programme, and Copernicus, the EU Earth monitoring programme. In April the first Copernicus satellite, Sentinel 1A, was put into orbit after a successful launch. The data that it will provide will enable considerable progress in improving maritime security, climate change monitoring and providing support in emergency and crisis situations, thus multiplying the benefits that European citizens will reap from space programmes.

2014 is going to be a crucial year also for Galileo. New satellites will be launched in the next months, allowing for early services to be available by the end of 2014/beginning of 2015.

However, having the necessary infrastructure at our disposal is not enough. It is fundamental to make the most out of these infrastructures. We need to put European industries, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, in the position to exploit the services that will arise from space technology. To this end, the "European Space Solutions" events that were organised, for example, in Munich and in London have the objective of bringing together representatives from the private and public sector to discuss how space-powered solutions can be harnessed for business and society. They also aim at exploring with users how the EU's navigation and Earth observation programmes can deliver innovative solutions to real-life challenges. This year, the "European Space Solutions" will take place in Prague on the 11th of June. With the same objective but with a different focus, the "European Space Expo", a travelling exhibition with already over 360 000 European visitors, explains to citizens the way in which the EU space programmes help them "on the ground" every day. Expo 2015 will be amongst the next destinations.

Industries and SMEs should be prepared to seize all the opportunities that space offers, in order to develop new services and applications and contributing to the European industrial renaissance. This is a whole new world to discover, where the only limit is that of our imagination: therefore, let's give free rein to imagination and overcome this limit!