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Final Press Release

Space Council Brussels 26 September 2008

Valérie Pécresse, the French Minister for Higher Education and Research met with her European counterparts for space at the Space Council in Brussels, during which a resolution on the European Space Policy was adopted.

This resolution is mainly based on the:

- 2007 resolution, adopted under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Dutch presidency of the European Space Agency Ministerial Council (ESA),
- highly productive discussions proceeding from the informal meeting in Kourou last July.

The Minister welcomed a major breakthrough for European Space, as the European Union is now formally recognised as a global actor in this field alongside the European Space Agency and the Member States.

Accordingly, the European Union will be charged with defining Europe's political ambitions in the field of space, placing space firmly in the service of European citizens, the economy and the independence of Europe, and also in the service of creating a strong sense of European identity.

The Council believes that adapted Community instruments and a financial blueprint for European space policy should be created, particularly within the framework of the next financial perspectives. The financial blueprint must take two specific features into account: the industrial sector, of which the competitiveness must be supported, and the need to find long-term financing for space infrastructures, particularly in the field of observation. This principle will enable the European Union to guarantee long-term financing for the GMES system.

Several new initiatives were launched at this Space Council:

- Europe must acquire a system for monitoring space debris which presents a hazard for orbiting satellites, in order to ensure the continuity of space services essential to our everyday activities and the European economy in general. The European Union, in conjunction with the European Space Agency and the Member States, will be responsible for the system's implementation and organisation;
- in the field of exploration, Europe should play a significant role within a worldwide project based on the principle of interdependence, without the scheme being appropriated by one State or another. To achieve this, the Commission will organise

an international political conference on Europe's role, which must be based on these fields of excellence;

- in the field of climate change study, the Commission is invited to propose a better organisation of research communities, in order to optimise satellite data use;
- the European Union could lastly make the space industry a "growth sector", that is to say a sector where the Commission pays particular attention to developing an easily accessible common market, to reinforce the competitiveness of the space sector and give fresh impetus to a new space applications industry.

On 25 and 26 November, the ESA Ministerial Council meeting will again bring together the European ministers for Space, where the main issue at stake will be the implementation of the principles discussed at the Space Council, especially that of placing space in the service of citizens, the economy and the environment.

Furthermore, the Competitiveness Council of 2 December should examine and adopt conclusions on the Commission's Communication on GMES, expected by the end of October, on the way in which the system's user needs will be taken into account.

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