



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
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AT THE
UNISPACE+50 HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

VIENNA

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you today on this important event.

First of all, I want to congratulate the organizers for this great event. This conference marks the 50th anniversary of the first UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE), held for the first time in Vienna in 1968, and offers a great opportunity to bring a lot of issues on the international space agenda (Space 2030) and to renew and strengthen the mandate of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).

Space is an extraordinary business. Space technologies, data and services have become indispensable in our daily lives. Space stretches out the innovative skills of scientists and engineers and inspires young people to develop the skills and push forward the frontiers of scientific knowledge.

Space technologies are of strategic importance for economic growth, social prosperity and cohesion, protection of the environment, enhancement of public security and civil defense, and for the promotion of excellency in science, research and innovation.

On the other hand, it's obvious that the excessive use of space increases the number of space debris. In this context, the new technologies of Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) could play an important role in the removal of active space debris and hence ensuring the sustainable use of space.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Cyprus space activities started in the late 1970's and initially were aiming at receiving meteorology satellite data. Also, space activities were used at telecommunications. Later, Cyprus became a member of INTELSAT, INMARSAT and EUTELSAT. In May 2003, the first Greek and Cypriot Telecommunications Satellite, HELLAS-SAT II, was launched. Since then, several telecommunications satellite operators have established their headquarters in Cyprus.

Cyprus wants to be part of the space development and to benefit from the space systems that are today essential for the wellbeing and security of the European citizens. As a result, the Republic of Cyprus is actively supporting the efforts concerning the use of space related technologies and applications. The Government proceeds to the organization and development of the appropriate necessary structures and procedures aiming in an active participation in the European Space Policy.

In this context, the signing of the European Cooperating State (ECS) Agreement with the European Space Agency, in 2016, is expected to result in promoting the innovation and research, attracting foreign investments, creating new jobs and in general further developing of the domestic space industry.

I want to stress that the success and development of the space sector is not an exclusivity of "big" States. Small States can, through a targeted strategy, cope successfully in this area as well.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The earth observation sector in Cyprus is one of our priorities. The opportunities that arise from the related EU and international space programmes should be fully taken to our advantage. It is very important that the expertise gained from the academia and the research to be transferred to the industry for commercial development of related services.

Satellite communications is another important priority. Cyprus has seen major developments in satellite communications infrastructure and space assets. Currently there are established gateway facilities and TT&C (Telemetry, Tracking and Command) stations for major European operators and it has granted ten licenses to organizations to launch telecommunication satellites, using the rights that Cyprus secures through the UN International Telecommunication Union

Concluding, I would like to stress that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus strongly supports the need for the peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Against this background, Cyprus applied for membership to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in order to strengthen its international cooperation and efforts in the field of space activities, its practical collaboration with UNOOSA and the Members States of COPUOS and to promote the achievement of our common goals in space.

Finally, I would like to thank you and wish all of you a productive and fruitful meeting.

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works

20th June, 2018