

*Statement by the European Space Agency at the 62nd STSC session
Agenda item 3. 'General Exchange of Views'
5 February 2025*

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

First, let me start by commending you, Madam Chair, on your excellent work in leading this Subcommittee and assure you our delegation's full support during your chairmanship. Let me also express my appreciation to the Office of Outer Space Affairs for the excellent organisation of this meeting as well as its continuous support and guidance to the work of the Committee.

We join the other delegations in welcoming Latvia and Djibouti as the new state members of the Committee.

The European Space Agency (ESA), as a permanent observer to the Committee, greatly appreciates addressing this Subcommittee to share its efforts and goals in fostering space cooperation among European states and international partners. ESA values international cooperation, optimising space for society, and advancing scientific understanding, technological development, and industrial capabilities. ESA acts as a spacecraft operator and space agency, coordinating efforts for its twenty-three Member States, Associate Members, Cooperating States, and Canada, along with numerous international partners.

Madam Chair,

ESA has witnessed several exciting space-related milestones in the past year. Allow me to highlight some of those:

The first launch of Ariane 6 on 9 July 2024 from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana successfully released several satellites into a circular Earth orbit. With Ariane 6's upper stage restart capability, Europe's launch capability will be tailored to the needs of multiple payload missions. This autonomous capability to reach Earth orbit and deep space supports Europe's navigation, Earth observation, scientific and security programmes. Year 2024 also saw the return to flight of Vega C launcher in December bringing a Sentinel-1 satellite successfully in orbit.

Hera, launched in October 2024, is a planetary defence mission to investigate the Didymos binary asteroid that is being developed at ESA. Hera will provide extremely valuable information for future asteroid deflection missions and science as well as investigating asteroid geophysics, the formation of the Solar System and its evolutionary processes.

In April 2024, ESA celebrated the graduation of candidates from the ESA astronaut class 2022 at the European Astronaut Centre in Cologne, Germany. This event not only marks the successful completion of rigorous training, but also serves as the platform for announcing the carefully curated selections for upcoming space missions.



The EarthCARE mission that was launched in May 2024 is a key initiative by ESA aimed at enhancing our understanding of climate and weather patterns by providing critical data on clouds, aerosols, and radiation.

2025 looks to be an exciting year for ESA.

In the beginning of 2025, Slovenia became the 23rd member state of ESA.

The ESA/JAXA BepiColombo mission flew past Mercury for the sixth time, making its closest approach on 8 January. This flyby will help steer the spacecraft into orbit around the innermost planet late in 2026. Year 2025 will also see the launch of various Sentinel missions. MetOp-SG-A1 and Sentinel-5 are equipped with state-of-the-art technology to deliver crucial data for weather forecasting and air-quality monitoring, respectively.

This year will mark the European Space Agency's 50th anniversary and promises to be a landmark year for the European aerospace industry. Also, ESA's international ground station network enables missions by communicating with spacecraft – transmitting commands and receiving scientific data and spacecraft status information celebrates its 50 years. Since its debut, Estrack has grown and developed. In addition to milestone events in our programmes, September will also mark 30 years of satellite navigation for Europe. In the second part of this year, ESA Council at Ministerial level will be held. In this occasion, key decisions will be taken that will shape the future of Europe's space ambitions.

Distinguished delegates, let me conclude by emphasising ESA's commitment to remain an active, dutiful member of the international space community, exploring and using outer space, working towards capacity and partnership building, strengthening the rule of law in outer space and, finally, making a meaningful contribution as a permanent observer to the important work of this Committee.

Madam Chair, delegates, thank you very much for your kind attention.