

“Space Agencies in support of Space2030”

I am delighted to be here for the 50th anniversary of UNOOSA and to be representing the European Global Navigation Satellite System Agency, GSA. The GSA is an EU regulatory agency with its seat in Prague, Czech Republic, and operational centres throughout Europe including in France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain. It is responsible in particular for ensuring the service provision of Galileo, and EGNOS, the European satellite based augmentation system.

Firstly, although it is correct to consider that the GSA is a ‘space agency’, the GSA is really a ‘space services agency’. This means that the GSA is focused on what space infrastructures can do for citizens on the ground, hence our motto of ‘linking space to user needs’. This is one of the big trends that should feature explicitly in the Space2030 agenda: the continuing shift in focus from the development and deployment of space infrastructure, to the services which such infrastructures provide. This is in particular the case for sustainable development.

Secondly, and linked with this, there will be a continuing growth in services based on inputs from multiple space infrastructures, and non-space infrastructures. The days of entirely separate Earth Observation applications and GNSS applications are gone for example. Indeed the recent combined UNOOSA-GSA study, focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrated just this. I think the GSA, focused on space services, should play a key role for the European Union in fostering such cross fertilisation.

Thirdly, and finally, I think there is an important role for the UN in facilitating the shift in focus from space infrastructure to services, and in taking the benefits from multiple space services, as one action to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We should consider how the UN’s coordination activities on space services can be strengthened. For example the UN International Committee on GNSS already has a working group which includes as part of its activities GNSS services. This could be broadened to include also other space services, and a focus on their application in particular for sustainable development.

And who knows? Why not eventually for the UN a much fuller role than ‘just’ coordination, for example a UN space services agency?