

ESSC-ESF Address to the ESA Council at Ministerial level

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Luxembourg, 2 December 2014

Dear Chairs, Dear Ministers, Monsieur le Directeur Général, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to express the views of the European Space Sciences Committee of the European Science Foundation and we associate our warm congratulations to ESA for its recent extraordinary scientific and technological successes. Now to the point from the scientific community perspective.

- **As concerns the European Union and ESA relationships.** There are several options on the table on how to proceed, but a better integration at the European level of publicly-funded programmes is mandatory to achieve increased cost-effectiveness and optimal scientific return. Space efforts need long-term continuity and this can only be achieved through an improved integration of the support provided by the stakeholders. The ESSC favours the resolution for a step-wise evolution of ESA that would enhance the coordination on space projects within Europe.
- **On the International Space Station.** Major funding cuts in the European Life and Physical Sciences Programme (ELIPS) have endangered the timely realisation and exploitation of several European experiments and Europe's leading role world-wide in the fields of Life and Physical Sciences. The ESSC thus strongly recommends that the full additional subscriptions necessary for the ELIPS Programme Period 4 be approved at this meeting. This would guarantee Europe's return on investment until 2020 - and beyond, should Europe decide to continue its commitment after that date.

- **On the question of launchers.** The ESSC supports a flexible approach to the development and upgrading of a family of European Ariane launchers; an approach that is compatible with both the competitiveness of the European industry on the world telecommunications satellite market, as well as with the independent capacity to launch government-supported science payloads.
- **As concerns Europe's Exploration programme.** The ESSC supports Europe's participation to the Luna-Resurs and Lunar Sample Return missions with Russia, as an integral part of ESA's broader exploration strategy. ESSC continues to recognise the importance of the ExoMars missions and in particular urges ESA member states to ensure that funding is sufficient for the launch of the ExoMars rover in 2018. The ESSC also emphasizes the great scientific value of other mission concepts such as the network mission to Mars and the Phobos sample return mission and recommend that they proceed into the next phase.
- Finally, the ESSC underlines the importance of the **Copernicus** Space Component to Europe's economic competitiveness and the technological advances that give its space industry a leading position in many areas. The ESSC therefore strongly recommends that participants maintain or increase their commitments to GSC-2 to ensure the successful delivery of the programme and also that ESA Member States consider entering or maintaining their involvement in the GSC-3 programme phase.

On behalf of the European Space Sciences Committee, thank you very much, merci for your attention.