


EARSC

European Association
of Remote Sensing
Companies

Brussels, 25th July 2020

Mr Pierre Delsaux,
Deputy Director General - DG DEFIS
European Commission,
Rue de la Loi 130,
1049 Bruxelles
Belgium

Dear Mr Delsaux,

I write concerning a document circulating which calls for the setting up of a strategic research agenda for space. As the organisation representing the Earth Observation downstream services industry in Europe, we are surprised that EARSC has not been consulted over the proposals.

The fruits of investment in upstream, space, manufacturing industry lie in how the satellite services are used. Any investment is predicated on a return coming from the use of the space infrastructure which may be for private business or for public benefits. The downstream industry serves both and is key to decisions surrounding upstream investments.

The document “A Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for EU-funded Space research supporting competitiveness” sets out to establish a new space partnership; but as stated in the document, it only accounts for the upstream industry. Given the importance to the EU of the new proposed space programme, the EU flagships Copernicus and Galileo and the relevance of key EU initiatives such as the Green Deal (for which the environmental monitoring capability of Copernicus is especially important), the digital agenda and responses to the Covid-driven crisis, we should like to propose that consideration is also given to the application and exploitation of the space infrastructure.

As the umbrella organisation representing the EO services industry, we shall be happy to organise the views of the sector – making no pre-judgement as to what the outcome may be.

EARSC represents its members - 130 EO service companies right across Europe – as well as promoting the sector. Our most recent survey (just published) of the EO Services industry in

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Europe in 2019, shows around 600 companies employing nearly 10,000 highly-skilled persons. Revenues are around €1.35b and the sector is maintaining its impressive growth of 10% per annum.

The vast majority (over 95% of the companies) are SME's. These are key to shaping the industrial landscape, as described in our recent position paper setting out industry views on the next generation of Copernicus services and how to use the public investment to drive growth in Europe.

Whilst a space partnership may be an appropriate instrument, it can only be effective if all stakeholders are engaged. We shall be happy to make ourselves available for discussions with yourself or your services to help find the best approach and affirm our strong support for the EU Space programme and for Copernicus in particular.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chetan Pradhan".

Chetan Pradhan

Chairman of the EARSC Board of Directors.