



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Thierry Breton
Member of the Commission

Brussels, 12/03/2021

Dear CEOs,

Thank you for your letter of the 24 February 2021.

By this reply, I would like to convey to you and the different Start-ups, that I share your analysis and the need to change mindset on how we “do” space in Europe.

As I had the opportunity to say several times, my ambition is to position Europe as THE hub of space entrepreneurship in the world. We have in Europe the talent, the creativity, the drive of many entrepreneurs, the research and innovation capacity. The signatories of the letter are a fraction of this potential. We however need to get organised differently, develop a coherent European approach, rather than a scattered and inefficient one. This is about adapting to the new realities of the “New Space”, including the public authorities, at European level, but also at national level.

Today, we are duplicating efforts by not being coordinated, we are wasting resources by not being organised. We are missing disruptive technologies by not working together.

In my view, the space sector is going through a fast and profound industrialisation process in all the segments. Doing space has become cheaper. This is good news, but it also calls grasping the challenge and develop a European approach to New Space, one that is not a mere copy paste of the US.

In this perspective, I would like to attract your attention to the new Art 6 of the Space Programme which the Commission promoted and was agreed by the co-legislator, and which will allow the EU to launch an ambitious support plan to space innovation in Europe.

As part of this strategy on which I am working, let me mention some elements that could be useful:

- First, I will launch in the coming month a new Space entrepreneurship Initiative called Cassini, a €1bn European Space Fund (Fund of Fund) to boost Space Start-ups and Scale ups by enabling space companies to negotiate investment rounds with European venture capital funds. Cassini will cover actions on the whole innovation cycle, from business ideas to industrialisation, facilitating access to all risk finance instruments for the space ecosystem and in particular for NewSpace actors.

To broaden networks to active investors, we will organise matchmaking events for companies that are investment-ready. We will also launch Cassini Prizes with upstream and downstream challenges where companies compete for inducement prizes each, designed to boost the development and placing on the market of technologies meeting clear needs, such as for example environmentally friendly propulsion.


As you see, Cassini will both support SMEs and start-ups in procurement schemes to fill the needs of institutional clients (EU and ESA member States) and enable them also to reach out to several paying customers in the private markets for the technologies, products and services mentioned in your letter - since it is likely that both launch services and the deployment of assets in space will increasingly involve private ventures.

- Second, in putting forward with ESA a large-scale European in-orbit demonstration and validation programme to accelerate commercialisation of space technologies, by providing – upon competition – access to space and in orbit testing possibilities to the most promising technologies. I believe this would be a strong accelerator for innovation in Europe and a clear attractiveness argument for Europe.
- Third, I will promote the use of disruptive innovation and actors to ensure a cost-efficient and reliable access to space. This is one of the objectives of the future Alliance on launchers to be prepared together with the European Space Agency, federating Member States and industry in an inclusive and open manner. The future Alliance will accelerate development and maturation of new technologies for EU launchers and foster new transportation services and concepts (such as green propulsion, kick stage or micro launchers), as well as disruptive concepts and technologies (e.g. fully reusable rockets, 3D printing, single stage to orbit, green propellants).
- Fourth, the European R&D programme - Horizon Europe – will support the competitiveness of the space ecosystem through innovation procurement schemes - pre-commercial procurement and public procurement for innovation. The Commission is also looking into the option of acting as anchor customer for the first contract, upon competitive bidding for large and small projects.

Besides these dedicated action, the Commission will rely on the potential of our entrepreneurs when it comes to the modernisation of our two European flagship, Galileo and Copernicus. It also counts very much on the innovative capacity of European start-ups to support the development of the European space based connectivity project that I am advocating and promoting. My services are organising a dedicated workshop with Space Start-up on this question. My objective is clear: this project will not be a “business as usual” space project. I want to engage a broader set of actors in building the connectivity infrastructure Europe needs to provide resilient and secured broadband access to all Europeans and beyond.

In line with the very proactive policy I intend to develop on the support to space start-ups in Europe, I would be keen to organise a dedicated exchange with representatives of the start-up who have co-signed the letter (and beyond).

Yours sincerely,



Thierry Breton

Recipients:

Lorenzo Feruglio, PhD, Founder and CEO AIKO S.R.L

Dr. Joachim Lang, CEO, BDI - Federation of German Industries

Dr. Max Gulde, CEO, ConstellR GmbH

Dr Thomas Sinn, CEO and Founder, DcubeD Deployables Cubed GmbH

Matthias Spott, Founder and CEO, eightyLEO Holding GmbH

Raycho Raychev, CEO and Founder, EnduroSat AD

Dmitriy Bogdanov, CEO Exolaunch GmbH

David Henri, Co-founder and CEO Exotrail SA

Raphael Roettgen, Managing Director, E2MC AG

Kai Zimmermann, CEO GEPARD-Aerospace GmbH

Ernst K. Pfeiffer, Chairman, German SME (AKRK)

Dr. Mario Kobald CEO, HyImpulse Technologies GmbH

Daniel Metzler, CEO, Isar Aerospace Technologies GmbH

Mark Rigolle, CEO, KLEO Connect GmbH

Sven Przywarra, Co-CEO and Co-CEO, Live EO

Daniel Bock, CEO and Co-Founder - Morpheus Space GmbH

Bulent Altan, CEO, Mynaric

Kristina Nikolaus, Managing Director, OKAPI: Orbits GmbH

Thomas Grübler, CEO and Co-founder Orbital Oracle Technologies GmbH

Andre Radloff, CEO Planetary Transportation Systems GmbH

Massimiliano Vitale, Managing Director Planet Labs Germany GmbH

Prof. Dr. Norbert Menke, CEO S4 - Smart Small Satellite Systems GmbH

Christian Williges, Founder The Golden Records UG

Mark Kugel, Managing Director and CCO yuri GmbH

Prof. Dr. Klaus Schilling, President Zentrum für Telematik GmbH

Stefan Wissuwa, CEO and Co-founder 2BCOM Space GmbH