



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 17.9.2021
C(2021) 6828 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Resolution on the Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries {COM(2021) 70 final} and welcomes the expressed support.

The Action Plan proved a timely initiative. Soon after its adoption, the European Council underlined the importance of fostering synergies between civil, defence and space industries. The Council Conclusions of May 2021 on Security and Defence then welcomed the Action Plan and asked for its swift and full implementation. A study commissioned by the Security and Defence subcommittee of the European Parliament concluded that ‘it is too soon to tell whether this action plan will be a game changer, but its very existence and the direction to which it is heading are extremely positive elements’. The European Economic and Social Committee found the Action Plan ‘fundamental for fostering the integration of new digital and other emerging technologies in the defence, security and space ecosystem’.

The Commission would now like to provide some more specific information for the points of concern raised by the Senát.

Regarding the Observatory on Critical Technologies, it has been conceived as part of Action 4 of the Action Plan on Synergies between civil, defence and space industries. This is also recognised under the Industrial Strategy Update of 5 May 2021 (COM(2021) 350), that foresees a “periodic review of strategic dependencies and monitoring of risks associated with strategic dependencies” as one of its key actions. For technology-related risks in the field of space, defence, and associated civil domains, this will be implemented through the Observatory. While being unique in its kind in the EU, this action will not duplicate any pre-existing activity, and will not result in a new EU structure or entity. Therefore, it should not be considered as an additional and superfluous instrument but rather as an action gathering all relevant information from existing actors. Every second year, a classified report will identify and monitor strategic dependencies in terms of products, services, technologies, and actors. This report will be instrumental for identifying targeted measures to reinforce EU technological sovereignty.

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The Observatory will be implemented as a project within Commission services, using its own resources. European stakeholders in space and defence, in particular the European Space Agency and the European Defence Agency, as well as the industry will also be closely associated. The Commission invites the Czech Republic along with all EU Member States, to contribute to the work of the Observatory of Critical technologies.

Regarding the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 07/2021 on the EU space programmes, the Commission welcomes the overall conclusions of that Galileo and Copernicus provide valuable services, which the Commission has been promoting in various ways. The Report encourages the Commission to make more efforts in the future to fully harness the Space Programme's potential.

It is important to underline that the reporting period of this audit started in 2014. Since then, the key effort of the Commission was to put in place the necessary space and ground infrastructure, which is indispensable for providing Galileo and Copernicus services and hence for their market uptake. During that deployment period the Commission took various measures to promote the market and user uptake of the two systems. Today, both Galileo and Copernicus are operational and providing services to users, which are setting global standards in satellite navigation and Earth Observation.

The recently adopted Regulation (EU) 2021/696 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Union Space Programme and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme provides for the first time a common framework for all space data and services. It puts great emphasis on the downstream sector, the market uptake and the exploitation of space data. This will allow for streamlining the market and user uptake activities of all space data and services.

In its Special Report 07/2021¹ the European Court of Auditors proposed four recommendations, which the Commission accepted. These recommendations help us to promote more effectively the uptake of EU space services in the next seven years, and to monitor better the achievement of the programmes' objectives.

The Commission hopes that these elements address the issues raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Margrethe Vestager
Executive Vice-President*

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

¹ [Special Report 07/2021: EU space programmes Galileo and Copernicus: services launched, but the uptake needs a further boost \(europa.eu\)](#)