



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 15.1.2019
C(2019) 160 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space programme and repealing Regulations (EU) No 912/2010, (EU) No 1285/2013, No 377/2014 and Decision 541/2014/EU {COM(2018) 447 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Senat's broad support for this proposal and has taken due note of the views expressed in the Opinion.

With regard to the point 2.b), which suggests increasing the funding level for Governmental Satellite Communications and Space Situational Awareness, given their complexity and the prospect of an increase in the number of Member States participating in this program, the Commission concurs that an increased budget would indeed enable the European Union, as far as Governmental Satellite Communications is concerned, to satisfy the user needs expressed so far more globally and to deliver the service with a broader geographical coverage and better quality. As for the Space Situational Awareness Programme, Space Surveillance and Tracking and Space Weather need to be differentiated. For Space Surveillance and Tracking, a higher budget will be beneficial and give the opportunity for an increased autonomy of the European Space Surveillance and Tracking capabilities. The European Union will be able to work more efficiently in complementarity with the United States and on a more equal partner basis in the future. For Space Weather, an increased budget will allow to have more space weather services developed.

Nevertheless, both Governmental Satellite Communications and Space Situational Awareness rely to a very large extent on both Member States and commercial space assets and ground infrastructure, and do not require any massive new infrastructure developments through the European Union budget.

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The Commission has proposed a single Space Programme with various components and indicative amounts for their implementation. Together with the proposed flexibility to re-allocate these indicative amounts as necessary, this would enable the Commission to manage the programme more efficiently, to react with the necessary flexibility to the further evolution of its individual components, to address cross-cutting issues effectively, and to tackle any unforeseen events.

However, the key issues – the overall budget allocation of the Space programme, the possible ring-fencing of amounts for individual components, and the degree of flexibility to re-allocate budgets – are now up for discussion and decision by the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing the dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Member of the Commission*