



Into orbit

Space policy is of benefit to the entire EU and touches the lives of every citizen, writes **Aldo Patriciello**

The space sector refers to all activities essential to the growth and development of our society. Often, when we talk about space, we think about something that is a long way away from us and our lives. However, space policy is in fact very close to us, as it refers to all the applications that can help citizens. If we think about satellites, they are crucial for studying climate change, for preventing earthquakes, for GPS systems. Furthermore, the European space policy requires the use of advanced technologies and this is translated into an invest-

ment in competition and innovation, as well as in highly qualified jobs.

With the development of the space policy, we will be able to pursue the targets of the European 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The legislative journey, which began with the presentation of the commission's guidelines, will end in December with the discussion and vote in plenary session. One of the next important dates is the European space policy conference on 8 and 9 November at the European parliament in Brussels.

I am very proud to be taking part in the next conference on Europe's space policy. I am sure that this event will provide a useful forum for debate and practical discussion to delve further into a subject that is incredibly relevant and increasingly interesting for our continent. The relevance of the subject, and the vital need for a new strategy for space has been highlighted several times, both by the public and the private sectors, as well as by the general public of course.

Indeed, we are all convinced that in time, space technology will not only give us a greater understanding of our planet, of its nature and of space in general, but it will also encourage scientific research and our consequent industrial competitive-





“There is no competition without research”

Aldo Patriciello is parliament's rapporteur on a space strategy for the European Union that benefits its citizens

ness with other continents. If we look back to the past and the first discussions on this issue, I am delighted that my final message will be based on a fundamental instrument of the European Union today, namely the Lisbon treaty.

In fact, the treaty recognises the importance of space in a social, economic and strategic atmosphere, considering it to be essential if the union wants to be able to compete on a global stage with its own competitors. To achieve this significant goal my report highlighted the importance of dedicating the appropriate financial and legislative resources to space, so that the European space policy is both credible and effective.

It is essential that the existing programmes, in other words Galileo and global monitoring for environment and security (GMES), have an equally important role in making sure that they guarantee technological independence with political independence for our continent, also offering advantages in economic and social to citizens. For this, we must not only safeguard the launch stage of these programmes, but also their continuation over time.

With this in mind, taking into consideration the economic efforts in place for Galileo, which is deemed to be crucial for

the credibility of the European space policy, in the same way as the GMES programme has been given the same weight and so has been incorporated in the European economic arrangements as established by the EU 2020 strategy. Only in this way can we continue to develop a programme that works, avoiding wasting the financial resources already sustained by Europe to create it.

Throughout all the preliminary work carried out to create a consensus and a future for the European space sector, I have let myself be guided by my own convictions. There is no competition without research, and space is without a doubt the one area where innovation and research are the main driving forces for the development of a sector which, in Europe, generates billions of euros every year, guaranteeing jobs and vital economic activity connected to this area. So it is a real opportunity that we should not miss out on. The European space policy is based on three fundamental pillars: fighting climate change, guaranteeing the safety of infrastructures in space and research; the development and closer investigation into the latter will guarantee positive results in other sectors, such as medicine, transport and telecommunication. ★