

*Key Takeaways of the Scenario-based Workshop*

# TOWARDS A SAFE & SUSTAINABLE SPACE: Bridging Policy and Programmatic Ambitions

On 16<sup>th</sup> July, the **European Space Policy Institute**, in collaboration with **Rasmussen Global**, organised a **scenario-based workshop in Brussels**, convening **representatives from the EU institutions**, including the European Commission, European Parliament, European External Action Service, and the European Defence Agency—alongside the European Space Agency, Member States, and key industry partners.

In an era of unprecedented activity, opportunity, and innovation in space, sustainable use and sharing of orbital resources are rising issues. Still, as operators are planning to launch unprecedented numbers of satellites over the coming years, this gives rise to concerns on equitable access, and the use of the orbital environment in the future. Without the introduction of adequate measures and frameworks, the multiplication of large systems poses a concern to the future of sustainable space activities, the assertion of sovereignty, and market entry for new players. Failure to actively manage these developments might undermine the foundations of our connectivity-based societies.

The **workshop aimed at exploring how to best align policy and programmatic ambitions with competitiveness considerations**, stimulating a creative yet grounded debate on how to manage the overcrowding and overexploitation of the orbital environment.

## THE SCENARIO



*Participants have been challenged with a scenario where only five large constellations for connectivity can be deployed in LEO: three are already deployed by space powers, while two others are in the pipeline and expected to launch within a three-year timeframe by emerging spacefaring nations. None of these deployed or planned constellations is European.*

After the presentation of the scenario, participants split into two breakout groups to explore its practical implications. The groups then presented their reflections and engaged in a moderated discussion on possible approaches, including concrete steps and measures in response to the scenario.

**The workshop produced forward-looking recommendations** focused on a consolidation of global governance frameworks, a more deliberate and coordinated European approach to space diplomacy, and a renewed effort to capitalise on Europe's strengths across the entire space value chain.

## Key Takeaways

### TOWARDS A SAFE & SUSTAINABLE SPACE:

Bridging Policy and Programmatic Ambitions



#### WHY EUROPE NEEDS A SAY IN THE FUTURE OF SPACE CONNECTIVITY?

#### STRATEGIC PROTECTION OF EUROPEAN ASSETS

Europe must ensure it is not sidelined in a scenario where orbital and spectrum access is dominated by a few early movers. This is not just about sovereignty but about protecting long-term European economic, security, and environmental interests.

#### LONG-TERM REFLECTION AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Today's allies may not be tomorrow's. Collaboration shouldn't be one-size-fits-all. Europe may work with space powers for some applications where it can benefit from their space capabilities, as well as with middle power, when it can better shape long-term cooperation beyond space. The key is to remain flexible and pragmatic in building coalitions.



#### NEGOTIATING FROM STRENGTH: WHAT DOES EUROPE BRING TO THE TABLE?

#### INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP:

Europe stands out through a combination of technological excellence, regulatory leadership, and a strong commitment to sustainability. It leads the world in environmental monitoring and navigation.

Europe's secure ground infrastructures are trusted globally. The continent is also spearheading debris mitigation efforts globally, while scientific contributions remain at the forefront of possibility and imagination, with landmark missions, showcasing deep expertise.

#### Market Power and Regulatory Leverage

Europe's large, integrated single market is a strategic asset. Through instruments like the upcoming EU Space Act, Europe can shape global behaviour, not through exclusion, but by setting high standards for access. These include transparency, debris mitigation compliance, and real-time STM data-sharing. Europe has the capacity to define global norms via sustainability standards, spectrum allocation, and STM. Its regulatory reach enables it to guide responsible orbital behaviour and ensure long-term space sustainability.



*ESPI and Rasmussen Global thank all participants for their valuable contributions and welcome continued dialogue on enhancing Europe's space posture.*

**Key Takeaways**

**TOWARDS A SAFE & SUSTAINABLE SPACE:**  
Bridging Policy and Programmatic Ambitions

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THE DISCUSSION**

**1 COHERENT GOVERNANCE AND ASSET PROTECTION**

Strengthen coordination between ESA, the European Commission, and Member States to ensure more integrated space governance. Safeguard European space assets as a strategic priority, essential to resilience and long-term autonomy, recognising space as a strategic domain.

**2 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND DEPENDENCY MANAGEMENT**

Tailor partnerships to specific domains (commercial, security, scientific) and associated benefits. Avoid over-dependence on any single partner; instead, pursue diversified, pragmatic partnerships that reflect evolving needs. Recognise that different partnerships serve distinct objectives, military, commercial, civil, and adapt accordingly.

**3 BUILD ON STRENGTHS, INVEST IN FUTURE CAPABILITIES**

Reinforce existing industrial strengths along the value chain while developing strategic capabilities such as SSA systems, object removal technologies, and alternative orbital infrastructure. Enhance SST to mitigate congestion and preserve orbital capacity.

**4 ASSERTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL FORA**

Develop a unified European position within the ITU and other global platforms (e.g., WRC) to protect spectrum and orbital interests. Establish a permanent coordination body (ESA, EU, Member States) to represent and defend European positions in third-country constellation approval processes and spectrum negotiations.

Scale up participation in UN and other diplomatic arenas to shape non-binding but influential frameworks and standards.

**5 LEVERAGE MARKET ACCESS AS A NEGOTIATION TOOL**

Europe's regulatory influence and consumer base can serve as powerful incentives for responsible action, even when Europe is not a direct asset owner. Leverage the EU Space Act and market access conditions to influence global operator behaviour and ensure compliance with European norms.

**6 SECURE POLITICAL & PUBLIC BUY-IN**

Cultivate public understanding of space as a strategic domain to ensure political continuity and long-term investment. Transparent communication about trade-offs (e.g., cost, regulation) is key to sustaining support for Europe's space agenda.

Europe's strength lies not in replicating others, but in developing its own vision, shaping the rules of engagement, offering trusted partnerships, and leveraging its regulatory and market power to lead responsibly. In an increasingly interdependent space environment, Europe must remain indispensable, visible, and values-driven in all partnerships.

