

April 2026

ESPI Vienna Space Diplomat

7th ESPI VSD Newsletter



With the closing of the first quarter of 2026, I am pleased to share the 7th edition of the ESPI VSD newsletter. Over the first months of the year, we have already hosted VSD events, reflecting the growing relevance of space diplomacy in an increasingly complex and competitive international environment. As ESPI enters a new phase following its recognition as a quasi-international organisation, this dimension of our work is gaining even greater importance.

This evolution not only strengthens ESPI's institutional profile, but also reinforces our capacity to serve as a platform for dialogue among diplomats, policymakers, industry representatives, and experts engaging with the strategic, political, and governance dimensions of space. In this context, we see space diplomacy becoming an ever more important pillar of ESPI's activities, and one in which we intend to continue growing in the months and years ahead. The events featured in this edition reflect that ambition and our commitment to fostering meaningful exchanges on Europe's role in the evolving global space landscape.

The Role of Europe in International Space Cooperation

On 4 February, ESPI hosted the event **"The Role of Europe in International Space Cooperation"** in cooperation with the **French Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Vienna**. The evening featured a keynote by **Agnès Romatet-Espagne**, Director for International Affairs, Strategy and Technology at the **SGDSN**, followed by a panel discussion with **Virginie Dominguez (Thales Alenia Space)**, **Juan Carlos Dolado (Look Up Space)**, and **Rodrigo Praino (Flinders University)**.

A central theme of the discussion was the importance of **European strategic autonomy in space** through a broader and more diversified approach to international partnerships. Speakers stressed that, in an increasingly competitive and geopolitically complex environment, Europe's value lies in its ability to act as a stable, reliable, and predictable partner. Strategic autonomy is not opposed to cooperation; rather, it is what enables Europe to be a credible and effective international partner.

The discussion also highlighted that strengthening Europe's capabilities, industrial base, and long-term vision is essential not only for competitiveness and security, but also for defending its values and interests in global space governance. The event offered a timely reflection on how Europe can continue to advance international cooperation while reinforcing its own strategic role in space.



ESPI

European Space
Policy Institute

Newsletter Highlights

The role of Europe in
international space
cooperation

FEB. 4th 2026

Next VSD Evening
Events:

Apr. 15th and Jun. 15th
2026

New VSD Forum

MAY 2026





NEXT VSD ENGAGEMENTS

We are pleased to announce that several further events are planned, continuing the momentum of our VSD activities throughout the year. These upcoming gatherings will provide additional opportunities for exchange on timely space policy and diplomacy issues, and we warmly encourage all VSD members to join us and remain engaged in this growing community.

VSD Evening event: Lunar Policy Options to Promote Alignment

Alongside the **65th session of the UN COPUOS Legal Subcommittee**, ESPI will host the VSD evening event **“Enabling Utilisation, Preserving Science: Lunar Policy Options to Promote Alignment”** on **15 April 2026, from 18:00 to 22:00 CET**, at ESPI in Vienna. The event will provide a timely forum to reflect on the meaning and feasibility of sustainability and remediation in the context of emerging lunar activities, particularly those related to the extraction and utilisation of space resources. In a context where questions of governance, scientific preservation, and responsible use are becoming increasingly urgent, the discussion will explore how policy frameworks can help reconcile competing priorities and promote greater international alignment. The evening will feature a **keynote address by the Luxembourg Space Agency**, followed by a panel discussion and networking dinner, creating space for delegates and experts to exchange views on one of the most important emerging issues on the multilateral space agenda.

VSD Forum

We are delighted to announce the next VSD Forum, planned for **the end of May** with the **exact date to be confirmed** so as to best accommodate diplomats' calendars. This edition will focus on **space-based data centres**, fostering dialogue on their strategic relevance, technological potential, and broader implications for Europe's competitiveness, resilience, and role in the evolving space economy.

VSD Evening event: Delivering Water Diplomacy through Space

During **COPUOS**, ESPI will also organise **“Delivering Water Diplomacy through Space”** on **15 June 2026**, a VSD event co-organised with the **Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE and other International Organisations in Vienna**. The event will focus on the growing role of space-based capabilities in supporting water management, water security, and broader diplomatic efforts around one of the world's most pressing shared challenges. Bringing together diplomatic, institutional, and technical perspectives, the discussion will seek to bridge the space and water communities, contribute to the development of a broader **“Space for Water”** policy agenda, and identify practical avenues for action. In doing so, the event will highlight how space diplomacy can help connect innovation and international cooperation in support of resilience, sustainability, and global public value.

Save-the-date for the next ESPI Autumn Conference

Save the date for the **20th ESPI Autumn Conference**, taking place on **19–20 October 2026** at the **Garden Palace Liechtenstein in Vienna, Austria**. Held under the theme **“Global Europe: Aspirations for a New Era”**, this anniversary edition of ESPI's flagship conference will bring together leading European and international voices to discuss Europe's role as a strong space actor and reliable global partner in a time of profound geopolitical and geoeconomic change

Yours sincerely,

Hermann Ludwig Moeller
DIRECTOR OF ESPI

