

WORKSHOP

What action at European Level for the European Community of actors involved In Education and Space? Current activities, needs and prospects

Paris, France – 7 March 2007

Over 50 experts in space & education from 14 European countries met in Paris on March 7, 2007, to assess "What action at European level for the European Community of actors involved in Education and Space? Current activities, needs, and prospects". They were invited on the initiative of Eurisy, with the support of CNES, to this one-day Workshop during which presentations and discussions were organised. The programme, presentations and list of participants are available on the Eurisy web site or by contacting the Eurisy Secretariat.

Conclusions

The participants agreed to the following:

- Space activities are of vital importance for the survival and development of society. They have the potential to play a major role supporting the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda, with benefits for sustainable development, especially environmental policies, safety of the citizen and disaster management, etc...
- Education is equally important for developing the knowledge-based society, as recognised in the Lisbon Agenda
- In direct relation to the importance of space activities and education, Space Education has a major role to play in two ways:
 - 1 Education to space matters, for which the issue is to prepare the future European Space workforce and thus ensure the strategic capability of the European Space sector. The main stakeholders are the space industry and space institutions. The education target group is composed of scientific higher education students.
 - 2 Education with space applications, for which the issues are (a) to facilitate education on critical issues such as global warming, and (b) to raise awareness in society on the usefulness of space applications. This aspect of Space Education addresses the general public, in particular younger children, as well as current and future decision makers, and is of importance for the whole of society. The main target group is teachers and is using the multi-disciplinary dimension of Space activities.

As a bridge between these two issues, space simply is a thematic able to motivate youngsters to study science and technique.

- Accomplishments in the area of space education are high in many different countries, despite difficulties ranging from lack and fragmentation of resources to heterogeneity of national education systems and languages. Education is managed at national or subnational level. Stakeholders from different countries do not know each other well and act in isolation. Yet there are common needs and objectives.
- The main concern/objective for the Workshop participants is the training of teachers, which must be done at national level. The main need of the community is to identify the relevant resources available (material and methods for teachers, tools to inform and educate the teachers), and to adapt the resources to local specificities.

- The participants recognised that there are a lot of resources in Europe. While Space Education activities could remain at local level, there is a strong need for actors to network to know and share with each other, to identify the relevant resources and avoid duplication. There is a strong need for intersectoral and international coordination on Space Education matters and to clarify the role of the different stakeholders (agencies and industry, countries, EC, etc.)

Recommendations

Following their conclusions, the Workshop participants wish to recommend to European and national actors the following actions.

1. The participants wish to congratulate ESA for its action towards establishing a European, decentralised network with the ESERO project (European Space Education Resource Office) aiming at offering a tailored support to the education community. The participants agreed that establishing first a few local pilot offices is the right approach. However, the participants strongly urge ESA to make ESERO move ahead and recommend an increase in the amount of information provided to local actors about this programme. The workshop participants also recommend to ESA to provide as soon as possible the results of the evaluation of the pilot offices and to pursue engaging its member countries into developing local offices.
2. The participants believe it would be useful to extend this network beyond ESA Member states at EU level, in particular within New Member States, and recommend that the European Commission partner with ESA and contribute to this project.
3. National and European organisations (agencies, government, industry, etc.) must take a look at what is their role to educate society on space, and what resources are needed. The participants recommend that Eurisy initiates a debate on this issue.
4. To facilitate reaching to teachers, the Workshop participants recommend that National and regional Governments should introduce the presentation of Space Education as a teaching tool into teachers' training.
5. To overcome the difficulty in sharing education material, the participants recommend that the EC facilitate mutualisation of tools and practice through support to translation and adaptation to national specificities
6. The Workshop was the occasion to recognise the success of the Eurisy initiated Eduspace website as a very good example of a tool helping teachers to find education material created by and for their peers. The participants also congratulated ESA-Earth Observation for maintaining and developing this website further. However, the participants invite ESA to further integrate Eduspace with other applications based (e.g. positioning, telecom)
7. The participants conclude that there are further needs for the sharing and development of tools, methods and good practices, and for raising the profile of Space Education at European and National level. They recommend that Eurisy organises further workshops, inviting European and national practitioners and policy makers to raise the profile of Space Education and facilitate the sharing of good practices. Similarly, the participants urge ESA (ESERO), EC and national bodies to organise events aimed at teachers in order to diffuse the education tools and methods (such as science on stage).

