Developing the Downstream Sector

We have been claiming for some time that it is essential to develop a formal dialogue between the industry and key decision makers; particularly those in the European Commission but also with ESA and Member States. Up to now, industry views have only been provided through specific meetings, corridor talk and only in an informal fashion.

Finally, the EC is prepared to establish a mechanism to engage with the industry and discussions have started about establishing a "structured dialogue" around space. As an input to the thinking on this we have developed some views on what are the key lines that need to be discussed. These are contained in our latest position paper on "Developing the Downstream EO Services Sector in Europe". The paper can be downloaded here or from our web-site where all EARSC position papers can be found.

We have categorised the

1. Leverage Copernicus and improve the public-private interface

   In order to allow the private sector to play a full role in Copernicus and to develop the 48,000 jobs which are foreseen by 2030, companies need to have a clear role with respect to the public sector bodies. This is a critical issue for us which must be addressed. We are doing our best to move forward and have a meeting organised on 17th June in Brussels when, for the first time, all the Entrusted Entities with delegated authority from the EC to deliver the Copernicus Services will be present to debate how to address this.

   2. Research and Development

   We consider that the European R&D programmes do not take sufficient account of industrial priorities. A large number of good projects do not result in exploitable products because there is a lack of industrial input during the research. This should be addressed through an overall strategy for developing the sector which can lead to focused R&D actions with a strong industrial interest.

   3 Market Structure and Uptake

   One of the biggest barriers facing the European industry compared to others is the lack of a single home market. Because it is fractured and because the majority of customers are public sector this leads to an industry which is fragmented. A more co-ordinated purchasing regime could help to overcome this weakness and help the industry organise itself.

On the question of the industry, we are just completing the latest survey and I'll write about that shortly. We are starting to analyse the results which - as always - are very interesting. I look forward to sharing them in due course.