

Linking National and European views.

Last Friday I was in Rome at the invitation of the Italian Space Agency ASI. Along with colleagues from the other European Associations Eurospace and SME4Space, I participated to a workshop hosted by ASI to exchange views on the next EU MFF (Multi-Annual Financial Framework). Our equivalent Associations in Italy (ASAS, AIPAS and AIAD) were also present.

It is the first time that I have known such a meeting which seeks to build links between the national and European associations; quite possibly because there are not many national associations in our sector. In the aeronautics sector, ASD (of which Eurospace is part) is run by the national associations (together with some of the larger companies) so alignment is much more natural. For EARSC, we generally rely on companies to make the bridge between national and European policy actions.

The discussion centred on two main topics; Copernicus and the space technology JTI being studied and possibly set up by Eurospace. Our interest is of course on the former of these and I basically presented our views from the position paper published earlier this year. These are focused around sustainable access to data, organising and stimulating demand and creating an environment where EO service companies can flourish. All of these lines require some clarification on the roles of the public and private actors and improving the governance so that the industry views can be heard.

In order to achieve sustainable access to data, we address the question of private participation in Copernicus and the possibility of anchor tenancy schemes. This was also the subject of the meeting organised by DG GROW – also held last week. We have recommended different formula should be tried depending on the market for the data type leading to different PPP arrangements. There were some concerns expressed that most PPP schemes shut out the SME's and a recommendation that a number of schemes of various sizes should be considered to try to overcome this problem.

Further, it is easier to understand a PPP where the private sector can invest in infrastructure as is the case for a satellite system. It is less obvious when we move downstream where the asset is more about IPR. So the notion of multiple PPP's and of different sizes could be a way to help structure the industry without stifling the innovation which is apparent. As one speaker said the key question will be who is taking the decisions on the actions developed under the PPP.