



PRESS RELEASE

After Rosetta success, where next for European space policy?

New EASAC report launched in Paris urges a strategic rethink in Europe's options for the continued exploration of the solar system

EASAC, the association of the National Science Academies of EU member states, will present its recommendations on the future of European space exploration to the public during an event at the Swiss Embassy in Paris, on 15 September 2014. In the report “European Space Exploration: Strategic Considerations of Human versus Robotic Exploration”, EASAC outlines the major potential benefits of space science for research, explores the economic, political and social arguments for choosing automated or human missions, and recommends the adoption of an overall strategy to ensure opportunities are not lost. The report will go forward to the European Space Agency’s (ESA) Ministerial Council in December 2014.

“If Europe wants to stay at the international forefront of scientific and technological capability in space, a strategic plan for the cost share between automated and manned missions has to be the main focus of European decision-makers of space exploration policy on all levels,” says Professor Thierry Courvoisier, a space scientist at the University of Geneva, President of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences and EASAC Vice-President. “In the past, decisions have often been made on the basis of competition for prestige and industrial interests, especially in the area where robotic missions and human spaceflight overlap,” he continues.

The EASAC report has been prepared to assist politicians, advisory bodies, and funding authorities, as well as the interested public, to understand the various arguments put forward to justify both future space exploration and Europe’s potential role. It gives an overview of the most important scientific targets for solar system exploration, and suggests some possible joint missions for the future

exploration of the Moon and Mars. EASAC also addresses the various scientific, economic, societal and cultural complexities of European space exploration. “EASAC sees the extension of international collaborations as a key way forward, not only to minimise costs, but also to ensure Europe and its citizens reap the full and potentially widespread benefits,” claims Professor Courvoisier.

The event to launch the report to the public will be held at the Swiss Embassy in Paris on 15 September at 08:30. The event is also supported by the Académie des sciences, which is the French member among EASAC academies. Leading European space scientists will participate in the event to present the report. ESA representatives will give a first response before discussion will be opened to attending journalists and members of the public.

The report is embargoed until 08:00 on 15 September 2014. The full report and an executive summary can then also be downloaded from the EASAC website www.easac.eu.

EASAC is formed by the national science academies of the EU Member States, to collaborate in giving advice to European policy-makers. EASAC provides a means for the collective voice of European science to be heard. Through EASAC, the academies work together to provide independent expert, evidence-based advice about the scientific aspects of European policies to those who make or influence policy within the European institutions.

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