

ESRE POSITION PAPER ON THE EU SPACE MOONSHOT

A Sovereign Capability Maturation Engine for FP10



ESRE supports the creation of a EU Space Moonshot under FP10, focused on next generation of space transportation and logistics, and on advanced space robotics to enable the exploration. The initiative must be built on a balanced involvement of the whole value chain, along with a mandatory and fair participation of Research and Technology Organizations (RTOs), Academia SMEs and Start-ups in all funded consortia, with RTOs structurally leading early high-risk system integration and validation.

The scope shall be precise. The initiative will develop, mature and integrate new technologies. The initiative should fund system-level capability building blocks with clear operational and interoperable application with dual-use potential, consistent with the resilience, sustainability and defence objectives outlined in the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence.

Governance discipline is central. The budget for the Moonshot shall be composed of FP10 for low to medium TRL activities and from the European Citizens' Fund (ECF) for large-scale deployment. This ensures irreversibility, credibility, and protection against research drift, while securing a clear pathway from innovation to operational use.

The initiative will not duplicate and will instead complement other funding programmes, granted by ESA, the European Commission, as well as national programmes. This Moonshot shall prepare technological building blocks within a coherent architecture, enabling their subsequent uptake without fragmentation.

ESRE will act as the neutral integration backbone, anchored in Europe's RTO network, providing qualification environments, pre-competitive system integration and structured consortia orchestration. By defining a clear technological scope and placing RTOs and SMEs at its core, ESRE will support the Union in converting research strength into sovereign operational capability and strengthening European resilience before strategic dependency becomes structural.

ESRE is available to support the Commission in the design and following development of this initiative, setting itself as the natural bridge between low TRL and high TRL activities, enabling credibility and sustainability in support of industrial players and the entire space community.