Cyprus as a Regional Hub in the Field of Earth Observation

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Cyprus is geographically positioned at a strategic location in the Eastern Mediterranean at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa.

What do we need in order Cyprus to be a regional electronic communications hub?

First, we need a vision.
Our vision is for Cyprus to become a Society of Information, based on modern technologies, skills and infrastructure, within the context of the national objective to be established as a regional hub in the area of Easter Mediterranean.
The Department of Electronic Communications is the competent authority in Radiocommunications, Electronic Trust Services, Information Society Strategy and Space Strategy issues.
Satellite communications is an important priority. Cyprus has seen major developments in satellite communications infrastructure and space assets. Currently, there are established gateway facilities and TT&C stations for major European operators and ten licenses have been granted to organizations to launch telecommunication satellites, using the rights that Cyprus secures through the UN International Telecommunication Union.

It is also expected that the geographical location of Cyprus, in the middle of 3 continents (Europe, Asia and Africa), in connection with the strengthening of cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA), will significantly assist Cyprus’ goal to become a regional node (hub) in the field of satellite communications.
Space Strategy

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works is the authority responsible for formulating and implementing the national space strategy and for the active participation of Cyprus in the European Union, and in the European Space Agency space programmes. Currently we are working on the preparation of the National Space Strategy.

In addition, Cyprus has decided to apply for membership with the United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (known as COPUOS). This membership is expected to be approved by the COPUOS committee.
In this context, Cyprus signed the European Cooperating State (ECS) Agreement with ESA in 2016.

The overall objective of this Agreement, with duration of five (5) years, is to associate Cyprus with Agency programmes and activities, and to prepare Cyprus for possible future accession to the ESA Convention.

In particular, we expect to increase our knowledge of ESA, to promote the innovation and research, to educate our young engineers and scientists and to create the critical mass needed for our universities and industry to be more competitive in securing more funds in space applications.
The 1st Call within the ECS/PECS was addressed in September 2016 and the total intended envelope of this 1st Call is 1.3 M euro.

Such a Call will be announced every year for the whole duration of this agreement. More specifically, during this Call, 28 proposals were submitted and from them 7 proposals were selected. During the 2nd Call a similar number of proposals was also submitted.

This clearly shows that despite the small size of Cyprus, there is a great potential and capacity regarding Space Technologies and Applications. In 2019, Cyprus will increase the ESA/PECS Subscription in order to fund more successful proposals.
Cyprus, as a member state of EU, actively participates in the Horizon 2020, Galileo/EGNOS and Copernicus EU programmes that will help Research and Innovation, and other sensitive sectors of our economy.

Also, Cyprus has secured the relevant infrastructure necessary for the Search and Rescue service of Galileo. This infrastructure is a receiving station on the ground responsible for detecting and locating emergency beacons, and forwarding the appropriate information to its associated Mission Controlled Centre.

Cyprus has been elected to be one of the three Hosting Countries of such infrastructure, thus enhancing its strategic role in the area.
Space technologies are of strategic importance for **economic growth, social prosperity and cohesion, protection of the environment, enhancing public security and civil defense, and for the promotion of excellence in science, research and innovation.**
Cyprus needs to exploit its own capabilities. Cyprus has one of the best climate conditions for earth observation. Together with the strategic location, the national infrastructure and expertise, we can develop innovative space technology services and attract investments.

The earth observation sector in Cyprus is one of our priorities. The opportunities that arise from the related EU programmes, especially Copernicus, should be fully taken for our advantage.
Why Earth Observations in Cyprus?

Excellent weather conditions
availability of cloud free images optical (passive) remote sensing

More than 78% are cloud free images
300 days of sunshine per year!

Ideal place
 calibration/validation of satellite observations
Air pollution and Climate Change

Cy-CARE campaign
BACCHUS project
ACTRIS Network

Intense events and complex aerosol mixtures in the Eastern Mediterranean

Cyprus

Anthropogenic pollution
Saharan mineral dust
Middle East dust
Haze and fire smoke
Aerosol's direct and indirect effect
A Centre of Excellence in the EMMENA region exploiting the opportunities for Research and Innovation in Earth Observation and Space-based Monitoring of the Environment

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works strongly supports the Excelsior Project and believes this project will be an excellence opportunity to promote Cyprus in the Earth observation sector.
The Cypriot Government has put in place a number of policies aimed at enhancing the adoption of digital and space technologies.

The space sector, together with the ICT Sector, can be a driver for growth, social prosperity, and regional cooperation.
We look forward to seeing you in Cyprus!
Thank you for your attention!