International Relations in space: challenges and opportunities for Europe

International Presse Center « Residence Palace », Brussels
13 September 2012

Christophe Venet
Research Associate
Ifri Space Program
1. Space and IR

• IR are shaping Space:
  ➢ End of the Cold War had consequences on space activities:
    ▪ Increasing number of actors
    ▪ Diversification of their nature (public actors, private actors, NGOs, IOs)
  ➢ Space mirrors main transversal issues of IR:
    ▪ Competition/cooperation
    ▪ Unilateralism/ multilateralism
    ▪ Polarity of the international system
    ▪ Gloablization and international trade
    ▪ Global governance
• Space is shaping IR:
  ➢ Space policy is a complex issue-area at the intersection of the 3 major issue-areas in world politics:
    ▪ Security
    ▪ Welfare
    ▪ System of rule
  ➢ Space is associated with some of the major challenges of current world politics:
    ▪ Global warming
    ▪ Terrorism
    ▪ Proliferation
    ▪ Poverty/development
    ▪ Rule of law
2. Space and Europe’s IR

- International space cooperation serves European interests:
  - International cooperation is contributing to Europe’s space policy objectives:
    - Utilitarian cooperation
    - ISS, exploration
  - Space is contributing to Europe’s foreign policy objectives:
    - Political cooperation
    - Climate change, sustainable development, humanitarian aid, security
• Space is illustrating Europe’s positioning in the international system:

  ➢ Space and Europe’s international actoriness:
    ▪ Europe is an international actor under construction
    ▪ Europe’s actoriness in space depends on the area (civilian/military space)

  ➢ Space and Europe’s international identity:
    ▪ Is Europe a normative, a civilian, a civilizing or simply a weak power?
    ▪ Discourse vs. Reality: critical analysis
    ▪ Specific European identity in space cooperation?
3. Challenges for Europe’s IR in space

- **Structural challenges (long term)**
  - Strive for internal cohesion
  - Find the right balance between cooperation and autonomy
  - Remain a credible cooperation partner for established spacefaring nations

- **Short to medium-term challenges**
  - Adapt to the emergence of new actors
  - Cope with the consequences of the economic crisis
4. Drivers of the conference

- Combine internal and external perspectives
- Combine policy and operational aspects
- Combine geographic and thematic approaches