



Space collaboration within the Treaty

Joint Declaration by Philippe Baptiste and Ministers Adolfo Urso

Rome, 9 March 2026

We, France and Ministers delegated to Space of Italy, acknowledging the joint work carried out since the entry into force of the Quirinal Treaty signed in 2021, provided a regular and stable platform for consultation between the two Countries also in the space sector, met in Rome to ensure continuity to the initiatives already undertaken, with the aim to further strengthen our cooperation in this field and to contribute to the bilateral intergovernmental exchanges in the frame of the Treaty.

France and Italy are aware that space is a key dimension of European strategic autonomy and economic development. They are committed to promoting the coordination and harmonization of their strategies and activities, also within the framework of the European Union and the European Space Agency, as a means to improve their capabilities to operate jointly in space

Through their cooperation, France and Italy aim to strengthen the European space strategy and consolidate the competitiveness and integration of their space industry. France and Italy look forward to increasing their industrial partnership, especially in view of ensuring the competitiveness and innovative capacity of industrial actors in the space infrastructure domain.

Looking ahead to the forthcoming challenges, we commit to jointly address through closer bilateral cooperation and a coordinated approach at European level the following key topics, which are essential to strengthen European competitiveness, industrial resilience and technological leadership in space:

1. Autonomous access to space
2. Satellite communications
3. Earth observation
4. Coordination on EU and ESA programmes and budget
5. European space governance and procurement
6. Space regulatory framework

Detailed elements of the topics and collaborative actions are hereinafter illustrated.

1. Autonomous access to space

The lack of European launchers in 2023 and the need to rely on US launch service providers for institutional missions have highlighted European weakness as for autonomous access to space. The 2023 Seville Resolution has provided a balanced solution, by consolidating launchers developed within ESA, developing competitiveness and competition, stimulating new families of launchers and operators (public/private) capable of offering launch services from Kourou and additional European bases.

France and Italy strongly share the will to fully implement the Seville agreements on launchers and finally welcome the conclusion of the long process on the legal framework review. They believe that the successful conclusion of this process is essential to stabilise the sector. Together with the other pillars, it will ensure the implementation of a cooperative and competitive

European solution for the launcher market. It will meet the European strategic need for autonomy, serve its companies' competitiveness and efficiency and foster the European supply and value chain. Both countries believe that implementing the Seville decisions has been a cornerstone for the success of ESA Ministerial Conference 2025 (CM25).

France and Italy reaffirm their support, as enshrined in the Quirinal Treaty, to the principle of European preference in the field of launchers.

France and Italy are engaged at agency level in a joint work to assess both the institutional needs and the market perspective and in the near future may discuss a common roadmap for the future European launchers. It will rely on complete control of launch chain, from the design of launchers to the European space port.

2. Satellite communications

As Satellite Communication (SATCOM) is a strategic asset for sovereign nations, EU Member States need European solutions, even more in a time of crisis. The SATCOM services started shifting from GEO to LEO (mega) constellations when a US provider took position on the LEO orbit. The latter currently provides a predominance on the customer market. In response Europeans must develop their own architecture for LEO SATCOM. Such outcome could also benefit from national interoperable infrastructures, in a pooling and sharing approach where possible.

Furthermore, geopolitical tensions - especially the Ukrainian conflict - emphasize the need to strengthen the European SATCOM services in a time of crisis.

The French- Italian cooperation may build upon past joint developments on GEO SATCOM services (e.g.: Athena Fidus). Keeping on cooperating on GEO would be beneficial for both sides, considering that this service market, although limited, is robust and serves specific needs.

On the LEO SATCOM segment, France and Italy will launch a mutual reflection on its future developments. Furthermore, the cooperation will jointly monitor the timely and effective deployment of IRIS2, coordinating the efforts to promote a proper involvement, based on recognized competencies and expertise, of both countries industrial landscape in the upstream and downstream of the project, discussing also on possible European gap-filling solutions in order to meet urgent and adequate Member States' needs.

3. Earth observation

France and Italy will strengthen their cooperation on Earth observation and continue to coordinate on EO related-initiatives to propose to EU, ESA and other national partners a jointly FR-IT approach. France and Italy, notably in the context of ERS and EOGS, recognize the EU as the unique political forum to address the needs and technical and security requirements of these future initiatives on EO. Furthermore, in this framework, while acknowledging its technical and programmatic excellence, ESA shall be considered as an entrusted entity developing technical activities on a clear mandate of the EC and the member states. France and Italy will also take advantage from the existing EU Centers (e.g.: SatGen) that are already operational on EO secure data management.

4. Coordination on EU and ESA programmes budget

After the ESA CM25, the coming EU Multiannual Financial Framework (EU MFF) for 2028-2034 will shape the future of the European space sector. These key milestones will define the priority

programmes and allocate funds to consolidate the European space ambition, in the context of a rapidly changing and challenging global scenario.

France and Italy are committed to reinforce their coordination to discuss the programmes and the budget of the next EU MFF. The two Member States defend increased resources for the space sector to meet a higher level of ambition and ensure EU strategic autonomy in that field. They will pay close attention to avoid duplication and misalignment between ESA CM25 and EU MFF.

France and Italy recognize the critical issue related to the high level of the financial treasury of ESA; they will jointly work to find solutions to greatly reduce such level, increasing the capacity to spend the financial resources assigned by the Member States for the programs.

5. European space governance and procurement

The institutional governance structure regarding the European space policy is complex: EU, ESA and Member States have their own competences in terms of space policy, governance and funding, resulting in some overlapping and possible inefficiencies. That weakens the European position face to the growing efforts undertaken by world players like US and China. Therefore, France and Italy agree to promote the streamlining of the European space governance and funding, including a careful discussion on the organizational reform of ESA with the objective of a more effective and efficient Agency which shall be done with the involvement of all Member states.

On its side, the EU must assume a strong political leadership in space policy, within the righteous division of competences between the EU institutions and the Member States, and draw on the technical expertise of ESA within an adapted and improved framework. This clarification will need to be enshrined in the future EU-ESA framework agreement, alongside better coordination with space operations (EUSPA).

In the context of evolving industrial structures and new manufacturing models, including future space factories and cross-border industrial integrations, France and Italy underline the need to safeguard national prerogatives related to security, protection of critical technologies and supply chains, continuity of industrial capabilities, and the integrity of sensitive information, in full coherence with European objectives.

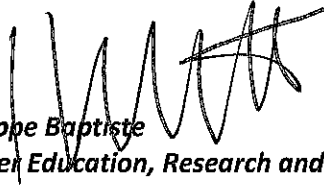
Both countries are convinced that the global competition requires a critical mass. An improved coordination between the EU institutional space actors will increase their demand and their spending capacity. It will therefore enhance the competitiveness of the EU industrial base. Both countries commend, in this respect, the ongoing industrial consolidation in the field of satellites. In addition, both countries are convinced that space procurement rules should be modernised, considering the European preference approach as a starting point.

6. Space regulatory framework

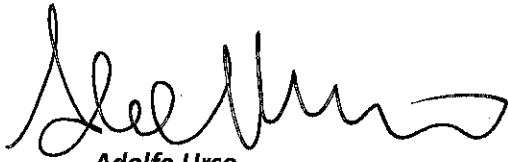
France and Italy support an EU initiative for a Space Act to support resilience and sustainability, with consequent benefits for the EU space economy. Accordingly, they stand for a regulation respectful of national competences and sovereignty, simple, clear and proportionate, not placing undue burden to enterprises, primarily on SMEs and start-ups. This regulation should guarantee a level playing field for all operators active in the European market, whether they hail from EU Member States or third countries. France and Italy commit to exchange views in the forthcoming discussion phase at the EU Council level, to set the conditions for space operators to innovate and compete more effectively.

France and Italy also acknowledge the key and urgent stake that represent the long-term viability of space activities and commit to work more closely in the multilateral arena dedicated to space, with COPUOS at its core.

Rome, 9 March 2026



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Roadmap

1. Autonomous access to space

- Fully implement the Seville agreements on launchers.
- Complete the legal framework review (Launcher Exploitation Declaration – LED; CSG agreement; Launcher Exploitation Arrangements).
- Discuss a common roadmap regarding the joint conception/development of the future European launchers.

2. Satellite communications

- Continue the cooperation on GEO SATCOM services.
- Develop the exchange of information regarding the LEO SATCOM segment and encourage mutual reflection on its future developments.
- Monitor the timely and effective deployment of IRIS2
- Promote an effective full involvement of both countries industries in the upstream and downstream of the project
- Discuss European gap-filling solutions to IRIS² to meet urgent and adequate Member States' needs for secure satellite communications.

3. Earth observation

- Strengthen cooperation on Earth observation and continue to coordinate on EO related initiatives to propose to ESA, EU and other national partners a joint FR-IT approach.
- Take advantage from the existing EU Centers (e.g.: SatCen) that are already operational on EO secure data management.

4. Coordination on EU and ESA programmes and budget

- Reinforce our coordination to discuss the programmes and the budget the next EU MFF.
- Defend increased resources for the space sector to meet a higher level of ambition and ensure EU strategic autonomy in that field.
- Avoid duplication and misalignment between ESA CM25 and EU MFF.

5. European space governance and procurement

- Promote the streamlining of the EU space governance and funding, reducing fragmentation and overlapping between EU, ESA and Member States.
- Space procurement rules should be amended also to consider the European preference.

6. Space regulatory framework

- Exchange views and coordinate discussions on the EU process for a Space Act,
- Jointly work for a regulation respectful of national competences and sovereignty, simple, clear and proportionate.