

***Statement of Dr. Ákos Mernyei***  
***Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of National Development in***  
***Hungary***  
***Head of delegation to the First International Space Forum***

Honorable Minister, Presidents, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honor and a pleasure to participate on this International Space Forum by representing Hungary, discussing such overarching and crucial issues, amongst decision makers and experts from truly all around the world, seeking global solutions to global challenges together.

As some of you might know, Hungary has become a member of the European Space Agency at the end of last year. Since acceding to an international organization with not just ambitious scientific objectives, but also a heavy emphasize on industrial leadership and competitiveness, stakeholders of the Hungarian space sector are fully aware that some of their methods will have to be changed and some of their priorities realigned. In the past, development and production of space assets in our country have often been the result of purely scientific purposes, which is quite unique. But even though things are changing, we do wish to hold on to capabilities developed over the years, and we certainly consider science driven innovation to be highly advantageous in a lot of aspects.

It's been my experience that scientific communities tend to have by nature more far-reaching and more ambitious plans for the future than decision makers or even industrial innovators who ultimately benefit from scientific research. I am convinced that it is a good thing; especially in the case of global challenges, like the topics of this very event. Sure, in the long run commercial organizations tend to do better in satisfying existing needs of society, but it's often up to academia and scholars to identify these needs or to outline the instruments of accomplishing certain goals.

Hungary is currently in the process of adopting its own space strategy, and it is exactly for the above mentioned reasons, that we intend to place special emphasis in this policy document on the importance of resources presented by universities and academia.

While commercial stakeholders don't often have the luxury to disregard the highly competitive environment of the space economy, scientific communities tend to cooperate more freely and substantially. Society needs to actively harness the potential in this inherent drive for cooperation when it comes to issues that far exceed the individual capabilities of competing entities. Earth protection and climate change are definitely such issues.

Thanks to extensive land-based and space infrastructures, today there is almost an overabundance of data related to these topics and it is the shared responsibility of leaders of scientific communities and policymakers to make sure that the information available is utilized in the most effective manner. Hungary believes that a substantial part of this task is fostering cooperation and sharing intellectual resources on an equitable basis. This is true both on national, bilateral and multilateral levels. Universities and academia seem like the natural instrument of choice for such activities.

A myriad of satellite are collecting and broadcasting ground, atmospheric, maritime and space weather information, yet the raw datasets mean little without the proper processing. Hungary is of the opinion that scientific initiative backed up by official policy on the part of legislators could be used effectively to expedite this process, and incentivize academics, scholars, and young professionals, even university students to comprehensively integrate their scientific research into everyday practical problem solving.

I therefore hope that this forum and its conclusions will serve as a signal for multilateral understanding and commitment to establish processes to involve more extensively individual national scholastic entities in the overall international scientific landscape, thereby providing meaningful opportunities for them to contribute to solutions for challenges facing us all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for your attention!