

Statement of Montenegro

By Darko Petrušić

Director General, Ministry of Science, Education and Technology

The desire for space travel is as old as human civilisation - we all remember the story about Icarus. Modern space exploration is reaching the areas once only dreamed about. Space technology has become a unique challenge for many nations and succeeded to unite the knowledge of human kind and efforts to create the International Space Station in 1998.

As many times in history, wars bring the utmost destruction and disrespect for human life. However, that destructive energy, in some cases, is directed at mobilising all resources and speeding up technological development, as was the case during WWII. A couple of major scientific and technological breakthroughs were created during WWII, including space technology, and all of them were created right here, in Europe.

Nowadays we are witnessing the rapid expansion of different stakeholders accessing space, with commercial space activities accounting for over 75%. It is obvious that private sector has become a major player in the field.

Space technologies play an important role in achieving goals of three major international frameworks such as the Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It also plays an important role in Earth observation and supporting the developments in Blue economy, especially with regard to the environment preservation i.e. helping protect coastal communities from the climate change impact.

Water bodies such as the oceans, seas, rivers and lakes collectively hosts about 2.2 million plant species and other life forms that represent over 50% of life on Earth. The sea water is fundamental to the life on earth, covering three quarters of our planet. It produces more than half of the oxygen that we breathe. Yet our oceans and seas are moving deeper into the ecological crisis caused by us.

Our actions are largely impacting climate change - one of the examples is this year's Amazon fires. In recent years we have realized that hurricanes are becoming stronger and stronger, such as Hurricane Dorian, which is just reaching the North America.

Satellite observations provide information highly valuable for climate simulations. It is widely used to create different mathematical model in an attempt to simulate natural processes and monitor changes on the ground. We should use these modern technologies to protect the Mediterranean Basin that we are proud to be a part of. The Mediterranean Basin has been the cradle of the world civilization since the first settlements in 9000 BC. This sea has always been an environment that has brought forth outstanding people who have made great contributions to the development of history in philosophy, art, music, literature, science and technology. Among the 44 oldest universities, 25 were founded in the

Mediterranean Basin, the Italian Peninsula being the leading region with 13 universities. Eight of the top ten oldest universities in the world that have operated continuously until the present day are in the Mediterranean area. The oldest university in the world is the University of Bologna, established in 1088.

In Montenegro, we have become aware of the vital importance of environment protection and that has been reflected in our Smart Specialisation Strategy, adopted in June this year. We are proud to say that we are the first non-EU country to adopt the S3.

Also, the Geological Survey of Montenegro was in charge of CARDS project: CORINE Land Cover (CLC) mapping in Montenegro which provided information on the biophysical characteristics of the Earth's surface. The CORINE Land Cover program is the result of the European Environment Agency collaboration with the ESA and the European Commission (EC) on the implementation of a fast track service on land monitoring.

In addition, based on the data provided from Sentinel 2 - Multispectral Imagery Satellite, we have created a STUDY AND PROPOSAL SOLUTION FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF PETROVAC BEACHES (Adriatic coast).

Moreover, Faculty of Architecture of University of Montenegro was in charge of the HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT of Boka Kotorska bay – a *UNESCO World Heritage Site* and it used spatial data to create this report.

We are now focusing on knowledge sharing and technology transfer in order to strengthen our participation in international initiatives related to space technology.

It is important to encourage greater involvement of Universities, research institutes and national Academies into space activities and to strengthen cooperation between academy and industry sector, in order to enable faster space technology development and its adoption, for the benefit of planet Earth and for the benefit of future generations.