

## **Statement of Portugal**

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President, Portugal Space Agency**

*\*Portugal Space was not able to join the ISF 2019 but nevertheless contributed with a Statement*

Good morning honourable guests,

It is with great regret that I cannot be there with you this morning to discuss “the Mediterranean Chapter” as I am currently with students in the hope of convincing them to join our ranks in tackling global challenges through space activities.

Water is one of our most precious resources, a gift of the universe, whose origin we have not yet discovered. Our latest effort through the Rosetta mission has taught us that the water on Earth is not from this one specific comet. The search continues and space is part of the answer.

To preserve, manage and optimise the use of all bodies of water should be one of the highest priorities of our time.

The economy of these bodies remains greatly unexplored and our scientific knowledge about them and the ecosystems they host is still far from being exhaustive.

It is for this reason that Portugal has defined as its vision to become by 2030 a widely recognised global authority in the science and economics of space-oceans-climate interactions for the advancement and well-being of all humankind. Through the founding of the AIR CENTER and its new national space agency, Portugal Space, Portugal has clearly indicated its commitment – political and financial – to this goal through assets in space and on ground and through a multi-disciplinary and multi-national approach.

This summer has seen much news around our seas and oceans: from migration, to illegal maritime activities and piracy, to a 150 km<sup>2</sup> area covered with volcanic rock discovered in the middle of the Pacific, to the landing of Sargasso in Mexico, to the death of marine life due to plastic waste, and more.

The Mediterranean is one of the busiest bodies of water and a treasure and great responsibility for all countries that boast a piece of it as a part of their national territory. But water flows and ignores national boundaries and it would be overly simplistic to define the challenges of the Mediterranean a problem of those countries alone. It is a joint responsibility and activities should be a common effort.

Beyond and to complement the on-going activities in all countries that are around the table today, Portugal puts forward the proposal of a joint-effort in observing and monitor our bodies of water with a joint constellation of small satellites co-owned by different countries and their interested entities to provide data and services to different end-users. Direct receiving stations in different participating nations would give each country the autonomy of organising their own institutional needs and users independent of other partners in this joint endeavour.

I take this opportunity to reach out to you with this proposal in the hope that you will reach back to us and that we may start on this endeavour before the end of this year.

I wish you a fruitful conference and look forward to a common positive future together.