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NEWSPACE AND SPACE EXPLORATION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE USA AND EUROPE
APPROACH TO PROCUREMENT

Abstract

As witnessed by recent space missions, a growing number of countries are engaged in space exploration programmes including several emerging and developing space countries with the ambition to reap the benefits of technology innovation, capacity building but also to show their ambitions at regional and global level.

With the overall raise of the private sector in space, space agencies and governments are more and more dependent of private actors for a wide range of projects, from RD to launching and operating space missions. This applies also to space exploration.

In recent years, more and more NewSpace companies have also been involved in space leading to new innovations in space, including space exploration.

However, for space agencies to leverage the potential that New Space companies bring to the space exploration, appropriate tools need to be used. In order to adapt specifically to the New Space reality, procurement is increasingly becoming a recognized tool to spur innovation and create new markets. However, as procurement is not set by international law but remain a State or organization's power, there are many different procurement rules among public space actors. But since the NewSpace is a fast-growing sector covering a wide range of activities, procurements rules adapt to best practices and tailored to consider this reality while supporting the increasing public demand and private supply.

The aim of this paper is to provide an in-depth comparison and assessment of the current USA and European space procurement frameworks regarding their applicability to the NewSpace sector with a special focus on space exploration. On the basis of this analysis, the paper will propose relevant tools and best-practices to support the increase of innovation in space exploration.