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FRANCO ITALIAN DECLARATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE LAUNCHERS

I. Italy and France announce the creation of a high-level Franco-Italian working group on space launchers and their exploitation

Italy and France decide to create a high-level working group on the future of European launchers.

The objectives of the working group are, in particular, to put forward common Franco-Italian work towards a shared solution to deal with the consequences of the health crisis for the launcher industry, and to build a shared strategic vision on the future of European launchers. The conclusions of this working group are expected in early September 2021.

II. Italy and France invite the European Space Agency, the European Commission and respective EU and ESA Member States to an in-depth common reflection on the future of European space launchers

The two countries note that the economic conditions for the exploitation of the European launchers Ariane 6 and Vega C, which are at the end of their development, have deteriorated significantly compared to the assumptions made at the time of the decision to launch these development programmes in 2014. Given the need to ensure the sustainability of these key elements in Europe's strategic autonomy of access to space, Italy and France call on ESA and its Member States to rapidly study the measures to be taken to consolidate the exploitation model of the Ariane 6 and Vega C launchers.

Our two countries also believe that it is necessary to build a longer-term vision in order to define the future family of European launchers, from the micro-launcher to the heavy launcher. They invite to launch a common reflection with the other main stakeholders, i.e. the European Space Agency and all its Member States, as well as the European Commission as one of the main customers of launcher services.

III. Italy and France share the vision of a coherent future European launcher family, utilizing a complementary and coordinated technological and industrial approach for their propulsion products

The synergy on solid propulsion that exists today between the Ariane 5 boosters and the Vega first stage, and which has been reinforced by the use of a common engine between Ariane 6 and Vega-C, is a fundamental axis of the long and fruitful Franco-Italian cooperation in the field of space launchers.

Following the example of this achievement, Italy and France are convinced that a strong synergy in propulsion between all the elements of a future family of launchers, from the heaviest to the lightest, will be a key factor in the competitiveness of the family of future European launchers. Italy and France wish to strengthen their cooperation and will explore enhanced synergy built around a family of liquid propulsion engines, derived from the Prometheus and the Vega M10 Lox-Methane engines currently under development. Both countries agree on the need for a balanced and coordinated repartition of industrial activities between Italy, France and Germany for the future production of these family of European Liquid propulsion engines.

The working group will also consider how to improve competitiveness and flexibility in the space ground infrastructure segment.

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