

Remarks made by Andre FARAND (Legal Affairs, ESA) on the status of the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, Vienna, 23 March 1998

Briefly commenting on the status of the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, I would simply recall comments made earlier in this forum that it is obvious that this Agreement has suffered from a lack of ratification; this may be attributed to the fact that a number of States do not see how the rules contained in it would affect those space activities planned for the near future. As an example of very concrete activities that could take place on the Moon, I would like to inform you that the ESA Council will be called upon at its meeting starting tomorrow, 24 March 1998, to approve phase 1 of the Euromoon programme. The anticipated funding for phase 1 is 8 million ECU from ESA, combined with a 1.5 million ECU in-kind contribution from industry. This phase should result in clearer definitions of the terms and conditions for associating industry with the project, the cost, schedule and performance feasibility and a credible financing and fund-raising scheme; it should also lead to the creation of a Euromoon company and prepare the ground for the release of additional ESA funding for the actual development phase.

This new ESA programme would be devoted to a celebration of the new millennium through the development of a 100kg lunar orbiter called Lunarsat, to be launched in the year 2000, for a reconnaissance mission. This will be in preparation for the landing of a 1250 kg vehicle on the South Pole of the Moon the following year for the purpose of conducting geology and geochemistry experiments. Many challenges await the Euromoon 2000 mission, including a pinpoint soft landing on difficult terrain and identification of future uses for sites of special interest, a 3 year "fast track" development schedule, a relatively modest cost of 200 million ECU calling for savings through state-of-the-art, off-the-shelf

technology and combined industrial effort. A significant feature of this programme is the establishment of a partnership with industry: at this point 11 partner companies are already contributing to the project.

The role of ESA is to provide leadership, the actual work being delegated to industry, to ensure compatibility with the long-term goals, secure political support and provide technical and operational support; on the short term, ESA is expected to provide a lump-sum payment for starting up the project and transfer the trademark "Euromoon". A communication strategy has been developed to support the project: Euromoon could be seen as the founding of the first extraterrestrial outpost, providing the vision of a robotic village and a virtual community. The communication strategy will target children and teenagers and will attract both technological and commercial types of sponsorship: all this should not only motivate people and give them new dreams and hopes but also increase public awareness of space and its benefits to mankind.

Although Euromoon 2000 appears to be a very challenging and forward-looking project, it will be up to ESA Council delegates to take their decision, based on their evaluation of its compatibility with ESA's role, as described in the ESA Convention, and also taking into account the current financial environment for space activities in Europe and ESA's industrial policy.

Note: At its meeting of 24-25 March 1998, the ESA Council, although supportive of the ambitious objectives of Euromoon 2000, decided not to commit ESA to phase 1 of this project; as a result, all activities which had been started were discontinued.

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