

14 October 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Luxembourg, NASA and several other partner countries are among the first signatories of the Artemis Accords

Luxembourg, October 14, 2020 – The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg became a founding member of the Artemis Accords when Minister of the Economy Franz Fayot signed the Accords on behalf of Luxembourg. The virtual signing took place yesterday at 12.30 h EDT in Washington DC at the 71st International Aeronautical Congress.

While NASA is leading the Artemis programme, which includes sending the first woman and next man to the surface of the Moon in 2024, international partnerships will play a key role in achieving a sustainable and robust presence on the Moon later this decade while preparing to conduct a historic human mission to Mars.

The founding member nations that have signed the Artemis Accords together with the USA, in alphabetical order, are:

- Australia
- Canada
- Italy
- Japan
- Luxembourg
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom

NASA announced it was establishing the Artemis Accords earlier this year to guide future cooperative activities, to be implemented through bilateral agreements that will describe responsibilities and other legal provisions. The partners will ensure their activities are guided by the Accords in carrying out future cooperation. International cooperation on Artemis is intended not only to bolster space exploration but to enhance peaceful relationships among nations.

Minister Fayot said: “It is a great pleasure for me to sign the Artemis Accords on behalf of Luxembourg. The Artemis Accords integrate very well with the efforts Luxembourg has been making both nationally and internationally to support the peaceful exploration and sustainable utilisation of space, and more specifically, space resources for the benefit of humankind.”

Minister Fayot went on to outline and reiterate Luxembourg's position as a leading player with its numerous space initiatives to date. "With its SpaceResources.lu initiative launched in 2016, Luxembourg's strategy has always been to strengthen the space sector and promote international cooperation. This by undertaking concrete actions and measures in the fields of regulation, education, research, innovation and long-term funding. We are convinced that the Artemis Accords will lead to valuable knowledge sharing and technical understanding of the key issues, which, in turn, will further discussions and progress towards an international framework to be developed at the United Nations."

Luxembourg has a thriving space industry and research community, fostered by government policy designed to encourage high tech industry - space in particular. Over the past four decades, the Luxembourg space industry has grown significantly. The country hosts world leaders of satellite-based communications and is home to other highly advanced technology companies. Luxembourg is strongly engaged in research and development activities and supports industry providing products and services in areas such as telecommunications, earth observation, navigation and security.

"Artemis will be the broadest and most diverse international human space exploration programme in history, and the Artemis Accords are the vehicle that will establish this singular global coalition," said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine. "With today's signing, we are uniting with our partners to explore the Moon and are establishing vital principles that will create a safe, peaceful, and prosperous future in space for all of humanity to enjoy."

The Artemis Accords reinforce and implement the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, otherwise known as the Outer Space Treaty. The Artemis Accords also reinforce the U.S. and partner nations' commitment to the Registration Convention, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, and other norms of behavior that NASA and its partners have supported such as the full and public release of scientific data.

Specifically, the Principles of the Artemis Accords are:

Peaceful Exploration: All activities conducted under the Artemis Programme must be for peaceful purposes;

Transparency: Artemis Accords signatories will conduct their activities in a transparent fashion to avoid confusion and conflicts;

Interoperability: Nations participating in the Artemis programme will strive to support interoperable systems to enhance safety and sustainability;

Emergency Assistance: Artemis Accords signatories commit to rendering assistance to astronauts in distress;

Registration of Space Objects: Any nation participating in Artemis must be a signatory to the Registration Convention or become a signatory with alacrity;

Release of Scientific Data: Artemis Accords signatories commit to the full and public release of scientific information, allowing the whole world to join us on the Artemis journey;

Protecting Heritage: Just like we do on Earth, Artemis Accords signatories commit to respecting historical sites and artifacts in space;

Space Resources: Extracting and utilising space resources is key to safe and sustainable exploration and the Artemis Accords signatories agree that such activities can and will be conducted in compliance with the Outer Space Treaty;

Deconfliction of Activities: The Artemis Accords nations commit to preventing harmful interference and supporting the principle of due regard, as required by the Outer Space Treaty; and

Orbital Debris: Artemis Accords countries commit to planning for the safe disposal of debris.

During his speech broadcast at the IAC, Minister Fayot concluded: “In the next months, the Luxembourg Space Agency and NASA will further explore concrete opportunities for cooperation within the Artemis programme, defining Luxembourg’s contribution to the programme based on our existing and future capacities. This in areas such as prospecting of resources, surface mobility and operations, and energy. We are proud to be part of the first group of countries signing the Accords. They represent the beginning of an open and inclusive dialogue originating from a very ambitious space programme. There are many challenges on the way which we can only overcome by working inclusively together with other countries and by looking for new innovative solutions.”

Marc Serres, CEO of the Luxembourg Space Agency added: “The Artemis Accords endorse the approach taken since 2016 by the Luxembourg Space Agency with its SpaceResources.lu initiative aimed at the peaceful exploration and sustainable utilisation of space resources. We look forward to the ongoing exchange of information and expertise with the 8 founding partners. The opening in Luxembourg by the end of 2020 of the European Space Resources Innovation Centre in partnership with ESA and the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology will further enhance international cooperation, scientific knowledge sharing and research together with the establishment of an in-space economy.”

United States Ambassador to Luxembourg H.E Randy Evans offered in his remarks by video: “Today, we strengthen the U.S. and Luxembourg collaboration in space and when we watch in a few years when the next astronaut sets her foot down on the moon, we can all collectively say we did our part to help her get there. That is the magnitude of what Minister Fayot and NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine have done this week”.

Further countries can sign the Artemis Accords in the future. NASA confirmed that a number of prospective Artemis partners have already reached out to express interest in signing the Accords. NASA welcomes their interest and would be very pleased to have additional signatories.

Released by the Ministry of the Economy and the Luxembourg Space Agency

Press Contact

Paul Zenners

Communication Advisor

Phone: +352 621 409 141