

4 August 2020

PRESS RELEASE

The Luxembourg Space Agency and LIST join forces to create a "European Space Resources Innovation Centre" in Luxembourg

On 4th of August 2020, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of the Economy, as the supervisory body of the Luxembourg Space Agency (LSA), and LIST (Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology) in view of the creation by the end of 2020, in Luxembourg, of a "European Space Resources Innovation Centre", called ESRIC in abbreviated form.

Signed today by Minister of the Economy Franz Fayot, Chairman of the Board of LIST Jacques Lanners, and CEO of LIST Thomas Kallstenius, the agreement paves the way for cooperation between LSA and LIST to implement the national component of this initiative until the European Space Agency (ESA) joins the project in turn as a strategic partner as provided in the "Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Space Resources" signed by Luxembourg and ESA (Space19 +) during the ESA meeting of the ministerial council in November 2019 in Seville.

The creation of ESRIC is part of the government initiative SpaceResources.lu launched in 2016 to establish an ecosystem favorable to the development of activities related to the exploration and use of space resources. For its part, since early 2019, ESA has been implementing its own strategy regarding the use of space resources, recognising their importance for sustainable space exploration as well as their economic and scientific potential.

Unique of its kind, ESRIC's long term objective is to become an independent innovation centre with an international vocation whose open research structure will allow the integration of other European players, public or private in this field, to constitute a hub of excellence for space resources in Europe.

Funded by the Ministry of the Economy, LIST, ESA as well as by the National Research Fund (FNR), ESRIC will exist in a first phase in the form of a new department within LIST in Belvaux in order to benefit from synergy effects with its "Material Research Technology" department (MRT), which already has a core of key skills and equipment that can support and accelerate the future activities of ESRIC. These will be based on four main pillars:

- **research and development in connection with space resources:** make available to the international community of researchers as well as to the European academic and industrial world, unique infrastructure and facilities making it possible to carry out specific research projects and the development of technologies around the use of space resources;
- **support for economic activities:** contribute to economic development by supporting the creation of new businesses and by encouraging collaboration between industrial players in the terrestrial and space sectors and by identifying technologies with high economic potential. A business incubation component will also be developed;
- **knowledge management:** monitoring scientific developments, technologies, financing instruments and the legal framework relating to space resources in order to benefit from the scientific and industrial community;

- **community management:** bringing together and encouraging a scientific and industrial community around the subject of space resources in Europe, while acting as a catalyst and federator.

When signing the cooperation agreement with LIST as the national strategic partner of the project, the Minister of Economy Franz Fayot said: “ESRIC is designed to become the centre of excellence in Europe in terms of exploration and use of space resources and associated technologies and economic opportunities. The project will strengthen Luxembourg’s international positioning in this area by continuing the activities planned under the SpaceResources.lu initiative, adding to them an additional dimension that does not exist elsewhere in Europe.”

Present at the signing ceremony, the Minister of Higher Education and Research Claude Meisch said: “After the launch of the “Interdisciplinary Space Master” at the University of Luxembourg in February 2019, the creation of the “European Space Resources Innovation Centre” as part of the LIST is the second initiative in Luxembourg of a public research and higher education institution in order to develop and support the space sector on a national and European level and that shows the good collaboration with the Luxembourg Space Agency.”

Thomas Kallstenius, CEO of LIST commented: “LIST is honoured to support the Luxembourg government and Luxembourg Space agency with the establishment of ESRIC in Luxembourg by creating a new department within LIST for this purpose. This partnership is both natural and strategic for us as we are already conducting several high-level research projects in the space sector. The creation of ESRIC will offer great opportunities for synergies and will definitely position Luxembourg as a European reference in the space resources sector.”

About the Luxembourg Space Agency

Established in 2018 with the goal of developing the national space sector, the Luxembourg Space Agency fosters new and existing companies, develops human resources, facilitates access to funding and provides support for academic research.

The agency implements the national space economic development strategy, manages national space research and development programs, and leads the SpaceResources.lu initiative. The LSA also represents Luxembourg within the European Space Agency, as well as the space related programs of the European Union and the United Nations.

Press Contact

Paul Zenners
Communication Advisor
Phone: +352 621 409 141