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Dear [redacted]

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit of the European Parliament (AskEP) thanks you for your email received on 6 August 2021 concerning space and Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force.

Please rest assured that we have read your observations and concerns attentively and carefully.

AskEP is an administrative service that provides citizens with information on the activities, powers and organisation of the European Parliament.

With regard to your message, we would like to give you some information on the subject.

The EU has made significant investments into space in recent years, including into areas such as navigation and Earth observation. These investments have a direct positive impact on citizens' everyday activities here on Earth, for example on communication and travel.
The Space Strategy for Europe launched in 2016 aims to create concrete benefits for citizens and businesses, as well as strengthen the EU's leadership role in space through fostering a competitive and innovative space sector. In 2021, the European Union adopted new funding for its space programmes.

Earth monitoring and satellite navigation systems

The EU has a number of active space programmes, which are run by the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) with the European Space Agency (ESA) acting as the key partner in implementation and operational support. All programmes are fully financed by the EU.
Within these are three flagship programmes:

- Copernicus is the EU's earth observation programme, which includes monitoring and providing data on climate change, marine environment and the atmosphere. It improves the EU's ability to respond to natural disasters and aids in saving lives at sea as well as helping farmers to better manage their crops. All data gathered through Copernicus is freely accessible to citizens.
- EGNOS (the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service) provides so-called 'safety-of-life' navigation to users in the air, on water, and on land, for example with information precise enough that aircraft can use it to land. It is fully operational, and a predecessor to the Galileo programme.
- Galileo is Europe's global satellite navigation system, providing a highly accurate global positioning service. Its data can be used for a broad range of applications. While it is an autonomous system, it is nonetheless interoperable with existing satellite navigation systems. Galileo began to offer initial services in December 2016.

Changes to the EU's space policy

Under the April 2021 Space Regulation, the new programmes will bring a number of changes for the EU's space strategy. With €14.88 billion, this represents the largest ever budget for space.
The new regulation aims to ensure the continuous development of the programmes, while supporting new initiatives on space surveillance. It also aims to foster innovative industries ensuring a strong connection to research, in conjunction with the new Horizon Europe programme.

Further Information

- EU Space Programme, European Parliamentary Research Service, Briefing, May 2021
- Space Programme, European Parliament, Legislative Train

- EU Space Policy, European Commission, Factsheet

European space policy: Historical perspective, specific aspects and key challenges, European Parliamentary Research Service, In-Depth Analysis, January 2017

We hope this information is useful and thank you for contacting the European Parliament and its President.

Kind regards,