



The drivers for the creation of European Administrative Bodies in the European Space Sector - Advantages and Disadvantages for Space Situational Awareness

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Executive Summary

Modern societies have become deeply dependent on services delivered by space systems. Therefore, across Europe there has been great investment into space infrastructure, which, through the increased use of space and new emerging actors, has become increasingly vulnerable. Threats are constituted by other existing space objects with the chance of collision, by Near Earth Objects and Solar Storms. To safeguard Europe, infrastructure decisions need to be taken about whether to manoeuvre satellites or to turn them off. Both actions constitute a great economic loss as well as a shortage in services. Therefore every decision taken needs to be carefully weighed, and for this it is important to create a system that provides reliable and accurate data in order to have the best information when making decisions. Such a system must include physical investments as well as institutional transformation. Currently the EU is deciding on such a proposal. This master thesis assesses this proposal and shows its structural weaknesses. It further explains why this approach was chosen and looks at the dynamics in the space sector that lead to creation of European administrative bodies. To arrive at the results a survey among top-level experts and decisions makers in the space sector was conducted. The results explain that with an increase in actors, agencies with a stronger EU influence are chosen. These agencies distinguish themselves by their institutional features. Different sets of arguments strategically played a role when deciding for these forms of Administrative Bodies. The main proposal of this Master Thesis is to create a EU owned operational SSA system, managed by an EU transnational agency. To achieve this three recommendations, that result from the findings of this thesis, should be followed: (1) Setting up a funding scheme (2) increase of relevant stakeholders through identification and invitation of stakeholders to workshops on SSA, which thematically show the significance of SSA for Europe and financial funding opportunities; and (3) emphasis on the functional aspects of SSA for Europe in the negotiations for an European SSA Institutional Structure for which the decision should be prolonged to June 2015 when Qualitative Majority Voting changed the voting procedures in the European Council.