

## Polish space industry is eager to conquer Europe

### Space Sector Forum 2024 Highlights

**Authorities from the national entities of the space sector, the Polish and European Space Agency and representatives of public administration met in Warsaw to discuss crucial issues for the Polish space industry. One of the things announced during the Space Sector Forum was close inter-ministerial cooperation in updating the Polish Space Strategy and preparing the National Space Programme, as well as the dates for launching the first Polish suborbital rocket into space and the first national microsatellite.**

An increase in the fee for optional programmes of the European Space Agency, the launch of funds for the space sector in the National Reconstruction Programme, the finalisation of a contract by the Ministry of National Defence for observation satellites, the launch of the CAMILA programme and the signing of a contract for the flight of a Polish astronaut into space. These are the key events for the Polish space sector for 2023-2024, as pointed out by Paweł Wojtkiewicz, President of the Board of the Polish Space Industry Association, during the inauguration of the Space Sector Forum. The largest industry conference dedicated to the space industry in Poland was held on Tuesday, 4 June, in Warsaw.

*The Space Sector Forum is an excellent opportunity to discover the achievements and capabilities of Polish companies and scientific institutions developing space technologies. It is also an opportunity to discuss our country's ambitions and plans. Polish companies are already successfully participating in tenders of the European Space Agency and provide equipment for missions exploring the planets of the Solar System and the faraway Universe. At present, the time has come to build satellites providing images of the Earth's surface, providing communications for the state and society. The presentations at the Forum showed that our sector is already well prepared for this – commented Professor Grzegorz Wrochna, President of the Polish Space Agency.*

This year's event brought together more than 400 representatives of companies, scientific institutes, as well as government and administration. With a rich programme of content, the conference provided a valuable platform for the exchange of experience and knowledge of experts in the space industry. Visitors to the event were able to participate in live debates on the development of the Polish sector, cooperation with foreign entities or challenges related to security in space. As pointed out by the Polish Space Agency, later this year, more precisely at the beginning of July, the flight of the first Polish Bursztyn rocket into space and the launch of the first domestic Eagle Eye microsatellite are due to take place. The flight of a Polish astronaut to the International Space Station is scheduled for the first half of 2025.

The current situation of the Polish sector was also discussed by Paweł Wojtkiewicz, who addresses national companies and entities related to the space industry. - *Let us not slowdown in order for us to continue working on the Polish Space Strategy and launch the National Space Programme. We wish that in 2025, during the next ESA Council, Poland could maintain the current fee and even increase it, as our industry is ready for this* - pointed out the President of the Polish Space Industry Association. -

Let us aim to increase our participation in the flagship space programmes of the European Union. - he added.

Whereas Łukasz Kotapski, Vice-President of the Management Board of the Industrial Development Agency, emphasised that *the Polish space sector is entering the age of early maturity. The current situation necessitates greater development and prioritisation of the space sector, and the ability to send objects into space and operate them is important for ensuring the security and competitiveness of our national economy.*

The first section of the event focused on Poland's cooperation with the European Space Agency. In this session, experts spoke such us on increasing the fee to the ESA, opportunities for national industry in the NAVISP programme. They also presented the most important upcoming scientific missions and discussed the key opportunities and challenges for our country's entities to get involved in them. The panel concluded with a presentation on the importance of space missions and space exploration for the development of the Polish sector by Dr Sławosz Uznański, an ESA project astronaut. The next panel was devoted to the entities managed by the European Space Agency, ESA Technology Broker and ESA Business Applications Ambassador. The experts introduced the conference participants to the process of funding innovation from ESA funds.

The Forum involved two discussion panels, during which key representatives of companies, scientific institutions and public administration debated the directions of development of the Polish space sector in the coming years. The speakers analysed the challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Poland's strategic goals in space under the National Space Programme and the Polish Space Strategy. All speakers emphasised how important it is for the development of the Polish sector to undertake and implement international cooperation. They also presented opportunities for Polish companies to participate in ESA programmes and other European space initiatives. Moreover, experts discussed the most relevant issues related to security in space, such as cyber-attacks, space junk and threats from other countries. They also provided an overview of the national efforts underway to boost security in space.

Among the guests at the event were representatives of the Polish Space Agency, the European Space Agency, the Ministry of Development and Technology, the Industrial Development Agency and NATO. Visitors were able to participate in the exhibition part, where domestic companies presented their most important projects and latest technologies. Moreover, visitors had the chance to take part in workshops on raising funds from the ESA Technology Broker and ESA Business Applications Ambassador. The presenters not only guided participants through the process of obtaining funding, but also provided examples of good practice in proposal preparation.

The fourth edition of the Space Sector Forum was held at EXPO XXI at Prądzyńskiego Street in Warsaw. This is the first event conducted in a stationary format after 2021. The conference is organised by the Polish Space Industry Association and the first edition of the Forum took place in 2016. The co-organisers of the 2024 Space Sector Forum were the Ministry of Development and Technology, the



Polish Space Agency and the Industrial Development Agency, as well as the managers of the ESA Technology Broker and ESA Business Applications Ambassador programmes. The Minister of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of National Defence and the National Contact Point for EU Research Programmes at the NCBR covered the event under the patronage of honour, and patrons included the European Space Foundation and the New Space Foundation.

