

Position



Keynote Speech at the Munich New Space Summit | October 23, 2024

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“Europe reaching for the stars”

Ladies and Gentlemen, friends and colleagues, it is a great pleasure to be here with you in Munich. Thank you for having me!

It has been only three weeks since I started at BDLI. In these few days, one thing has become VERY clear to me. It was evident in the many conversations I had with the fantastic people working in our industry, with members of the Bundestag, state secretaries and other government officials, scientists and the space community gathering at the International Astronautical Congress in Milan last week. What has become so very clear to me is:

Dear Germany & the EU: We have a problem.

The problem is the massive mismatch between the enormous relevance of space on the one hand and, on the other hand, the lack of public awareness about it as well as the lack of support space receives in German strategic political thinking.

For the wider public, space is endlessly fascinating. But the deeper understanding of space’s relevance to today’s world is heavily underdeveloped.

We here at the New Space Summit are very aware that without space exploration or for instance secure satellites our way of life would no longer exist.

Space is essential for predicting and **coping with natural disasters**; for **communication and navigation**; for the development of **vaccines**; and – first and foremost – **defense**.

All those areas depend 100% on space. And so do we. So, obviously in space we'd better not be too dependent on third parties or other countries.

I know: I am preaching to the choir. We here at the Summit are fully aware that space is **essential for freedom, security, and human progress**. But ask anyone here on the streets of Munich – or anywhere else in Germany – and you'll find nearly everybody highly fascinated by space, rockets, and PRADA moon suits. But most people don't think of space as crucial for their own lives.

And as people fail to grasp the strategic importance of space, we start to lose.

It is very simple: **Without the broad public being aware, there will be no political support**. However, THAT is exactly what our presence and power in space depends on: Political support. Because political support means funding. **Funding means workforce, training, research, and – most of all – equipment**.

If – on the contrary – we lose political support and regulatory advantages, we lose public funding and enthusiasm in private investment. We'll be unable to attract the best minds to our industry, and we lose in innovation and ultimately competitiveness.

After what I have listened to during the past weeks, **I struggle heavily to understand why Germany and Europe don't prioritize investments** in and regulatory support for space. We see it so drastically all around us, other states doing the exact opposite – not just the U.S., but also China, India, and many others: They have fully understood the strategic dimension of space. They invest accordingly.

Because they do so, they gain the upper hand and start making the rules. This cannot be in Europe's interest. **If we cannot compete in space, we are very likely to be blackmailed** – or worse. Vice Admiral Daum will talk tomorrow about the military implications of space. It will be very interesting to listen to his insights.

From what I've learned so far, **Europe is already heavily dependent on others in space** – or is **lacking protection**. Take for instance the fact that U.S. players are majorly controlling space waste detection and the ability to warn satellites against it. Or the fact that **China, Russia, and India** are all testing and developing **anti-satellite capabilities** threatening the integrity of space. If deployed, they are likely to put our systems into their reach.

My point is simple: **We as Germans and Europeans must step up**. We must prioritize public investments in space. We must raise every European's awareness.

And to get there, we – the entire space community – must improve in convincing the public and decision-makers. **We must get better at explaining what we do** and why it is so important.

Because **more awareness** means **more funding**, and more funding translates directly into **greater independence**.

The Munich New Space Summit is the perfect place to kick off this mission. Changing the national conversation about space requires a team effort. Such a team must go beyond the space industry. This is what the Summit excels at.

What I find striking is that this Summit brings together innovators from **automotive, defense, finance, research**, and more. It creates a special kind of eco-system. Here, you will have surprising conversations that inspire new ideas: New synergies, that might be a promising starting point to change the national conversation.

Coming to politics, now.

Let's assume we would get ALL the political support we wish for. **What is it exactly we as industry would want?** What do we, the entire space industry—big and small, established organizations and new players: What do we need from political leadership to maintain our competitiveness and ensure Europe's sovereignty in space?

Let me offer **some suggestions**:

1. The **German Space Law** should be as simple and streamlined as possible, and it should be harmonized with the **EU Space Law**. The clock is ticking—we cannot waste time trying to get rid of **double regulation** afterwards.
2. Both in Germany and the EU, we must establish honest and true **impact assessments** for all regulation. Ever heard of REACH, PFAS, due diligence regulation? From my previous role I know only too well how destructive such initiatives and laws can be for innovative ideas.
3. Industry seeks a trusting cooperation with its enabled partners in government. Whether in Berlin or Brussels: Those coordinators, commissioners or state secretaries must be of high rank and **sufficiently empowered** to take fast decisions and **align all disciplines** and ministries. In that sense, I find **EU commissioner Andrius Kubilius's** approach, his responsibilities and announcements, very encouraging.
4. We need **targeted public funding**. The current plans for the German federal budget are insufficient. As of now, the German national space program is to decrease from about 334 million euros in 2024 to less than 292 million euros in 2025. That's a **decrease of more than 12%**.
Moreover, German contributions to **ESA** are set to shrink from over 1 billion euros to less than 944 million. **With such numbers, you cannot survive in the new world of space competition.**

Overall we need space to become a higher priority on the political agenda in Berlin and Brussels. The ESA council of ministers in November next year in Bremen will be THE test case for Germany's political ambition in space. The preparation for this agenda-setting opportunity starts now, and it must include all of us, public and private actors, start-up and global players alike.

I invite all of you to connect with the BDLI, with my colleague Nicole Thalsofer, her team and me, and share your ideas and experiences. We are very much interested to learn from you, hear your real-life business experience, for instance with regulation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are amid an exciting transition. A transition toward a diverse space economy where institutional and commercial actors are intertwined. As far as I see it: The entire community is unified by wanting Europe to reach for the stars and excel in space.

Let's make a joint effort and convince the public as well as decision-makers in Berlin and Brussels to support accordingly.

We must succeed at this task, because space is too important to leave it to others. Let's start today, right here at the Munich New Space Summit.

Thank you.