

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR SECURITY AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES**

**IVO ŠRÁMEK**

OPENING REMARKS

*THIRD PSSI SPACE SECURITY CONFERENCE*

*“ADVANCING THE TRILATERAL EUROPE-U.S.-JAPAN SPACE SECURITY PARTNERSHIP”*

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to welcome you at the Czernin Palace on the occasion of the Third Prague Security Studies Institute Space Security Conference entitled “Advancing the Trilateral Europe-U.S.-Japan Space Security Partnership”. Space security and safety is of growing importance in view of the increasing dependency of the world on space-based services and applications. International cooperation to preserve the stability of space environment and to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, outer space is inevitable.

As you know, the Czech Republic is very active in terms of space-related activities and technologies. Prague hosts the Headquarters of the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems Agency. The Czech Republic, through the EU as well as its membership in the European Space Agency (ESA) is fully committed to advancing the space security portfolio at a European level in an effort to strengthen the governance of the space domain and the capacity to respond to external threats to Europe’s assets in today’s world that is perilously dependent on space-based capabilities and services.

Space-based assets enable the functioning of vital day-to-day terrestrial services. The use of satellite communications, Earth observation, meteorology, and navigation generates an ever growing number of services and applications. These concern, inter alia, the domain of weather forecasting, environmental and climate change monitoring, disaster management, transport, natural resource management, agriculture, banking, and many others to name. Such space assets have become critically important to Europe’s economic and social development, as well as security.

The European Union is now building its critical space infrastructure – the Galileo Global Navigation Satellite System and the Copernicus Earth Observation system. The EU also uses space-derived geospatial intelligence, precise navigation and communication for its CSDP missions. Space is also used to advance other EU policies, such as use of Copernicus-derived applications for border and maritime surveillance, and support to EU external action. Given the value of space for Europe, the EU needs to ensure the integrity, availability and reliability of these space assets.

As satellites are vulnerable and exposed to multitude of hazards and threats, including space debris, space weather, various technical issues such as radiofrequency interference, or even intentional threats posed by purposeful interference with satellites, or even their destruction by an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon, the European countries need to be prepared for space-related contingencies with a goal to ensure the security and availability of the space infrastructure. This includes an effort to support the establishment and operation of services consisting of monitoring and surveillance of space objects to mitigate the risk of on-orbit collisions. To that end, European countries adopted at the EU level a Decision to establish a Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) Support Framework, which is based on “networking and in using national SST assets to provide SST services”, and possibly involve “the development of new sensors or the upgrading of existing sensors operated by Member States”. A consortium of initially five countries (i.e. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK) has been established (signed by their respective space agencies), with a view to potentially expanding the Consortium in the course of 2017. The Consortium works alongside the European Union Satellite Centre (SATCEN) to implement the mechanisms planned for providing SST initial services as soon as in July of this year. Europe, at the EU level also engages in Space Dialogues with its major partners, the U.S. and Japan among them.

To conclude, space-related activities underway in Europe indicate the need for the capacity and capability to engage meaningfully in this critically-important domain. This needs to involve the continued development of space assets, and safeguarding of space environment and space activities.

I wish you, Ladies and Gentlemen, a productive and successful conference and a pleasant stay in Prague.