



Department for
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Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Baroness Lloyd of Effra CBE
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Minister for Space, Cyber, and Regulatory
Reform
DBIST & DCMS
22-26 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2EG

Liina Vahtras
Minister of Economy and Industry
Republic of Estonia

T: +44 (0) 020 4551 0011
E: lloyd.correspondence@businessandtrade.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk

By email: liina.vahtras@mkm.ee

09 Oct. 26

Article 65 of the European Competitiveness Fund

Dear Liina,

I understand that COREPER will discuss Article 65(5) of the European Competitiveness Fund on Sunday. The outcome will have important implications for Europe's future access to space, including whether the EU can draw on secure and capable launch infrastructure across the wider European space ecosystem.

The United Kingdom strongly supports Europe's ambition to strengthen its autonomous, resilient and competitive access to space. Against the backdrop of an unprecedented global shortage of launch capacity, it is more important than ever that Europe works together to secure its future access to space. European launch demand is growing, while significant new capacity will take time to become available. The United Kingdom stands ready to contribute secure and capable launch infrastructure now.

We believe Europe's ambition will be best served by preserving the ability to use launch capability in close partner countries where appropriate security conditions are met. An unnecessarily restrictive approach would reduce Europe's available launch capacity and strategic choice, constrain competition and investment, and risk disadvantaging European companies that have built their plans around launch from partner territory.

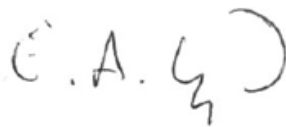
This is also a question of coherence with the Long-term Vision for European Space Transportation endorsed at the International Space Summit in Paris in September. That Vision, realised between the European Space Agency and the European Commission, recognises that Europe's launch challenges cannot be addressed by any one country alone, calls for an inclusive approach among European public partners, and understands European territory as encompassing the respective Member States of both the European Union and

the European Space Agency. Article 65(5) should give practical effect to that shared commitment, rather than create a new distinction between those same European partners.

I therefore hope that you will support an outcome which preserves a clear and workable route for EU space assets to launch from the territory of close European partners, including the United Kingdom, under an appropriate international agreement and with the necessary security safeguards. In particular, the final text should not make use of trusted partner territory dependent on undefined “exceptional circumstances” or allow other eligibility provisions to frustrate activity expressly authorised by such an agreement.

A constructive decision on Sunday would demonstrate that Europe can strengthen its strategic autonomy while continuing to work pragmatically with its closest partners. I would be grateful for your support, and I look forward to continuing our cooperation on our shared space, security and competitiveness priorities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'E.A. Lloyd' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Baroness Lloyd of Effra CBE
Minister for Space, Cyber, and Regulatory Reform