On 22 October 2026, the AEAAS Virtual Policy Roundtable brought together institutional perspectives, national licensing experience and industry concerns. Across two sessions, the exchanges identified practical priorities for increasing European access to space and explored the interplay between the strategic case for autonomous access to space and the decisions that determine how infrastructure can be licensed, financed and used efficiently.

Sessions Overview

Session	Speakers		Moderator
01 Institutional Strategy and Governance 09:30–11:00 CEST	Fabio Angellotti	– European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA)	*João Lupi* Abreu Advogados
	Luce Fabreguettes	– European Space Agency (ESA)	
	Tiago Marques	– European Commission Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS)	
02 National Agency and Legal Workability 11:00–12:30 CEST	Martin Reynders	– Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. (DLR)	*Mark Roberts* Reflect Solutions
	Inês d'Ávila	– Agência Espacial Portuguesa (PT Space)	
	Simonetta Di Pippo	– SDA Bocconi SEE Lab	

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Key Takeaways

- **Interoperability is multi-layered and necessary, but not sufficient.**

Interoperability combines technical compatibility of interfaces, functional equivalent alignment of information requirements, organisational coordination between authorities and operators, and legal acceptance of evidence reuse. These layers reduce duplication and streamline operations, but they deliver full value only when matched by operational interoperability, meaning the resilience and responsiveness needed to ensure physical and operational capacity to reuse materials.

- **Predictability depends on more than regulation.**

Institutional demand, investment alignment and access to testing infrastructure also shape the viability of European launch services.

- **Coordination requires capacity.**

A single entry point for applicants is useful only if it is furnished with the human and technical resources necessary to obtain decisions and resolve interfaces between competent authorities more quickly than operators could by approaching each authority directly.

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SESSION 01 | MODERATED BY JOÃO LUPI

Institutional Strategy and Governance

Tiago Marques, Fabio Angellotti and Luce Fabreguettes examined how European policy, institutional demand and industrial investment can support a more coherent launch ecosystem.

Aligning responsibilities and investment

The discussion started from the observation that cooperation between stakeholders on risk management and safety compliance, and in investment in shared infrastructure, is an efficient avenue to share costs and increase returns. It was suggested that the industry should bring its operational challenges to regulators early enough to inform policy design. The complementary roles of European institutions (in setting policy), Member States (in operationalising and implementing) and industry (in directing investment) were also stressed, along with the importance of regulatory coherence across those roles. Asked about the main obstacles facing European spaceports, participants identified regulatory complexity, lengthy infrastructure development and uncertain investment returns. Limited regulatory interoperability[1] was also highlighted, along with the misalignment of public and private investment.

Operator-centred interoperability

An industry intervention highlighted common technical standards and reusable designs as foundations for compatibility between launch vehicles and spaceports. The reuse of licensing evidence alongside common technical requirements was supported. The exchange was once more linked to AEAAS work on regulatory interoperability in the White Paper and technical assessment in its other deliverables. It was further observed that resilience and responsiveness are also key for true interoperability. The importance of standards uptake was emphasised, while reference was made to existing European experience with interoperable vehicles. This raised the question of how common requirements can accommodate different vehicles and launch profiles.

[1] Regulatory interoperability under the White Paper is defined means that spaceport operators and users can exchange sites for a launch campaign under compatible technical and operational interfaces across sites and jurisdictions, which render re-assessment activities unnecessary, while preserving justified national and site-specific safeguards. It means, in essence, that authorities across jurisdictions require compatible information, coordinate and accept evidence-reuse practices that reduce avoidable friction while preserving legitimate national and site-specific differences and responsibilities.

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Using institutional demand to improve predictability

On the aggregation of demand across European institutions and agencies, reference was made to existing shared responsibility frameworks and the opportunity to build on existing space programmes. The Commission's dual role as policymaker and customer was described, with a call for simpler and more coherent action. It was also highlighted that institutional preference for European solutions serves as a powerful policy instrument. It was noted that launch missions do not all need the same infrastructure, which adds a layer of complexity to the aggregation of demand and to interoperability. This intervention highlighted the need to examine demand and infrastructure requirements together.

Using institutional demand to improve predictability.

Uncertainty and slow decisions were identified as obstacles to innovation. Divergent national frameworks, gaps in capabilities and sites, and insufficient testing infrastructure for access to space were also highlighted. Fragmented demand was connected with unpredictability. The session closed with a concrete challenge for the Alliance: to populate its layered regulatory approach with specific practices that authorities and operators can use.

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SESSION 02 | MODERATED BY MARK ROBERTS

National Agency and Legal Workability

The second session tested regulatory ideas against national licensing experience.

Separating spaceport and launch authorisations

The need to address legislative gaps and define the scope of a spaceport licence was described. In the experience discussed, the site authorisation focused on infrastructure conditions and limitations; the launch authorisation addressed the vehicle and operation. A spaceport licence therefore did not remove the need for a separate launch approval, and drawing the line between spaceport material and launch approval material proved the most challenging decision.

A 240-day timeframe was described as sufficient for obtaining opinions and engaging the institutions concerned in that case, helped by the operator's prompt clarifications. Review and validation of technical documentation, in turn, consumed the most time. On vehicle design changes, it was explained that changes must be communicated and may require an adjustment to the licence or a new licensing process.

Coordinating overlapping regulatory requirements

In the context of the preparation of German space legislation, the coordination of spaceport requirements with other regimes, including maritime and sustainability rules, was identified as a central concern. The exchange highlighted how an authorisation pathway depends on approvals outside the space regulator's remit. Requirements for spectrum and air traffic remain relevant even where applicants have a single point of contact.

Clarifying liability and the role of standards

Asked about a shift from authorisation towards certification and presumptions of compliance, the discussion connected the issue to liability, responsibility for damage, insurance and the benefits of liability caps.

It was also observed that prescriptive requirements can help newcomers understand what is expected, citing ISO and European Cooperation for Space Standardization (ECSS) standards. Clear requirements can therefore help new entrants navigate an approval route.

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Governing common tools and acting promptly

Asked about governance of an interoperable toolkit, reference was made to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as a common international framework. It was also stressed that regulatory design and implementation must move quickly enough to support competitiveness irrespectively of its shape and content.

Making a single entry point effective

The contacts, resources and technical and legal expertise needed to secure opinions from other bodies and assess submitted documents were emphasised. It was noted that a coordinating body cannot necessarily anticipate every requirement of another authority. A practical test was proposed: centralisation is useful when it is faster than approaching each authority separately.

These contributions give AEAAS a concrete basis for assessing a one-stop shop: its effectiveness depends on how it coordinates decisions, the expertise it can access and the time it saves for the applicant.

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IMPLICATIONS AND FOLLOW UP

Priorities for AEAAS

The roundtable identified **follow-up priorities** for the White Paper consultation and final regulatory proposal.

Populate the layered approach with usable practices

AEAAS must now draft recommendations on which best practices should be included in a voluntary interoperability toolkit or addressed through funding, procurement, demand aggregation, programme participation or binding regulation within its layered, hybrid pathway, taking into account the goals of EU space policy and other objectives and guardrails.

Test coordination through operational cases

The project should examine cases involving space, maritime, airspace, environmental and spectrum authorities to determine what a single entry point can resolve, which decisions remain with specialist bodies and where delays arise. The Portuguese experience offers a useful reference, with its timeframe considered in the context of the case discussed.

Use the consultation to resolve specific choices

The White Paper consultation provides the next opportunity to test the layered approach and alternatives.

The four consultation questions are drawn from the White Paper's consultation section. The published deadline for stakeholder comments is **30 November 2026**. AEAAS should use the campaign to seek concrete examples from authorities and operators on the issues raised at the Roundtable and feed the responses into its final proposal for common European regulatory practices.

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