

PRESS RELEASE

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AAM: More than new aircraft

Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) covers more than the development of new aircraft. Taking part in a debate at ILA Berlin, experts examined what kind of infrastructure climate-neutral aircraft would require and how it could be integrated in cities.

Achieving climate-neutral aviation with alternative propulsion systems requires more than innovative aircraft. A corresponding infrastructure is needed too. Experts exchanged their views on this topic at ILA Berlin. In that context, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) presented an extract of its new regulations for vertiports. These are landing pads for flying taxis, which subject to precautions could conceivably be installed in cities. The fact that these electric vehicles are low-noise would be a big advantage for inner-city use.

The aircraft manufacturer Airbus is working on several electrically powered models, including the experimental Vahana, which can fly unmanned, as well as the CityAirbus. To make sure they can be used in the future the aircraft manufacturer is also working on a landing pad infrastructure. Here it would be important to cluster vertiports, as the company has demonstrated in the Brazilian metropolis of Sao Paolo.

Use of existing airfields

As a company developing electrically powered aircraft, Lilium is also designing a corresponding infrastructure. Its low-noise, eco-friendly jets can be used for both passenger and goods transport. According to Marvin König, Government Relations and Public Affairs manager, Europe Markets, one take-off/landing option would be to build commercial vertiports. Upgrades to existing airfields were a good idea, along with landing pads on private or company premises. Lilium is in close contact with large airports.

In her presentation, Ivonne Kuger, VP Corporate Development, Munich Airport International, showed how vertiports could be integrated in a major airport. An eco-system comprising startups, universities and technology companies has made Bavaria an important hub for AAM. One could imagine integrating vertiports at various locations on the airport grounds, providing they did not interfere with flight operations.

The Bundeswehr and the space dimension

Since 13 July 2021 the Bundeswehr has had a space command. At ILA, Base Commander Major General Michael Traut talked about the responsibilities and challenges facing this most recently established

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Bundeswehr unit based in Uedem on the Lower Rhine.

“Space important it is very” – Major General Traut began his speech on the Defence Forum Air Stage in Hall 3 by quoting Jedi Master Yoda from the Star Wars epos and raising smiles in the audience. However, faced with new actors and new threats, the responsibilities of the new command in the wide, not-so-limitless universe were very serious. Traut quoted the recent and stark example of Russian forces targeting one of their own satellites in November 2021, whose debris now constitute a risk to other space actors such as the Starlink network. It was currently impossible to keep track of altogether 5,000 active satellites, as well as 30,000 large and 700,000 tiny objects polluting space. On day one of the war against Ukraine, the transponders of western-built wind turbines were destroyed in a deliberate interference with Ukraine’s communications. “In space, there is a grey zone between military and civilian operations and hardly any regulations exist – it is the new wild west”, said Traut. However, the new command was taking an active role in confronting the various security threats, and in addition to protecting its own systems and evaluating data, its focus was on exchanging views with similar commands among friendly nations. The more digitalised our society was, the more it would become dependent on space and had to be protected from the dangers which that posed. In that respect, the space command cooperated closely with the Bundeswehr’s cyber and information room.

Focus on SMEs at ILA Berlin

On day two of ILA Berlin, five brief presentations on the ISC Stage in Hall 1 impressively highlighted the wide range of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represented at the International Suppliers Center:

Toolcraft (Hall 1/220) is a 3D printing specialist based in Georgensgmünd, Bavaria, which also markets tailored turnkey robotic products, and with them the entire processing chain from the initial concept to production, as well as precision parts in CNC metal cutting, additive manufacturing and injection moulding and mould and die production. Part of the company’s philosophy is virtual customer training, as well as maintaining close contact with joint venture partners and higher education and research institutions. **Proxivison** (Hall 1/360) is based in Bensheim in the state of Hesse and a supplier of innovative optoelectronic products to OEM customers and consumers. The company specialises in UV solar blind detectors which are used both in a military environment and for inspecting high-voltage power lines. The devices are lightweight, small and can be fully controlled online.

Astrofein (Hall 6/260) from Adlershof develops, manufactures and tests space flight components and systems. The SME’s core business is small-scale satellites, position control, structures, mechanisms and payloads. ASTROFEIN is one of the world’s leading manufacturers of reaction wheels featuring intelligent electronics for controlling the position of satellites weighing up to six tonnes. The 90 employees develop, manufacture and integrate the systems entirely in-house and have a 100 square-metre clean room at their disposal.

X2E Aerospace Technologies (Hall 3/462) from Wildau in Brandenburg markets a particularly wide range of services, with a focus on collecting

and processing aviation data. Its in-house developed logging device can store up to three Gigabits of data per second. It also deals with development and manufacturing services, testing on board its own research aircraft based in Strausberg, and everything to do with unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

Dessia is based in Antony, France, and has developed a special software tool for increasing efficiency in development processes, which has already been put to successful use by several companies in the aviation and automotive sectors. The programme is mainly used to accelerate decision-making when evaluating various development paths.

Mega trends in German and European aerospace at ILA Berlin

In her keynote speech at the SPACE MEGATRENDS event at the ILA Space Day Conference on 23 June, Federal Government Aerospace Coordinator Dr. Anna Christmann outlined the substantial benefits of aerospace programmes to humanity over recent decades and examined the opportunities for German and European participation in future projects. Afterwards, a panel of high-ranking figures discussed the mega trends and agreed on the relevant issues.

At ILA Berlin the slogan of the Space Pavilion In Hall 6 is 'Space for Earth'. According to Dr. Christmann, there is no doubt about the benefits of space programmes to humanity. She mentioned weather tracking and navigation satellites as everyday examples. Especially in the face of the climate crisis, space flight with its Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) programme was helping to determine water distribution on Earth. With the arrival of new and flexible actors (including startups with microlaunchers and small satellites) and against the backdrop of the commercial exploitation of space ("new space"), successful joint partnerships with industry had the potential to reduce programme costs.

The state in the role of a customer

"We want to create a competitive situation in which the state is a key customer awarding payload contracts", Christmann said. Sustainability also had to be part of space flight, and by introducing de-orbiting a greater effort had to be made to prevent space debris. "In all of this, ensuring technological sovereignty is increasingly important, but there is no need to accomplish everything on our own. Significant contributions and close partnerships must enable Europe to actively help shape space flight", Christmann said.

Not lagging behind

According to Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA) **Dr. Josef Aschbacher**, Germany and Europe had demonstrated excellence with Galileo, the world's most accurate navigation system, and the Copernicus Earth Observation Programme. However, Europe had to avoid lagging behind, especially in the light of the US and China increasing their budgets. According to the head of the German Space Agency of the DLR and member of the DLR board **Walther Pelzer**, it was necessary to define clear targets: "The programme's benefits must come first – independence may be of value in itself, but Europe has no interest

in a new space race, which the US and China seem to be engaging in.”

Communicating how space flight vastly benefits Earth

According to **Sebastian Roloff**, SPD member of the German Bundestag, the public had not yet fully registered the benefits of space programmes. “They need to know what space flight actually achieves.” BDLI Vice President Aerospace and Chairman of the Board of OHB **Marco R Fuchs** added: “Climate change and decarbonisation are confirmation of the overall direction of space programmes. Other European countries such as Italy and France are already investing more effort and funding in order to fight crises – Germany must not lag behind!”

Support for SME participation in major space programmes

Lastly, **Sebastian Scheiding**, CEO of Astro- und *Feinwerktechnik* Adlershof GmbH, underlined the importance of small and medium-sized companies’ (SMEs) contributing to space programmes: “Our numbers are not small. More than 100 SMEs with a combined workforce of 2,000 make up 20 per cent of the German aerospace industry. Consideration should be given to SMEs and their suppliers where the big issues and programmes are concerned – ideally to the tune of 20 per cent.” Besides Earth observation programmes, telecommunications also generated large business, he said.

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