Opening Address — COSPAR 2025 Symposium

Opening Address by Chief Scientist of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Skourides
November, 3 2025
Royal Hall, Nicosia, 2pm

Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues,

Welcome to Cyprus — to our beautiful island at the crossroads of three continents, where history, culture, and science meet.
On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, it is my distinct honour to welcome you. For millennia, Cyprus has been a crossroads of civilisations and ideas. Today, we are proud to be a global crossroads for the future of space exploration.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Nicosia for the 6th COSPAR Symposium — a global gathering some of the worlds brightest minds in space science and exploration.
Cyprus has always been a meeting point — a place where ideas, cultures, and trade routes have intersected for thousands of years. Today, that same spirit of connection drives our ambition to play a meaningful role in the world of science, technology, and innovation.

As the philosopher Plato once said, "*Astronomy compels the soul to look upwards and leads us from this world to another.*"
Those words, spoken more than two thousand years ago in the ancient Greek world, remind us that humanity's gaze toward the heavens is not new — it is a timeless expression of our shared desire to understand, to explore,

and to transcend, hower today, we don’t just gaze, we are actively involved in exploring the planets and the solar system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am personally excited to be opening this year’s COSPAR Symposium here in Cyprus, surrounded by so many scientists, engineers, and visionaries who are shaping the next frontier of human discovery. Your presence here is both an honour and an inspiration — a reflection of our shared commitment to exploration, knowledge, and progress.

This landmark symposium welcomes leaders from NASA, ESA, JAXA, ISRO, and more than 90 organisations from over 45 countries. The theme, *“Space Exploration 2025: Humanity’s Challenges and Celestial Solutions,”* captures our collective ambition — to harness space science and technology for the progress and wellbeing of humankind.

Hosting one of the world’s most significant gatherings for space research is not a coincidence. It is a validation of Cyprus’s strategic vision — our determination to become a regional hub in research, innovation, and high technology.

COSPAR’s engagement with Cyprus is not merely symbolic; it is catalytic. It fosters international partnerships and knowledge exchange, accelerates the development of Cyprus’s emerging space ecosystem, showcases Cypriot innovation, attracting new collaboration and investment, and provides a launchpad for new research, commercial ventures, and educational initiatives.

From the first spark of wonder that made humanity look to the stars, we have been driven by the desire to understand what lies beyond. Today, space exploration stands as one of the most powerful expressions of human ingenuity — where science, technology, and imagination converge to advance not only discovery but also progress on Earth.

Across the world, nations are returning to the Moon, reaching for Mars, and using data from orbit to address the great challenges of climate, communication, and sustainability. Each of these milestones reminds us that exploration is not only about reaching new worlds — it is about expanding what is possible for our own.

Cyprus shares this ambition. We recognise that space is not the domain of a few nations but the frontier of all humankind.

Our national direction is guided by the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the Government's long-term Vision 2035 — a strategy to build a resilient, knowledge-based, and innovation-driven economy. Within this framework, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy leads national policy for research and innovation, while the Office of the Chief Scientist acts as Cyprus's bridge to the world — connecting our scientific and innovation ecosystem with global markets, showcasing our potential, and inviting partners to grow, collaborate, and invest in our shared future and operationalizing national investments in R&I. Through its close cooperation with the Research and Innovation Foundation, it steers national funding,

policy, and international partnerships that enable Cyprus to take its place as an active contributor to global science and technology.

As Chief Scientist of the Republic of Cyprus and President of the Research and Innovation Foundation, I am personally committed to seeing our national space ecosystem rise — to build a resilient, knowledge-based economy, foster scientific excellence, and ensure that research and innovation are successfully commercialised, positioning Cyprus as a dynamic regional hub for science, technology, and entrepreneurship.

The Research and Innovation Foundation serves as the national funding authority for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Since its establishment, it has played a decisive role in shaping Cyprus's innovation landscape — supporting thousands of researchers, startups, and enterprises, and mobilising hundreds of millions of euros through national and European programmes.

Among its flagship initiatives is the establishment of the Cyprus Space Research and Innovation Centre, C-SpaRC, funded under the Strategic Research Infrastructures Programme of the Research and Innovation Foundation with a total budget of 2.5 million euros. The project, led by the Cyprus Space Exploration Organisation (CSEO) in partnership with Space Systems Solutions (S3), the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, the University of Cyprus, the CYENS Centre of Excellence, and Aretaeio Medical Centre with advanced partners NASA TRISH, Lockheed Martin, and Sodangula geophysical observatory established a state-of-the-art facility for rapid prototyping, production, integration, space testing, and space qualification.

C-SpaRC represents a new chapter for Cyprus's space capabilities. During its inauguration, CSEO announced Cyprus's first domestically developed satellite, scheduled for launch in 2026 with the support of NASA and COSPAR. The satellite will be manufactured locally using Selective Laser Melting (SLM) 3D metal printing — an advanced process capable of producing complex components in aluminium, titanium, steel, and even platinum, at precision levels rarely available elsewhere in Europe.

C-SpaRC currently hosts Cyprus's only SLM metal printer, one of the few of its kind in Europe. This infrastructure will soon become accessible to members of the Cyprus Space Cluster, encouraging open collaboration between research institutions and industry and advancing Cyprus's progress toward full European Space Agency membership.

Beyond engineering, C-SpaRC is advancing space-weather forecasting and space-health research. In partnership with the Sodankylä Geophysical Observatory and CYENS, Cypriot scientists are developing AI-driven space-weather models capable of predicting solar flares and mitigating their impact on Earth's critical infrastructure. At the same time, joint studies with NASA's TRISH and the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics are exploring the biological effects of cosmic radiation and microgravity on astronauts using organ-on-a-chip technology — work that not only supports NASA's Artemis lunar missions but also yields insights relevant to human health on Earth.

Recognised internationally for its achievements, CSEO has won multiple awards at NASA's Space Apps Challenge and has coordinated or participated in 13 funded research and innovation projects with a combined

budget exceeding 11 million euros, underlining Cyprus's growing role in global space research and technological excellence

This achievement reflects the combined vision of the state, the Research and Innovation Foundation, and our strategic partners, — all converging to turn Cyprus's ambition into reality. CSPARK has been a global magnet and accelerator, the driving force behind Cyprus's accession to the Artemis Accord in October 2024, and laid the foundation for C-SpaRC's recognition by COSPAR as one of only two Centres of Excellence worldwide., ~~strengthening Cyprus's position as a credible contributor to global space research, innovation, and technology development.~~

The National Space Strategy of the Republic of Cyprus reflects this broader vision, aiming to transform our nation into a regional centre for space research, innovation, and high technology in the Eastern Mediterranean. It leverages space as a catalyst for economic diversification and scientific advancement, while driving the development of advanced technologies and services — from satellite communications and Earth observation to space-weather modelling and microsatellite production.

At its core, the strategy focuses on building a strong national ecosystem that unites academia, industry, and government, creating the foundations for innovation to flourish. It also places strong emphasis on international collaboration, through Cyprus's Associate Membership in the European

Space Agency, achieved in October 2025, and the signature of Artemis accords with NASA in 2024 — milestones that deepen our participation in global exploration and cooperation.

Equally important, the strategy promotes education and capacity building, inspiring the next generation of Cypriot scientists and engineers to reach beyond boundaries. And throughout, it upholds a central principle: that space must be explored and utilised peacefully, sustainably, and inclusively, for the benefit of all humankind.

Just as Cyprus serves as a bridge of stability and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean, we are also becoming a bridge for global scientific collaboration — uniting nations through shared knowledge and exploration.

At the centre of this progress stands the National Cyprus Space Office, operating under the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, complemented with strategic funding from the Research and Innovation Foundation to support the growth of our national space cluster. The Cyprus Space Exploration Organisation, which proudly hosts this week's symposium, together with the Cyprus Space Committee, plays a vital role in advancing our space agenda and promoting international collaboration. Our emerging space cluster has grown strong and is also comprised of Eratosthenis space center of excellence which features a space incubator. The ecosystem also has other associations such as the Cyprus Space Industry Association whose mission is to support and strengthen Cyprus's international space pursuits promoting research, development and commercialization of advanced space technologies, support education and

workforce development, testing of space-grade components using advanced materials and nanotechnology, subsystems and systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we look ahead, Cyprus's growing role in the international scientific community demonstrates what is possible when a nation combines clear vision, strong governance, and open collaboration. Through these principles, we are building a future where Cyprus contributes to Europe's technological leadership and to the global advancement of science. We aspire to be more than participators, and contributors in this next frontier, participating in ESA programs such as GSTP supporting the development of innovative space technologies and systems for commercial and institutional use. To Participate in ARTES, further participate in Earth observation initiatives enabling Cypriot entities to contribute to environmental monitoring, climate resilience, and data-driven decision making, while also developing capabilities in space situational awareness.

Our journey into space symbolises the values that define us — curiosity, resilience, and the conviction that even a small country can make a meaningful contribution to the great human endeavour of exploration and discovery.

To all delegates and participants, I extend my warmest wishes for a fruitful and inspiring symposium. May your discussions, discoveries, and collaborations here in Nicosia forge the partnerships that will propel humanity's next great leap into the cosmos. Enjoy our hospitality, and welcome once again to Cyprus.

As we embark on this exciting new chapter, I reaffirm our commitment commitment to continue advancing Cyprus's position as a major contributor and trusted partner in global space science and technology.

Let us continue to explore boldly, to innovate fearlessly, and to reach for the stars — together.

Thank you.

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