19th ESSCA Space Policy Workshop

Sociological study of Space Policy

Call for Papers/ Expressions of Interest

Date: Thursday 29 – Friday 30 April 2027
Convenor: Space Policy Research Group - EU*Asia Institute at ESSCA School of Management & Bifröst University
Venue: Bifröst University-Iceland & Online via TEAMS

The Sociology of Space Policy

In today's multipolar world, the number of global players in space has increased and become more complex, since some activities are even carried out as joint collaborative efforts, such as on the International Space Station. Against this backdrop, it makes sense to search for patterns of explanation and anticipation in historical parallels with the current situation. These can be found in investigating naval relations at the age of competing national endeavours of exploration and colonialization of new territories (Leissle, 2017). A combined analysis of navies and air forces should help determine whether the current multipolar configuration of space exploration has historical parallels in naval competition and aerial combat, and whether lessons can be drawn from this for future European and global space policy. An underlying question of this research will be to what extent the EU will be able to shape international relations in space activities. The theoretical framework will draw in particular on Münkler's notion of the EU as an imperial entity (2005 and 2007; Kenneder, 2017).

Therefore, the workshop will welcome papers on questions such as:

- The configuration of multipolar space exploration such as the International Space Station and potential successor projects such as the Moon Village or the Artemis accords.
- The analysis of behaviour and communication patterns in international relations, from hostile aggression to attempts at mutually beneficial collaboration: multilateralism and its respective institutions as well as unilateralism policies that we have seen in recent years more frequently can be treated.
- EU and European Space Policy: to what extent will these actors be in a position to shape international relations in space activities?
- EU as middle power or as a normative power versus unilateralism in space.
- The social behavior of actors' organisations and states in domains similar to space, such as high seas or aerospace.

The 19th ESSCA Space Policy workshop is expected to lead to an edited book on the topic to be published in the Routledge book series Space Power and Politics.

Submission guidelines

Please submit an abstract of 150-200 words using the form on the website of the EU*Asia Institute.

Deadline for paper proposals is: 1 December 2026

You will be notified if your application has been successful by: 8 December 2026.

There are no registration fees for this workshop.

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