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Maltese Presidency secures deal to ensure checks of foreigners visiting the EU

"It remains imperative that European Union Member States adopt a convergent, collective, and harmonised approach in the development of European solutions as a means of addressing current and emerging challenges."

The use of satellite data collected through Earth Observation techniques is an important tool for economic development and in addressing other global challenges, including humanitarian assistance, migration, and security, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion Carmelo Abela said.

"We acknowledge the contribution of European space programmes and projects to fostering sustainable development and security and, in this regard, the European Commission has been an indispensable actor," the Minister said. "It remains imperative that European Union Member States adopt a convergent, collective, and harmonised approach in the development of European solutions as a means of addressing current and emerging challenges."

Minister Abela was addressing a conference themed: 'Space Solutions for Resilience in the Mediterranean', which was organised jointly by the Malta Council for Science and Technology, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the European Commission, under the auspices of the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU. The event, held at Esplora, Kalkara, on the 27th and the 28th of June 2017, brought together policy makers, scientists, service operators, and Earth Observation application specialists from Europe and the Mediterranean region to discuss the innovative concept of assessing the use of space solutions to aid resilience in the Mediterranean.

The topics addressed during the conference included the root causes of migration, and support for economic development in EU partner countries; topics that are at the core of the multilateral work conducted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion and areas where important progress has been registered during Malta's Presidency of the Council of the EU.

On the 26th of October 2016, the EU issued a Space Strategy for Europe and signed a Joint Statement with the ESA, in a bid to maximise the integration of space into European society and economy by increasing the use of space technologies and applications to support public policies. These initiatives are aimed at providing effective solutions to the big societal challenges faced by Europe and the world, strengthening synergies between civilian and security activities in the

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fields of navigation, communication and observation, including through monitoring borders, land, and maritime security conditions.

"We welcome the setting up of a system such as Copernicus, that provides timely and accurate geospatial information gathered from satellite remote sensing and completed by available *in situ* or open data sources," said Minister Abela. "Copernicus is most efficient in addressing disaster management by supporting preparedness and prevention by providing data that helps identify risks and prevent loss of lives and damages, addressing both the response and the recovery phases. Copernicus can act as an early warning system and mitigate against the catastrophic effects caused by natural disasters. This is a clear example of how science and politics can work together for the good of humanity."

On the margins of the conference, Minister Abela had a brief exchange of views with Director of Earth Observation Programmes at the European Space Agency Josef Aschbacher.



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