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GMES and the making of EU military space policy: Beyond the rhetoric

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Introduction

In recent years, the European Union has been locked in a process of developing a European Space Policy. This policy has been not only articulated discursively, but also realised through the development of grand projects involving great technological sophistication and politico-economic significance, such as GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) and Galileo. The official rhetoric has presented these developments as having a purely civilian nature, driven by environmental and security-related interests of the EU and its citizens. Nevertheless, the multiple military applications of both GMES and Galileo, as well as the setting-up of projects of a purely military scope, such as MUSIS (Multinational Space-based Imaging System), under the aegis of the European Defence Agency, demonstrate that the unfolding of the European Space Policy has entailed the establishment of its parallel, military arm.

The latter has not received any significant attention, both empirically and theoretically. Are these developments of a purely civilian nature? What are the sources of the making of EU mil-space policy? What does EU mil-space entail for our understanding of the EU as such? Against the prevailing rhetoric, the paper presents the background to the current European space projects' military applications, focusing in particular on GMES. It then links these developments to two prime factors: the unity of civil and military goals as part of the quest of the EU for strategic autonomy and power projection; and the political economy of European space manufacturers, and the respective quest for global industrial competitiveness. The analysis argues that projects such as GMES have not only a strategic but also a politico-economic rationale, as well as a multitude of de facto military applications that are associated

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with this rationale. The road from the Global Monitoring for Environmental Security to the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, and then to the ‘wider military use of GMES’ (Zandee 2008), is a road replete with the politico-economic necessities of the European capitalist formation.

GMES and Transitions in European Space Policy

The evolution of a European Space Policy dates back to the late 1990s, with the initial launch of the two primary space projects, GMES and Galileo. In 1998, the first reference to a GMES programme was made in the ‘Baveno Manifesto’ (European Commission *et al.* 1998), authored by representatives from the Joint Research Centre, the European Commission - which led the initiative - the European Space Agency (ESA), representatives from the French, UK, German and Italian national space agencies and the industry, represented by the European Association of Remote Sensing Companies (Brachet 2004: 10). Note that the acronym initially stood for ‘Global Monitoring for Environmental Security’. A year later, the name was changed by the EU Space Advisory Group to ‘Global Monitoring for Environment and Security’, thereby inserting an independent security dimension to its scope and rationale (see also Rheticus 2008).

As is often the case with developments at the EU level, the transition from environmental security to environment and security unfolded in a distinctively a-political and un-deliberative manner. The decision to proceed with a dual, security- and environment-oriented project was confirmed at the 2001 Gothenburg Summit, where member-states requested the development of a European capacity for GMES. In the same year, the Council urged the Commission to proceed with the initial phase of GMES (Council 2001). Nevertheless, also in 2001, i.e. after GMES entered its initial phase, it was publicly declared by the Commission that ‘the “S” in GMES covers the security and protection of citizens related to environmental threats’ (European Commission 2001a: 3). It was only when the Commission and ESA presented the findings of their Joint Task Force, which emphasised the need to establish appropriate institutional and funding arrangements, as well as to have the industry involved in the definition of the project’s tools and services (European Commission 2001b: 16) that all clouds with respect to the ‘S’ of GMES were removed. Adding to the project’s public visibility and legitimacy, the European Advisory Group on Aerospace - consisting mainly of industrialists and

Commissioners - authored the STAR 21 Report, where the development of GMES topped the list of recommendations on space (European Advisory Group on Aerospace 2002: 37). The 2003 White Paper on space, following the publication of the Green Paper, set the priorities of GMES and recommended specific actions concerning its implementation, such as including demonstrator projects in the Framework programme and addressing the interface between civil and security usage (European Commission 2003b: 13). European space policy as a whole reached a milestone in November 2004, when the first ever Space Council took place. Eventually, in 2005 the European Commission (2005a: 8) declared GMES 'the second EU flagship', next to Galileo.

In brief, GMES is an earth observation initiative, jointly undertaken by the European Commission and the ESA, and intended to provide information for the support of EU environmental and security policies. Its initial phase was completed in 2008, with the setting-up of three pilot services: emergency management, land monitoring, and marine services. The ESA is in charge of the development and coordination of the space component, and acts as the procurement agency for the GMES-related Sentinel missions. The Commission is responsible for the identification and development of services linked to GMES, as well as for the general management of the project.

The programme involves both the integration of existing national earth observation initiatives, and the development of new satellite families and missions, or 'sentinels' as they are known. The programme consists of six sentinels. Sentinel-1 is a European polar orbiting satellite system with imaging radar. Sentinel-2 will provide high-resolution optical observation capacity, while Sentinel-3 will cover the land and sea surface requirements for optical imaging and low spatial resolution. Finally, Sentinel-4 and Sentinel-5 will focus on the long-term space-based monitoring of atmospheric chemistry, while Jason-CS is an ocean surface topography mission. However, GMES is not only about the inclusion of new satellites; it is a system of systems, focused both on the coordination of existing and future national earth observation programmes, and the addition of new satellites. The applications of GMES are numerous and touch upon several separate technical fields. They include the monitoring of: global atmospheric processes and chemistry, global oceanic conditions, food supply, land cover, forests, wetlands, climate change, air quality, water and coastal zones, habitats and species conservation, land use and state of soil,

marine and urban environment, natural hazards, technological hazards, fishing activities, crop conditions and the evolution of agricultural environment. To these environmental aspects, one should add the security-related ones, such as the provision of information associated with the organisation and distribution of aid, and the improvement of the acquisition and exchange of data and information on conflict prevention, crisis management and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (European Commission 2004: 10-11). At the moment, GMES has entered into its pre-operational phase and in 2011 it is planned to move into the operational phase. The system consists of three components: the space component, the *in situ* component, and services. Four pre-operational services have been launched since 2008: a land monitoring service; a marine service; an atmospheric composition monitoring service; and an emergency response service.

GMES is a project that has entailed and will entail significant financial resources on behalf of the EU and its member states. According to the European Commission, the total cost of the GMES space component for the 2014-2020 period will be approximately €4.2 billion. The total investment dedicated to the space component alone up to the end 2009 was €2.25 billion Euros approximately, 28% of which was funded by the EU budget and 72% by the ESA participating states (European Commission 2009c: 2). During the period 2001-2006, approximately €230 million were spent on GMES demonstration services, out of which about €100 originated from FP 6 and the rest was funded by ESA; note that almost the whole space component of FP 7 was dedicated to GMES (European Commission 2005b: 9). Apart from the space segment, emphasis is placed on services; €48 million have been granted to ESA from the Commission for coordinated data provision for GMES services, while out of FP 7, €35 million were devoted for GMES services development in 2007 and €70 million in 2008 (European Commission 2008d: 5).

Civilian or military? The quest for space security

Both GMES and Galileo are *de facto* military systems, to the extent that they can be used for military purposes. In other words, the compromise that has been achieved between the civil founding principles of EU space policy and its clear military implications does not 'debar from military use of Galileo and GMES' (Dikow 2007: 2). The UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (2006: 1) has explicitly described satellite imaging and satellite navigation - the missions of GMES and

Galileo respectively - as 'military uses of satellites'. The PRS (Public Regulated Service), a key service category of Galileo, is intended for use by, among others, military authorities at times of war. Its applications include "public applications devoted to European and/or national security" as well as 'military/paramilitary resources involved in Petersberg tasks' (Caporale 2005). The very existence of PRS - given the relative accuracy of the civilian signals for any potential civilian use - constitutes Galileo's military dimension.

GMES also has a clear military dimension, since one of the Sentinel missions, served by Sentinels 1 and 2, is the imaging of targeted areas, including high/very high radar and multispectral imaging missions for emergency response and security (European Commission 2009c: 3). Yet, dominant discourse is hesitant to acknowledge this military-related scope; the European Commission has stated that 'for the foreseeable future it is not foreseen to give GMES a defence dimension' (European Commission 2009b: 2). Instead, security is a more preferable word. A working group on the security aspects of GMES, specifically tasked to identify the scope of GMES applications falling into the realm of security, mentioned the following aspects: prevention of and response to crises related to natural and technological risks in Europe; humanitarian aid and international cooperation; conflict prevention, including monitoring of compliance with international treaties; common foreign and security policy and European security and defence policy to support missions related to the 'Petersberg' tasks, i.e. humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks of combat forces; surveillance of European Union borders (Brachet 2004: 13). No special knowledge of the EU is required to realise that most of these tasks are directly related to military action.

The G-MOSAIC (GMES services for Management of Operations, Situational Awareness and Intelligence for regional Crises) project is characteristic of how civilian and military applications are intertwined under the aegis of security in GMES. G-MOSAIC is a three year project, launched in January 2009. It is coordinated by Telespazio, involving 36 partner organizations and a total budget of €15.3 million, most of which is funded by the 7th Framework Programme (FP 7). The project seeks to develop products and pilot services in support of EU external relations policies. The services involve intelligence and early warning support, and crisis management operations support, i.e., they have a clear military scope linked to ESDP and EU interventions. All big space manufacturers are involved in the project, including

EADS Astrium, Telespazio, GMV, Indra Espacio, Thales Alenia Space and Thales Communications. The project's unique feature is that it brings together all major players of GMES security services in Europe: the industry - including specialised SMEs -, space research agencies and academic institutions.

The LIMES (Land and Sea Integrated Monitoring for European Security) project was the first security-related research project associated to GMES, and funded by FP 6. Its goal was to provide expertise and develop services for security applications, involving maritime surveillance and surveillance of critical infrastructure, border management, weapons' proliferation and support to humanitarian missions (European Commission 2008b: 45). That project was also led by Telespazio, together with several other leading space manufacturers, such as Thales Alenia Space and Astrium, as well as research centres and universities.

The conceptual basis of GMES, as reproduced by the hegemonic discourse of EU officials and institutions, is the blurring of the boundaries between civilian and military objectives, uses and operations. The key concept where this blurring takes place is that of 'space security', which includes 'defence and other security applications' (Silvestri 2003: 10; European Space Agency & Istituto Affari Internazionali 2003: 16). Additionally, the European Commission (2005a: 4) has claimed that 'The differentiation between defence infrastructure and internal security infrastructure and systems is becoming blurred'. Günter Verheugen (2006) follows the same line of argumentation: 'the security challenges of today do not follow our old classification of purely civilian or purely military situations...effective crisis management needs to integrate military and civilian operations'. Essentially, what has occurred as part of the making of the EU security paradigm at the discursive level is the removal of the boundaries between civilian and military uses, through the concept of 'dual-use'. Such a removal has led to a broadening of the scope of EU security activities, a duality of means and goals incorporating both civilian and military ones, accompanied by a relative vagueness as to what a system such as GMES is essentially called to do.

For some, such a duality is a construction, promoted by the EU. Frank Slijper (2009: 71), who has produced one of the most powerful and sophisticated critiques of EU space policy, has noted that by 'making space policy such a broad area and at the same time claiming that the distinction between military and civilian use is artificial, the EU is deliberately blurring a distinction that - despite all interdependencies -

certainly exists'. The blurring of this distinction serves a major political role: it allows the Commission to expand the scope of GMES applications, thereby expanding the scope of its potential commercial uses, while at the same time maintaining an aura of political legitimacy. In this sense, this blurring is not an automatic, merely technical development, but a politicised project.

Yet, this is only the one side of the coin. Civilian and military objectives are characterised by a clear unity, not simply because this serves the Commission's long-term goals, but also because of the nature of EU security objectives. In the case of maritime surveillance, for example, space assets can be used by both civilian and military authorities for the purpose of maritime situational awareness, in operations ranging from the monitoring of maritime traffic to military operations. Border surveillance is another such case, where a system like GMES can monitor population movements both at times of peace and at times of war, under the control of civilian and military authorities alike. 'Support to EU external action' is the buzzword that is increasingly used to illuminate the dual, civilian and military dimension of space policy (see European Commission 2009a: 9). This duality is not a mere construction; it reflects the actual duality of the security of the European capitalist formation, in an era of the European Security and Defence Policy, i.e. in an era of power projection.

The primary goal of the EU concerning the security dimension of space is autonomy. Numerous documents and public declarations have castigated Europe's dependence on non-European suppliers and have called for the reduction of technology dependence (Council 2008: 14). Although the claim to autonomy appears evident and unproblematic to many observers, it raises interesting questions. Why does the EU feel that technological dependence from the US is a problem? Don't both of them share the same strategic objectives as part of an alliance? If seen in another light, the claim to autonomy reflects two things: a) the potential for inter-capitalist, and transatlantic in particular, conflict and competition, fuelled by the emergence of a distinct EU security and defence policy; and/or b) the turn to security objectives in order to justify a prevailing logic embedded in economic competitiveness. Autonomy becomes an end to itself only if one assumes that there is a plausible prospect of US-EU divergence and conflict; this is an open question. If not, autonomy is merely a mask for additional spending and protectionism in favour of space manufacturers.

The definitive criterion for deciding the nature of GMES is not only the declared intentions of the authors of GMES as set in public documents, but also the

future potential for alternative applications of GMES, of a more military nature. GMES has a *de facto* potential for future military uses; ‘planned systems such as GALILEO and GMES may have military users (European Commission 2007: 7). In fact, this seems to be not only a potential, but also a necessity, which has not been discursively realised for political reasons of legitimacy and inter-state disagreement. The Green Paper had envisioned GMES as a complementary mechanism to a European satellite observation system for security and defence purposes, initially recommended by the STAR-21 Report (European Commission 2003a: 24). In 2008, the Council pointed to the need for improvement in the synergies between civil and military space programmes (Council 2008: 5). Analysts suggest that GMES could be used for intelligence gathering purposes, if member-states wish to do so in the future (Burzykowska 2006: 37). Tensions between the legal basis of institutions and the military-related nature of GMES do not seem to obstruct the development of the project, despite its military scope. The ‘exclusively peaceful purposes’ mandate of ESA produces one such tension, following voices that call for a re-definition of the role of ESA in GMES with regard to ESDP missions and applications (Dickow 2007: 3). Instead of any such redefinition, the option followed by ESA and EU officials is the narrow interpretation of ‘exclusively peaceful’ as non-aggressive or non-weaponised.

The analysis, thus, stands in full agreement with Slijper’s (2008: 39) key conclusion, that ‘GMES slowly transforms into an important military asset to support future warfare by European and NATO partners’. The turn towards the military applications of earth observation is more clearly demonstrated by the work of the European Defence Agency (EDA). The EDA has been complementing the Commission’s work with another earth observation project, MUSIS. This was launched by six member states (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece and Belgium). It is planned to provide a multinational space-based imaging system for surveillance, reconnaissance and observation, to replace existing national earth-observation systems (Helios II, Pleiades, SAR LUPE and Cosmo-SkyMed) in the long-term, after 2015-2017. In March 2009, MUSIS became an EDA Category B project and was open to participation of other EDA participating Member States (European Defence Agency 2009). The Commission the ESA and the EDA maintain close links, as demonstrated by their joint work on critical space technologies and the setting-up of a joint task force to tackle questions associated with the availability and development of

that technology for both civil and defence-related purposes (European Defence Agency 2008a). Increased cooperation between the Commission and the EDA is itself a sign of the Commission's involvement with security and defence affairs, via space. The following words by the EDA Head of Planning and Policy leave not much to imagination: 'We have already provided the Commission with military requirements for GMES use for maritime surveillance. In the future military requirements for wider military use of GMES will be developed' (Zandee 2008).

Notably, the economic dimension of space is discursively utilised by the EU in order to generate new opportunities in support of this dimension, in a kind of vicious circle. Efforts to develop a capacity for the monitoring and protection of space infrastructure constitute a good example of this trend: 'space assets have become indispensable for our economy and ... their security must thus be ensured' (Council 2008: 13). Needless to say that securing the space assets entails new long-term market and funding opportunities for the European space industry. Moreover, there have been attempts to link GMES to Africa, a region with relative widespread levels of military conflict, through the 'Lisbon Process on GMES and Africa', in search of additional potential users for GMES services.

Strategic or economic? The quest for competitiveness

Official discourse has presented the development of GMES as an undeniable necessity that will produce great technical, scientific and socio-economic benefits. These benefits have been detailed in a major study prepared by Price Waterhouse Cooper (2006) on the instructions of ESA and in close cooperation with the Commission's DG Enterprise. They broadly fall into three categories: Europe as a global partner, preservation and management of natural resources, and sustainable growth. The separate types of benefits include: climate change adaptation, global environmental protection, humanitarian response, air quality, marine environment, forest ecosystem management, civil protection, and efficient delivery of public services. While the contribution of a system such as GMES to sustainable development and environmental protection is undeniable - if only impossible to quantify - what the study does not mention is the set of benefits that will be enabled by GMES for the European space industry in support of its global competitive status. This omission is indeed striking, considering the participation of representatives of DG Enterprise at all stages of the study. In order to delineate these benefits, one has to

turn to the politico-economic rationale underpinning the programme, rather to any technical or strategic one.

President Barroso has provided one of the clearest descriptions of the economic rationale of engagement with space: ‘Space both requires and generates new technologies, knowledge intensive services, new products and new forms of cooperation. All this stimulates innovation and creates new jobs beyond the space industry’ (Barroso 2008: 2). With respect to space manufacturing, the Competition Council has been keen to emphasise the need of the EU ‘to strengthen its overall and its industry’s competitiveness’ (Council, 2008: 6). Securing long-term funding is the key for the industry’s future survival and planning. Associating this need to a technical, politically neutral requirement is a basic tactic of the proponents of EU space policy. The EU itself has acknowledged that ‘data and service continuity is indispensable and that such continuity must be guaranteed by the European Union, in particular through long-term funding’ (Council 2008: 8). The industry itself has been swift in acknowledging the significance of GMES for its competitive survival. ASD-EUROSPACE, the lobbying group of the European space industry prioritised GMES as the primary area of earth observation with future growth potential (Lionnet 2006).

Let us get back to the basics. It is commonplace to state that ‘satellite communication was sponsored and funded in its infancy by the State’ (Spence 1994: 57). GMES and Galileo are satellite applications. After 2003, i.e. once GMES and Galileo were placed firmly at the centre of the European Space Policy, satellite applications have accounted for over 50% of the total industrial turnover in the field of space, including research, technology and development programmes as well as operational systems. The immediate beneficiaries of GMES are the two largest European space-industrial actors: EADS Astrium and Thales Alenia Space. The two are the direct recipients of GMES funds for its space component. As a prime-contractor, EADS Astrium was awarded the contract for the building of the Sentinel-2 optical satellite in April 2008. The contract was worth €195 million, with a second satellite due to be built in the future. In terms of industrial collaboration, the group of sub-contractors included firms from Germany, France and Spain. Also in April 2008, Thales Alenia Space was awarded a €305 million contract for the provision of the first Sentinel-3 observation satellite. Apart from the prime contractor, the consortium includes sub-contracting firms from Germany, France, Italy and Spain. This development followed the signing of a €229 million contract between Thales Alenia

Space and ESA for the Sentinel-1 observation satellite in June 2007. The two industrial giants, EADS Astrium and Thales Alenia Space have also developed links between them through the Sentinel contracts. For example, the imaging radar of the Sentinel-1 satellite was sub-contracted to EADS Astrium by Thales Alenia Space in an €85 million agreement. Smaller firms also have a stake in GMES; for example, in July 2007 OHB was awarded a contract by Thales Alenia Space for the mission analysis of the Sentinel 1 satellite for polar observation.

However, the key contribution of GMES is not simply to fuel the production of the new Sentinel satellites, but also to produce the market itself for the relevant services, in an orchestrated manner with the users. In the words of a key official, ‘The major innovation of GMES is to direct the focus onto user needs at a pan-European level and to reformulate those needs as a catalogue of user-driven services. These services will be implemented in a standard, coordinated manner across national frontiers, so as to achieve economies of both scale and scope’ (Moutarlier 2008: 9). In this sense, the Commission becomes a state-like institution, whose role is of extreme qualitative and quantitative significance. To begin with, through GMES, the Commission appears to define the requirements of a space system, to integrate its separate sub-systems, as well as to fund a large part of the system’s development and production. As part of the latter task, it ensures the coherence and complementarity of the development of GMES and of research activities undertaken under the aegis of Framework Programmes. Moreover, it ensures the formation of a user community for its services and the continuity of the provision of these services, in addition to the development of the necessary data policy tools and mechanisms. Next, the Commission is one of the major clients of these services - as it currently stands, it is the sole one. The Commission, in other words, responds to the needs of the supply side - the industry - by literally creating demand out of scratch. It is legitimate to assume that the Commission will be eventually the institution funding demand, through the provision of user funding (European Commission 2005a: 6; see also European Commission 2006 for the tasks assigned to the GMES Bureau). And all of these tasks and roles are fulfilled under the decisive leadership of DG Enterprise, which holds the portfolio of space.

One can assume that the emergence of such a project and such a market will lead to changes in the industrial side, through the consolidation of the industry. A programme with the magnitude of GMES also has positive effects for future

consolidation trends, given that it promotes collaboration between prime contractors and small and medium enterprises. Although a future merger of the two European space giants, Thales Alenia Space and EADS Astrium, seems improbable, the potential for consolidation at the sub-contracting level is still great, boosting further the competitiveness of internationalised space-industrial capital.

As for the broader connection between environment, security and economic profitability, the view expressed by Commission Vice-President Verheugen is telling: ‘Improved GMES capabilities are of paramount importance for our environment and security policies...the agreement opens up enormous opportunities for our industry’ (European Commission 2008c). The socio-economic essence of GMES is the massive transfer of public funds to the private sector. The Green Paper (2003a: 20) could not have described the process of this transfer in better terms than the following:

greater priority ought to be given to the process of transferring technologies from the research sector to the commercial sector e.g. by encouraging private investment through long-term commitments by the public authorities with regard to their requirements. It is equally essential to give preference to research actions aimed at industrial applications and value added services which go beyond the strict context of space.

The reason why the Commission is acquiring this massive, state-like role is because the market alone is simply incapable of securing anything close to the survival of space manufacturers. In other words, ‘today and for the foreseeable future, market forces are not strong enough to ensure the stability of the European space industry’ (Gaubert and Lebeau 2009: 40). Therefore, it is not surprising that GMES, as was famously the case with Galileo and the collapse of the public-private partnership negotiations, is a public programme - and is likely to remain so. Public investment is producing new technologies, applications and services at the hands of private corporations, generating new market opportunities and profits. In theory, one could assume that once this process is mature, i.e. once public investment has reached its goals and its recipients, public investment could be replaced by private one. Yet, this is just theory; in reality, this substitution ‘is not likely to happen in the short to medium term. At any event, GMES is expected to remain primarily a public-driven programme (Commission 2008: 5).

Are there any other aspects of the potential contribution of GMES to the promotion of EU space-industrial competitiveness? To begin with, GMES provides significant economic incentives to the space-industrial sector for the broadening of its services and the development of new observation and communication technologies.

This function is inscribed on the fundamental rationale of the project's masterminds: in the words of the European Commission (2004: 9), GMES 'should stimulate the industrial sector to expand its service offer and to develop the innovative technologies that will be required within a dynamic and evolutionary GMES capacity'. Moreover, the creation of a European platform for the coordination of the separate national programmes may increase pressure on smaller countries to increase their funding for space and security projects. The great advantage of the system compared to other, purely military applications, is the co-existence of environmental and security aspects in it, which can largely guarantee political legitimacy among both the member-states and EU institutions.

Transatlantic disparities in military space expenditure are at the heart of the political economy of the use of space for security purposes. National fragmentation, different national traditions, separate markets and duplication in funding and planning in Europe contrasts with the unity and magnitude of the US, its key competitor; 'confronted with the competitive pressure coming from other regions of the world, the European space actors cannot afford to address issues in a dispersed and fragmented way' (European Commission 2001b: 2). For the period 1994-2004 the average percentage of governmental military space investment in Europe was 13% of all space-related investment, as opposed to 50% for the US (Whittle and Filtness 2005: 11). In 1999, US aerospace firms earned €33.7 billion from space activities with three-quarters of this amount coming from governmental sources. European corporations only earned €5.5 billion, out of which only half was in the form of state subsidies (European Advisory Group on Aerospace 2002: 35). Essentially, the primary and decisive difference between the European and US sectoral conditions is 'the much larger domestic defence / security market accessible to US companies' (ECORYS 2008: 12) .

The supersession of member-state divergence is crucial in interpreting the Commission's initiative. With the largest single national space manufacturing industry, France has been the prime national actor favouring a robust GMES. After all, GMES became a joint initiative of the European Commission and ESA in 2000, during the French Presidency. On the contrary, the UK has been very hesitant to commit to an EU Space Policy and to its components, due to its access to US technology and programmes. Add 25 more member-states together with their differing traditions, priorities, national industrial and security interests, etc. A leading

representative of the industry notes: ‘Unlike in the USA, Russia, China and India, public policies ... are elaborated on 27 national basis [sic]. These national policies very often do not use the full potential of space, because they cannot afford it on a national basis...’ (Cipriano, 2007). It is at this point that the Commission enters as a mediator of these diverse national policies and interests, successfully producing grand programmes such as GMES and a relatively coherent - as far as its politico-economic goals are concerned - European Space Policy.

Conclusion

Drawing on the case of GMES, this paper highlighted the multiple linkages that exist between the development of the European Space Policy, its military and security-related applications, and the quest for industrial competitiveness. Despite a hegemonic discourse that stresses the ‘objective’, a-political nature of this policy - emphasising, in the case of GMES, environmental protection and the security of the citizens - the paper suggested an alternative conceptualisation of the project as an attempt to a) safeguard the global competitiveness of the European space industry and of the European capitalist formation as a whole; and b) equip the EU with an additional quasi-military tool in its quest for power projection and strategic autonomy. The two lines of action feed one another; competitiveness reinforces strategic autonomy, and power projection fuels competitiveness. The question is, therefore, not whether GMES has military applications, but rather to what extent it is part of the broader project of the politico-economic expansion of the EU. The paper demonstrated the key role of this programme in promoting the latter. More generally, the case of GMES highlights the unity of socio-economic and strategic considerations in the making of European space, security and ‘defence’ policy. This unity is accompanied by a unity of purpose that exists among institutions that function at the EU level, even when they do not share the same institutional form, such as the supranational EU and the intergovernmental ESA (a conclusion compatible with the findings in Hoerber 2010).

No normative questions and implications are addressed by the analysis, because no such questions need to be addressed. The findings discussed here are not based on any prior normative understanding of the EU, and their potential validity does not depend on any such understanding. In other words, the conceptual association of the European Space Policy with the military ambitions of the EU and with the competitive needs of European space-industrial capital need not produce a

particular normative stance vis-à-vis the EU as such. In fact, it is the current function of the study of the EU as a source of legitimacy for European initiatives and as a mere repetition of the hegemonic discourse of EU elites and institutions that produces and reproduces normative, problem-solving models, and it is this function that needs to be urgently abandoned. As this paper attempted to highlight, the study *of* the European Space Policy - and *of* the EU more general - is one thing. The study *for* the European Space Policy and *for* the EU is another.

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