

## Belgium, Europe and Strategic Autonomy in Space

Evening conference  
16 February 2023  
17:00 – 18:45

*Mr Thomas DERMINE (State Secretary for Economic Recovery and Strategic Investments, in charge of Science Policy)*  
*Dr Octávia PORTUGAL FROTA (Consultant on aerospace, security and defence matters)*  
*Air Force Major Nicolas GÉRÔME (Head of the Space office, Belgian Defence's Strategy department)*

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** organised on **Thursday 16 February 2023** from **17:00 until 18:45** by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the Royal Higher Institute for Defence.

The increasing number of services resulting from the exploitation of satellite resources has led to authorities, communities and individuals becoming increasingly dependent on outer space. In the coming decades, space will be less a matter of exploration and scientific conquest than of domination and supremacy. Besides a specific policy, the European space sector needs a strategy capable of ensuring its autonomous access to space in the long term. As a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) with a leading-edge and niche aerospace industry, Belgium deserves a seat at the table in the debates on the means to achieve this objective.

In the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the fierce competition in the launch market, how can the EU ensure its strategic autonomy in the space sector? What is Belgium's position in this respect within the European Union in general, and in the scientific and industrial fabric in particular? What are the major challenges of the militarisation of space and the role of the Belgian Defence in space security at national and international level?

In order to answer these questions, we will have the pleasure of welcoming Mr Thomas Dermine, state secretary for Economic Recovery and Strategic Investments, in charge of Science Policy; Dr Octávia Portugal Frota, consultant on aerospace, security and defence matters for the EU, NATO and the European Defence Agency (EDA); as well as Air Force Major Nicolas Gêrôme, head of the Space office within the Belgian Defence's Strategy department, who will share their analyses on the European space sector and Belgium's position in this field.

This conference will take place **in English and French** on **Thursday 16 February 2023 at 17:00 in the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**). A simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Dutch will be provided in the conference room. It will not be possible to follow the conference online. However, with the consent of the speakers, the recordings of the presentations will be made available afterwards on our website.

We thank you in advance for registering via the following link: [www.defence-institute.be](http://www.defence-institute.be). **Registration by Monday 13 February 2023 at the latest is compulsory.**

(Signed)

Filip BORREMANS, MSc Eng  
Air Force Colonel GS  
Director-General  
Royal Higher Institute for Defence

**Programme:**

16:30: Welcome  
17:00: Conference and Q&A  
18:45 – 19:30: Reception