



SpaceSUITE

Linking space components for a skilled society

Kicking off the SpaceSUITE project in Genoa, Italy

Between 1 and 2 February 2024, 28 partners and members from Academia, vocational education and training (VET) providers, associations of governments, and representatives of industry companies from Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Netherlands, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia and Estonia, kicked off the new SpaceSUITE project in Genoa, Italy. SpaceSUITE is an ERASMUS+ Blueprint project for the development of innovative resources for education and training to bridge the gap between the supply and demand of skills in the ever growing downstream space sector. The kick off meeting was hosted by Geographical Information Systems International Group (GISIG).

SpaceSUITE builds on the success, and experience of EO4GEO, updating the body of knowledge of Earth Observation and Geo-information, expanding it to the fields of Positioning Navigation and Timing and Satellite Communication. The main objective of the project is to ensure the development of advanced skills in space-related fields and the provision of education and training activities for higher education (HE) and VET for upskilling and reskilling, in particular for professionals, entrepreneurs, graduates and students, which are central in the EU Space Programme.

The meeting started with a welcome speech, given by **Maria Vittoria D’Inzeo**, project officer at European Commission Directorate-General on Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS), who recalled the European Commission’s endeavours towards the creation of a culture of lifelong learning. To achieve this, one of the biggest challenges is to ensure that professionals from different sectors are well-equipped with the necessary skills to take advantage of space data, services and applications and apply these in their works on a daily basis. Maria Vittoria D’Inzeo concluded that: *“SpaceSUITE will be critical for achieving the objectives of the European Commission on skills development in the space sector, and the project is extremely complementary to existing and upcoming initiatives in this area.”*

The SpaceSUITE project team was also greeted by **Franco Malerba**, the first Italian astronaut and space entrepreneur, who gave an inspirational speech and first recalled Europe’s achievements in the space sector, including IRIS2 and Copernicus. He continued by highlighting the many benefits of downstream applications and the importance of skills development and training in the downstream space sector for stepping into the new space age.

The consortium also heard from **Carlo Scatoli**, a senior expert from the European Commission Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EG EMPL), outlining the key success factors for the Blueprint projects, as well as from **Caterina de Giovanelli**, Project Officer from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), who provided some useful tips and information on monitoring Alliance for Innovation, in particular Blueprint projects.

The SpaceSUITE project coordinator, **Milva Carbonaro**, GISIG, highlighted the significance of the project: *“The development of skills, upskilling and reskilling the current work force and attracting new talents, is of key importance for fostering economic growth in the space downstream sector. Through*

SpaceSUITE, the consortium is aiming at ensuring the development of skills intelligence and innovative education and training resources to bridge the gaps and mismatches between skills offer and demand in the space downstream sector, at the same time raising awareness among the wider public and enhancing the inclusion of space downstream and geoinformation applications' value in everyday aspects of life, also attracting new talents to the present and emerging space geospatial professions."

The SpaceSUITE kick off meeting was a great opportunity to bring together the inspiring team of the SpaceSUITE project and discuss the upcoming project's activities.

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