

STATE ORGANIZATION in case of SPACE ACCIDENT

Nowadays, China is launching a hundred rocket by year, Space X constellation is growing and growing to achieve 15 000 satellites in LEO, numbers of start-up and private companies are popping up, new states have developed their own launch space ability, etc.: yes, space is huge, but he's busy.

Almost 11.000 satellites are already in orbit and rockets are bigger and bigger: risk of space debris re-entry making damages on Earth is not utopia. Private companies are investing space business and insurance amounts are more and more important. Space X Starship intends to transport a hundred people to a spaceport near Moon in order to send them to Mars. More and more human lives will depend of a very high level of vessels' safety.

So, the development of space activity is a reality and it won't stop. Due to these fast growing, space accident/incident will proportionally increase too. We must think about a space safety concept to preserve life in and out space.

French government does not have a dedicated organization dealing with safety issues in case of space accident investigation. At the moment, State Aviation Accident Investigation Board (BEA-É) is the national state accident investigation office in charge of state air accident investigations. BEA-É is an independent office investigating on numerous fleets belonging to - or operated by - Ministry of Defence, Home Office and Ministry of Finances.

French space operations law considers space accidents in terms of reimbursement but not in the field of the national organisation to investigate. The objectives are:

- to enhance space activity safety,
- to protect citizens and preserve expensive and rare means,
- to preserve national security and industrial secrets.

A pragmatic answer is to add space domain to existing national air accident investigations organization.

Despite the idea looks like easy, some questions must be solved before declining it in national regulation: coordination with allies in case of data transfer (ITAR/EAR), definition of a what is a space accident/incident (rocket failure, space to space collision, space to air collision, damage on Earth due to re-entry, ...), differences between state space activity and civilian space activity, etc.

BEA-É proposed during ISASI annual Conference to manage an informative group of European nations who are interested to think about space safety investigations. I thank NTSB (US) and AAIB / DAIB (UK) for the precious information they gave us when we started the benchmark of nations who are already organized to do so and had space accident investigations experience too.

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