

## **Switch to Space – 8th October 2018- Palais d’Egmont- Brussels.**

Mister Vice Prime Minister,  
Mister Head of the Astronaut Center  
Mister Director of Belpo,  
Dear Speakers and sponsors,  
And dear Space Enthusiasts!

Good morning!

We are so happy!! **Here we are!**

“Switch to space is a reality after months & months of planning and hard work!

**‘WE’** dared “Switch to Space and we make it possible with your presence and participation!

I can tell you it was a huge challenge for a small association as YouSpace which bridges Students and Space Professionals!!

**But the question! Who is “WE”?**

First of all **“WE”** is the Switch crew. Well, we are not the Red Devils!!

**Not YET!** But we are a lovely team of 27 members with amazing spirits, all volunteers **and** with no prior experience of the organization of such a big event.

You are a wonderful Squad, thank you for your support, availability and your friendship!!

Still, **“WE”** is also our speakers & sponsors, without them nothing would be possible.

Almost, all the space companies, Universities, Research centers, Institutions, the Flemish, Brussels & Walloon Regions are behind us. What a challenge!!

And what an adventure, to federate students & space professionals with 2 aims to give to the future workforce:

- 1/ a clear vision of the numerous space domains and,
- 2/ the enormous opportunities that can be created by an active networking with the space key players.

Thank you - **to all of you** - speakers & sponsors to make our dream feasible, and to make it REAL!!

**Furthermore, I have a deep thanks to address to 3 persons:**

**Didier Reynders, Vice Prime Minister,**

Didier, you were among our first sponsors, you believed in our project and gave us the chance to go further by providing such marvelous Egmont Palace which was also a part of our dream! Thank you for your confidence & thank you to be with us today despite your heavy schedule!

**Frank de Winne, our Belgian astronaut,**

Frank, on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 – you were beside us for the launching of YouSpace! It's nearly our 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary!!- All the way, and throughout that period, when we needed your help, you always been there! You never missed a single call! You are a wonderful supporter, and we are very lucky to have you as our Godfather!!

**Jacques Nijskens, Director of Belspo,**

Jacques, you are also a NON-STOP strong supporter of YouSpace from the very beginning. Indeed, you trusted our project and you encouraged us to persevere for “Switch to

Space” when we started launching the idea... also a warm **thanks** to you for the support of Belspo!!

**But time is passing** and the schedule is FULL OF WONDER.

And after this short introduction, I give the floor to Vice Prime Minister, Didier Reynders.

I’m back to explain quickly: Why “Switch to Space” & the guiding line of the day.

I begin with a question:

**What is bridging us -here - today?**

In this room, we came with divers’ backgrounds: we have engineers, lawyers, economists, life scientists, agronomists... If you are not in those, you are in another!! This is the beauty of multidisciplinary!

Under one roof, we have many various statutes: we have students, job seekers, young and Seniors professionals, people working in industries, SMEs, in the research centers, universities, in international institutions and we, also, have policy makers!! And this is the beauty of INTEGRATION

More than 500 registrations with nearly 50% students!! What a success!

And how it’s interesting to look to the topics you have selected!!  
What an assortment!

I have also some useful information to give you about the badges:

**The black ribbon-** are the organizers

**The yellow** are the Students.

**The red** are the Senior professionals,

Black, Yellow, Red...**easy to remember...**

For most of you, the selected topic is indicated on your badge; if not, go wherever you feel the most, follow your intuition and satisfy your passion.

Of course, it's also possible to move from 1 topic to another.

### **But I haven't not yet answer! - What is bridging us -together- today?**

In fact, with such a beautiful mosaic-like audience it's generally difficult to find a common theme that everyone agrees on... In our case it's easy!!

### **So! What is bridging us today?**

"All together we are the Space "ecosystem" in Belgium"

Certainly, this energy flow, is our common passion and enthusiasm for the space sector.

And it is important to remember that to maintain such an ecosystem **alive and Competitive**, we need: Young talents with innovative ideas and Senior talents to transfer the knowledge

So basically, today you are a student; **but tomorrow, perhaps** you will be sitting on the seat of a senior professional and perhaps you will be one of the main decision makers? Or the next successful CEO? Or the next Frank de Winne? Or next Nobel Prize laureate? Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps!

And this is, what this entire program is all about:

### **Let's have a look at the program and what comes next**

In the morning, until the coffee break, we will learn about the context and the fundamental information that everyone should identify: the WHAT, the HOW and the WHO.

**The WHAT** is the situation of Space in this vast changing world.

**Then HOW**, how space missions are designed and what are their elements of success.

**And finally**, WHO are the main actors?

During the coffee break, I invite you to visit the different booths for networking, career advices and professional information!

After the break, we will address two important aspects:

- Firstly we will hear the views from 3 international institutions linked to space sector in Europe: The European Commission, European Space Agency and EUMETSAT. Sabri Mekaoui from the European Commission -REA- will chair the session.
- After we will focus on Belgium and learn about the business approach for three successful companies including: the launchers, the satellites and the ground segments. Dries Agten -Chair of beSPACE - will chair this session

But of course, there are a lot of successful companies in Belgium and you will have the privilege to meet their representatives, at the lunch break, during the splinter's session and in the afternoon at the cocktail.

Then we arrived at the lunch, something I sure you'll appreciated ...

We have one of the best caterers of Belgium, the son of Jean-Michel Lories, Alexis, he launched his own enterprise the "Rocketcatering"!!

After the lunch we will spread over 7 groups. We already spook about it. During these sessions you will have all the time to interact and ask questions.

Good to know, to help you if you get lost! It's a big building, we have 13 volunteers from the Kot Astro-UCL & from ESA. Thank you very much to them to be part of the Switch team & for their availability.

After the splinters, we 'll gather again for the conclusions with Sabri, Linda & Natacha.

And we kept the best for the end !! The drinks and good food in the marvelous "Marble Hall", the last moment for your networking.

I have to conclude: I let you read my conclusion on the screen :

*"Life is like surfing.*

*Go face the sea, don't be afraid to fall into the water, learn how to anticipate & approach the waves, be confident! Feel the pleasure to overcome the difficulties and to be stronger for the next confrontation!*

***Make your professional life a success, make it beautiful!"***

***Good luck!!***

*Dominique Tilmans*