

Speech Dominique Tilmans

“SATELLITE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT”

Sweden, 12th November 2025

Mrs. Ella Carlsson, Director General of the Swedish National Space Agency

Mr. Åke Holmgren, Director of Cybersecurity and Secure Communications of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

Mr. Rodrigo da Costa, Executive Director of EUSPA

Mr. Kristoffer Hultgren, Head of the Space Security Section at the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

Dear Colleagues, Dear Experts,

Good morning,

You know when I think to Sweden, it makes me dream, I love your lifestyle, your beautiful landscapes, your design and the well-known “och din lilla Jultomte”!

A wink to catch your attention

But Sweden is much more than that!!

- You are a nation where space is an ambition.

- You are a country which has become a responsible key strategic Space actor in Defence and Security.

I’m quoting your Minister of Defense, Pål Jonson, who says "Space is a strategic area – its use is of great importance for our societies and, above all, for our Defense". I’ll come back on this.

First, let me warmly thank EUSPA, the Swedish National Space Agency and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency for their excellent collaboration in the

organisation of this important event, connecting space data with real-world needs.

As you know, this workshop is part of a European series on Satellite-based Services for Disaster Risk Management.

Our goal is much more than sharing knowledge, our goal is to connect and harmonise access to space services across Europe:

- To make sure that no one faces a crisis alone.
- To make sure that civil protection, local authorities and first responders can access reliable satellite information: quickly, simply and at low cost.

Each workshop, we are at the 12th, each host country brings unique experience.

And today, Sweden offers a particularly valuable one –you have made space a strategic pillar for facing the many crises which affecting us in Europe.

Here, space is not just a sector of innovation – here space is a national vision.

Your country has long been one of Europe’s pioneers in space.

From the early establishment of the Esrange Space Center in Kiruna in 1966 to its transformation into Europe’s first orbital launch site inaugurated in 2023, Sweden has consistently demonstrated how to combine scientific excellence and innovation.

Esrange is not only a symbol of technological achievement. It is also a cornerstone of Europe’s autonomy in accessing and using space — an asset that supports environmental monitoring, communication, and disaster risk management.

In line with this commitment, last year, your Defence and Security Strategy for Space added a new and crucial dimension: integrating crisis preparedness and civil protection into the heart of Sweden’s space policy.

That is why this event matters.

You know the value of satellite-based information not only to observe - I again quote here your Minister Pål Jonson - “communicate, navigate at any time almost anywhere on Earth. Space is also an operational domain”.

Let me give a concrete example.

In the summer of 2018, Sweden experienced some of the most devastating wildfires in its modern history. Hundreds of people were evacuated, others were warned to remain inside and rail services were disrupted.

During that crisis, the Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS) was activated at the request of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency to deliver rapid mapping products within hours — showing the active fire perimeters, burn scars, and smoke plumes. The maps were then used to guide firefighters, prioritise containment areas, and plan recovery operations once the fires were under control.

This activation showed exactly what we are here to discuss:

That satellite-based services are no longer experimental tools, but operational assets that save time, resources, and lives.

We are gathered today.

- To build on Sweden’s experience,
- To demonstrate how space and DRM can reinforce one another,
- To progress together as Europe

For this, we bring together decision-makers, space professionals, public servants and end users – to exchange and to improve how satellite services support anticipation, management, and recovery in times of crisis.

One word concerning the collaboration between Euspa and Eurisy and I conclude, our mission is to ensure that space solutions are not confined to engineers or specialists — but real tools for society.

We work to bridge the gap between innovation and application, between space agencies and end users, between technology and public service.

The strength of Europe’s resilience lies not only in its technology, but in its cooperation — in our capacity to share knowledge, align efforts, and build common systems that protect all citizens.

I must conclude,

Sweden’s policies remind us that space is not abstract

It’s operational. It’s practical. It saves lives.

By connecting space data, communication, and early warning, we can anticipate crises, respond more effectively, and recover faster.

And by working together — through events like this — we are turning Europe’s space innovation into tangible resilience on the ground.

Because space is not only about looking up,

Space is also about looking ahead.

I thank you.

