

NEREUS General Assembly 2026 follow-up!

The NEREUS General Assembly 2026, held on April 15th at the European Committee of the Regions, brought together members of the network, including regional and EU political representatives, EU officials, industry actors, and experts from academia. The meeting served as a key moment to discuss ongoing activities, strategic priorities, and the evolving role of regions in Europe's space ecosystem.

This year's edition had a particularly strong political dimension, marked by the participation of high-level representatives from both the European Parliament and the European Commission. Their presence underlined the growing recognition of regions as key actors in shaping and implementing European space policy.

The NEREUS General Assembly 2026 was kindly hosted, on behalf of the Bavaria region, by Tobias Gotthardt, Secretary of State of Bavaria and NEREUS Vice-President, at the European Committee of the Regions. NEREUS President Thierry Cotelte opened the session, followed by welcome messages from Vice-Presidents Tobias Gotthardt and Vito Bardi. The opening highlighted the need to better integrate regional ecosystems into EU space policy, strengthen political engagement with EU institutions, and promote Copernicus and satellite data as key tools for innovation, resilience, and evidence-based public policy across European regions. In his video message, Sts Tobias Gotthardt, added that, in the context of major global challenges such as climate change, security and competition, Earth observation is a key tool to address them. He also stressed the crucial role of regions as innovation ecosystems where industry, research and public institutions collaborate.

The General Assembly continued with keynote speeches on the latest EU space policy developments.

Member of the European Parliament François Kalfon (S&D) emphasized the importance of strengthening the role of regions within European space policy frameworks. He highlighted his commitment to bringing regional perspectives more prominently into the discussions of the Intergroup on Sky and Space of the European Parliament, ensuring that regional actors are better represented in future policy developments.

Giancarlo Granero from the European Commission (DG DEFIS, Space Economy Unit) provided an insightful overview of the Commission's activities and current policy priorities in the evolving European space economy. He highlighted the Commission's focus on building a competitive and resilient space ecosystem, supporting innovation, and reinforcing Europe's strategic autonomy through space-based capabilities. He also underlined the importance of taking regions into account as key actors in this transformation, recognizing their essential role in implementation and innovation across Europe.

Roya Ayazi, NEREUS Secretary-General, presented the NEREUS Activities for 2025/26, outlining the network's ongoing work and strategic direction. Her intervention introduced the two panel debates, addressing the strategic positioning of regional and local ecosystems in Europe's space policy transition and capacity building for strengthening regional space capabilities.

The first panel on Strategic Positioning of Regional and Local Ecosystems for Europe's Space Policy Transition brought together key stakeholders, including: François Kalfon; Marina Silveri, Emilia-Romagna Region; Daniela Dobрева-Nielsen (bavAIRia e.V.); Kamil Ziótkowski, co-founder of Supercluster who focused on how regional actors can better position themselves within

Europe's evolving space landscape, enhance competitiveness, and contribute to innovation and policy implementation. The second panel addressed the role of education, research institutions, and regional cooperation in supporting Europe's long-term space ambitions at the regional, European and institutional level. Estefania Blanch (Catalonia Region) Annick Castiaux, Rector of the University of Namur Cristina Ananasso (ECMWF).

The 2026 NEREUS Regional Symposium – European Symposium of NEREUS Regions will take place on 22–23 October 2026 in Emilia-Romagna, in Bologna. Regional representatives, Adriano Gilli and Lorenzo Calabri presented further details on the upcoming symposium, outlining its objectives and thematic focus. They also shared information on the next steps for collaboration with participating regions, aiming to strengthen interregional exchange and cooperation. The symposium is expected to continue fostering dialogue, best practice sharing, and joint initiatives among NEREUS member regions. Further, Ms Anna Huk, Member of the Board of the Podkarpackie Region, announced that the 2027 NEREUS Regional Symposium will be jointly organised by the Podkarpackie and Małopolska regions. The symposium will focus on security, reflecting the growing importance of space-based capabilities in addressing emerging geopolitical and societal challenges.

Next, three important announcements were shared by network partners, emphasizing NEREUS growing contribution in significant international space events: The International Astronautical Congress 2027 in Poznan, presented by Andrzej Bańka (Małopolska Region), the Space Summit for a Resilient Future, to be held in October 2026 in Toulouse, presented by President Cotelle, and the Space Economy Italian Expo presented by Adriano Gilli as a save-the-date announcement as a more detailed document will be provided by the organisers in due course. The General Assembly concluded with an open discussion with participants, followed by statutory affairs.