

**Agora ESA**  
**Towards a Joint EC-ESA Grand Science Challenges Initiative**  
**Monday: 14:00**

Session Convenor (s) Diego Fernandez Prieto (ESA), Gilles Ollier (EC DG-RTD), Anica Huck (EC DG-RTD), Simonetta Cheli (ESA), Jerome Bequignon (ESA), Attilio Gambardella (EC DG-RTD)

Invited Speakers: Patrick Child (Deputy Director General EC DG-RTD), Josef Achbacher (Director of ESA Earth Observation Programmes)

Agenda Points:

- Presentation of the status and plans of the collaboration between ESA EO Programmes and EC Directorate General for Research and Innovation.
- Presentation of the preliminary elements of a new EC-ESA Earth System Science Initiative.

Session scope/description:

Over the next decade, Europe will rely on one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated space-based observation systems in the world. Ensuring that the scientific community benefit from this unprecedented capacity and maximise its scientific impact will require a significant collaborative effort and an integrated approach to science where the synergistic use of Earth Observation (EO) data, in-situ and citizen observations and advanced modelling capabilities together with interdisciplinary research and new technologies will be essential elements. This can only be achieved by promoting a strong programmatic and institutional collaboration in Europe, where different institutions and funding programmes bring together different expertise, data and resources in a synergistic manner ensuring that the final result may be bigger than the sum of the parts. Sharing this vision, the European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation and the European Space Agency's Directorate of Earth Observation Programmes have the will and intention to further advance their existing cooperation in the field of science and research towards the definition of a joint Earth system science initiative based on an effective programmatic alignment and coordination of selected scientific activities under Horizon Europe and FutureEO in terms of goals, content, and planning. This session will present the status and plans to launch such a new joint ESA-EC initiative in 2020.