European Spaceport Insurance: a stakeholder's common approach

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ABSTRACT
Across the Atlantic, a recent GAO report has recommended that the FAA become more actively involved in how commercial launch insurance is organised. The report emphasises the difficulty of obtaining acceptable terms from insurers to cover such facilities for any losses resulting from space launch mishaps. It also highlights the complexity of identifying just what each of the various stakeholders is liable for.

How are these two difficulties dealt with in Europe?

The first of these, it seems, has been resolved for some time: facilities are covered for any damage to ground facilities, including that caused by the launcher in the event of a launch failure. Moreover, permanent reengineering has enabled these insurance terms to be improved considerably over time, with respect to both quality and cost.

The second was resolved more recently by co-insuring the different actors, these being CNES (owner of the land and guarantor of the security/safety of the base), ESA (the principal and contracting authority for the facilities) and Arianespace (launch services provider).