Airports to operate suborbital vehicles from France and Europe

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ABSTRACT

Suborbital flight is a rising activity. The market driver for this new aerospace industry development is the increasing demand to launch small satellites, short duration microgravity research and human spaceflight eventually. This paper will examine the potential development of suborbital operations from airports in Europe.

Requirements to adapt classical aeronautical infrastructure to operate special aerospace vehicles to reach the edge of space will be examined (sites location, logistic, propellants, air-traffic,…). Already existing infrastructure also imply additional functionalities (trajectory monitoring, safety issues,…).

Based on these requirements, this paper will propose some examples of civil and military airports in continental Europe to operate automatic and manned suborbital vehicles. General considerations for each location will be discussed, as well as the creation of associate “AerosSpace Park” for industry and tourism.