



Press release

Luxembourg and ispace, a Tokyo-based lunar robotic exploration company, sign MoU to co-operate within the SpaceResources.lu initiative

Luxembourg, March 2, 2017 – The Luxembourg Government and the Tokyo-based space robotics company ispace Inc. announced today that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the context of the SpaceResources.lu initiative with focus on developing miniaturized technology to discover, map, and utilize resources on the Moon. The governmental SpaceResources.lu initiative aims to promote and support the commercial use of resources gathered from celestial bodies such as asteroids or from the Moon.

Within the framework of this MoU, [ispace](http://ispace.com) intends to focus, through its European office based in Luxembourg, on business development, R&D and on several key technical services, including payload development, engineering and integration. For its part, Luxembourg contributes by providing funding through national R&D grants or programs of the European Space Agency (ESA) to co-fund relevant research and development activities such as the ispace “roving spectrometer”. This project aims to bring an innovative mass spectrometer developed by the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology ([LIST](http://LIST.lu)) to the surface of the Moon to explore elemental compositions of the lunar ice and regolith.

The company ispace Europe SA will be hosted in Luxembourg City within the facilities of Paul Wurth [InCub](http://InCub.lu) which offers, in cooperation with the national business incubator [Technoport](http://Technoport.lu)[®], a dedicated support program for innovative and technology-driven companies.

Luxembourg Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy, Étienne Schneider, stated: “The Luxembourg Government forges ahead with the SpaceResources.lu initiative. With ispace from Japan, we welcome another foreign company which chose our country as a European hub for developing highly advanced technologies and capabilities like robotics for exploring and mining resources in space. The cooperation with LIST as a renowned research organization and the collaboration with a key player of the local innovation ecosystem like Paul Wurth provide ispace a promising starting position as a new actor in the Luxembourg space sector.”

“It is a great honor to collaborate with Luxembourg and to be the first space resource company to be recognized for our focus on the Moon. We see the Moon as a strategic stepping stone to further spur human activity in space,” said Takeshi Hakamada, CEO of ispace and the leader of team HAKUTO, one of the finalists of the Google Lunar XPRIZE. “With strong technological, legal and financial support, we are convinced that Luxembourg is the best place for us to begin our European operations.”

“The development of technology solutions for the space sector is a key area of the Materials and Technology Department (MRT) of the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology,” stated Prof. Jens Kreisel, Director of the MRT-LIST. “Within this strategy, the present collaboration with ispace is an excellent fit for us”, added Dr. Tom Wirtz, who heads the Advanced Instrumentation for Ion Nano-Analytics (AINA) group at LIST. “We have a mass spectrometry technology that is of major interest for space applications, and ispace has unique means to deploy this technology to space.”

Georges Rassel, CEO of Paul Wurth, commented: “In the frame of our engineering activities beyond the traditional iron & steel industry, Paul Wurth is constantly looking to cooperate with young technology-driven companies. Given the increasing scarcity of mineral reserves, we have a natural interest in the development of innovative technical solutions allowing to explore resources, which today seem out of reach. We are therefore extremely delighted to welcome ispace Inc. at our incubation program Paul Wurth InCub and we are looking forward to the challenges lying ahead.”

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