

THE MARS SOCIETY



Commissioner Philippe Busquin
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200

B-1049 Brussels

Open Letter

Tuesday, 15 January 2004

Dear Sir

We, the heads of the European chapters of the Mars Society, would like to propose a more important role for Europe in the human exploration of space.

"Through our work across Europe, we have found that public support for the human exploration of the solar system is strong, especially among the younger generations. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the desire for human exploration of the planet Mars. Our regular presentations and discussions at European universities and schools have shown us, how inspirational human exploration of the Solar System is to students of all ages, gender, and social background. We feel there is an immense opportunity to make space exploration a major step in Europe's effort to become the world's leading knowledge based society. Our experience in discussions with students also shows, that, if we do not become a leading partner in the human exploration of Mars, many young, talented engineers, and scientists will leave our continent and look for challenges in the US. The technological gap between the USA and Europe should not be allowed to increase.

We acknowledge the very fruitful process of the European white paper for space policy released in November last year: *"To push forward the boundaries of human capabilities, explore beyond the limits of today's knowledge and inspire the coming generation."*

We call upon you as the commissioner for research in the European Union to combine the European resources and projects in order to take us to Mars, for the benefit of our culture, society, and our citizens.

Let a vision become reality for a united Europe!

Yours faithfully

Mars Society Chapter of

Austria

M. Hettmer

France

R. H.

R. Heidmann

Germany

S. Knuth

Italia

G. G.

G. Gavrighi

Romania

A. Farcas

Spain

C. Santana Gil

The Netherlands

A. Westenberg

United Kingdom

B. Maxwell