

Luxembourg to develop asteroid mining

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The tiny European nation of Luxembourg is not well known as a major player in the space race. However, its government has just made big investments in the future industry of asteroid mining. Private companies will mine asteroids near the Earth for water and



minerals. Some of the things they mine will one day help fuel trips to Mars and beyond. Luxembourg's government is looking at research and development projects to make sure it is one of the leading countries in this new industry. Minister for the economy Etienne Schneider said: "Our aim is to open access to a wealth of previously unexplored mineral resources on lifeless rocks

speeding through space, without damaging natural habitats." Luxembourg is not the only country to look up to the skies for new places to mine. In 2015, US president Barack Obama signed a law that will let American companies mine space resources. In January, the European Space Agency shared a vision for a research village on the Moon. This would be used as a base for mining companies. The US company Deep Space Industries said space resources will allow greater exploration of the solar system without the need to mine resources on Earth. However, there could be problems ahead for mining companies. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 says that natural resources in space are part of mankind's 'common heritage'. This means private companies may not be able to mine asteroids.

Sources: mashable.com / mining-technology.com / space-daily.com

VOCABULARY

- *space*
- *asteroid*
- *Mine (verb)*
- *unexplored*
- *resources*
- *habitat*
- *lifeless*
- *heritage*
- *mankind*
- *Solar system*

Is it **TRUE** or **FALSE**?

- ◆ A 1967 treaty allows companies to mine for space resources. **T / F**
- ◆ Luxembourg's government has not yet invested in asteroid mining. **T / F**
- ◆ Luxembourg is the only country looking into mining space resources. **T / F**
- ◆ Private companies will try to mine asteroids for water. **T / F**
- ◆ The European Space Agency hopes to build a village on the Moon. **T / F**



Let's discuss!

- ◆ What mining is there in your country?
- ◆ What do you think of the idea of asteroid mining?
- ◆ Do you think asteroid mining is a good thing to invest in?
- ◆ What would it be like to work as an asteroid miner?
- ◆ What do you know about asteroids?