

UNIFIED ETHERIAN STELLAR COMMONWEALTH

GALACTIC INFORMATIONAL CODEX

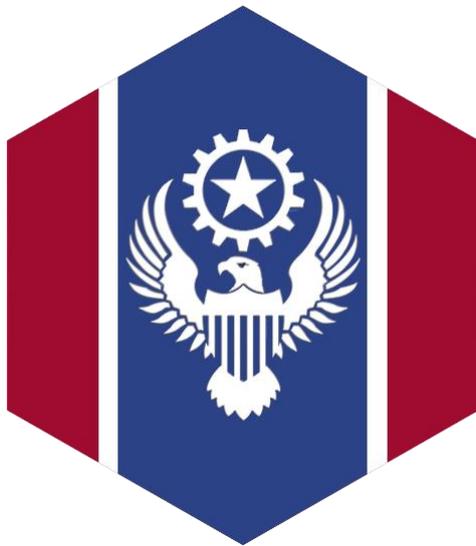


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The Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth (commonly referred to as the 'Commonwealth' or the 'UESC') is a federal digital direct democracy at a galactic scale. It is a biologically diverse nation, occupying over sixteen-hundred star systems and with active inhabitants in over four hundred of them and with a total population numbering nearly one hundred and fifty billion denizens. The star systems it occupies are engaged in an enormous variety of ways, ranging from mere mining stations —most of which are automated, both in their extraction operations as well as their security operations, and are only visited by transport convoys and the occasional military patrol units— to fully-fledged sectorial capitals, much like the planet of Eden, which is historically the first sectorial capital of the UESC and, today, stands as a tribute to the ecological construction of arcologies to maximise space and diminish environmental impact of habitation.

<i>Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth</i>	
	
Flag of the UESC	Coat of Arms of the UESC
MOTTO	
<i>Schyhen peotüs vâmpus ozis kré pamis</i> 'Together, we conquered the sky, sun, and stars.'	
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Capital Planet	Aetheria
Largest City on Planet	New Harmony
Official Language	Etherian
Demonym	Etherian
Religion	89.7% Aurelium 8.7% Irreligious 1.6% Other
Historical Events	
Union of Communes	12 th Day, 1957
Unified Global Alliance	271 st Day, 2008
Discovery of FTL spaceflight	167 th Day, 2077
Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth	1 st Day, 2100
First extra solar colony	323 rd Day, 2112
POLITICS	
Government	Digital democracy
> First Speaker	Chelsea Yang-Hi
> Deputy Minister	Aema T'Eal
> Deputy Minister	Jeremy Hudson
Legislature	Unicameral
> Platform	Galactic Assembly
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
Systems	
Occupied Systems	1642
Inhabited Systems	411
Population	
2385 census	149,220,976,115
Economics	
2385 value estimate	£4.831 quadrillion
Currency	'E-ruby' (£)
Date format	dd/mm/yyyy

The UESC's capital world of Aetheria is in the Aurelis star system. This is, singlehandedly, the most densely defended star system in Etherian space; the largest fleet in the Navy, the *Fleet of Guarded Genesis*, guards the habitual entrance points to the star system, as well as key structures and installations throughout the system: mining facilities, orbital habitats, research stations, and the various orbital rings constructed to increase housing and liveable spaces with minimal harm to the surrounding biosphere.

Today, the UESC is an active member of the intragalactic community. Though various regions within the UESC have different views on key subjects, there are others that are totally agreed upon by the majority: the openness of the Etherian borders to civilians, allowing them to arrive freely and settle on any compatible Etherian world; the militaristic defence of its world and territories from pirates and others that would actively harm Aetheria and its denizens; and the necessity to interact with other galactic species, albeit with caution.

1. Etherian Species

The Etherians are a proud species inhabiting the planet of Aetheria. A once feudal and oppressive species, it wasn't until the 19th Century that the nations of the world were replaced with communes, with democratic institutions ensuring the participation of all citizens in the advancement of their society.

The Etherians are a fiercely democratic species, especially since the introduction of telecommunications made the exercise of this democratic right of participation significantly easier across long distances. Because of the nature of such inter-personal communications via the sharing of thought processes and intense connection amongst the Etherians as a species, debate and consensus was always an extremely important attribute of the



There are approximately 150 billion Etherians in the galaxy today.

Etherian society. The development of technological tools that permitted long-distance communication and debate only furthered these goals; across entire worlds and communes, the Etherians are constantly in debate and work together to construct a future that safeguards the common good of their society as well as —since the establishment of the Commonwealth— the entirety of the UESC.

A very important difference between the Etherians and many other species in the galaxy is the heavyweight presence of genetic and synthetic manipulation of the Etherian body, introduced after a painstakingly lengthy process of species-wide modification in the 22nd Century. Although this isn't common amongst all colony worlds of the UESC, it is a relatively common occurrence; as such, it is even noted that, on some worlds, habitual genetic growth has been actively *dropped* in favour of other methods, the most popular being the aptly-named '*techno-organic cauldron*', what is essentially a cooking stove where a blended body of organic-synthetic material is produced and an Etherian consciousness is uploaded after coming of age. Most recently, advancements in this field have led to these organic-synthetic blends receiving uploaded artificial intelligences, although currently the majority of applications of AI remain in more effusive forms.

Aetheria is the homeworld of the Etherians, and it is, too, a unique planet. Despite being 80% water, islands are rare and far between; instead, an exorbitant percentage of the planet's total landmass —approximately 97% of it— is located on a singular landmass known as Mikervia, which itself is separated into another seven continents as per various other geographical landmarks. These seven continents are what formed the initial Union of Communes, the precursor to the modern UESC. Today, the territory of the UESC is divided into several 'Blocs', each of which is divided into 'Teyrnirs' and then 'Communes', with a few distinct autonomous zones that do not constitute such areas themselves (such as inhabited space stations).

2. History

The history of the UESC as an institution is a relatively long one and can be traced to the creation of the Unified Global Alliance that was constructed during the 19th Century on the planet of Aetheria. The path towards the discovery of spaceflight was facilitated by this previous institution, as was the construction of its future iterations.

2.1. Pre-spaceflight Era

From the Dawn of the Etherian species, the concept of expansion was one that was essentially unheard of. Preferring diplomacy and negotiation, as well as bartering, to such militaristic conflicts, the Etherians never grew into large empires spanning hundreds of thousands of square kilometres, but rather, into hundreds of thousands of smaller communes which occupied lands on which they generated food, whilst others generated other goods of value that were freely traded amongst the communes.

This relatively peaceful existence –though, notably, not without the presence of localised authoritarianism– permitted the widespread exchange of knowledge across the communes: new, more efficient methods of production, philosophical thoughts, internal organisational structure and even religion spread like wildfire across the Etherian communes of the world.

It was not until the 20th Century, however, that the need to unify all peoples of Aetheria ever became relevant. This was largely because technology had begun to advance at an enormously rapid pace, and various new discoveries were being made. Several independent groups of intellectuals began advocating for a unified Aetheria attempt to break ‘free of the shackles that hold us from the heavens’, something that immediately dazzled the public opinion and was pushed on every possible agenda.

In the desire to complete such a feat, the Union of Communes was established, in which a variety of amalgamations of smaller communes banded

together to work towards the common goal. These were not, however, all the communes of the Etherian people and there was some minor animosity between those that joined the UoC and those that did not. This animosity, however, was relatively short-lived; once the enormous advantages of the pooled resources of the UoC was envisioned and implemented in pursuit of the technological marvel of space travel, thousands more communes joined their ranks.

In the year 1991, with the UoC occupying more than 70% of the planet and with various space stations and operations on-going –as well as other technological advances in the fields of robotics, computing, and others– the UoC held a summit in which all communes on the planet were invited to attend. Although it was not the objective of the summit itself –as this was merely intended to secure closer relations amongst all communes, including those that had yet to join the UoC–, this summit would be the first in which the idea of the Unified Global Alliance was discussed.

In 2008, in a mass global referendum undertaken, for the very first time, across the world web, the project to construct the Unified Global Alliance including all communes on the planet was approved by an enormous margin of 98,7%. The birth of this new international project paved the way for enormous socioeconomic, cultural and scientific development. Suddenly, the tools and resources that formed part of the key infrastructure on one side of the planet were rapidly disseminated to groups in other parts of the world. This caused an incredible rise in efficiency and technological development.

2.2. Discovery of Precursor Ruins

The enormous advances brought forth by the establishment of the Unified Global Alliance were, until then, unprecedented: massive strides in robotics and computing technology, improved automation sequences and larger reliance on intelligent computing, life-saving advances in the fields of medicine, telecommunications and transportation led to a golden age for Aetheria. It even

allowed the UGA to establish the first local operating bases on the surface of Aetheria’s two moons, Janiri and Lucen, in 2021 and 2024, respectively.

These technological advances culminated in 2053 with the launch of the first official mission to establish a base for the first time on an entirely different planet — the closest planet to Aetheria, Lusia, was a semi-hospitable planet with drinkable liquid water, despite the atmosphere being filled with toxic gases—. This was the most daring feat to be undertaken by the Etherians until that moment.



The first large-scale immigration vessel travelling from Aetheria to Lusia in 2069.

Launched in 2053, the gargantuan vessels taking the colonists to their new world roamed the void for seven months before touching down on the surface of Lusia. Although with many hardships and, at two separate points, the looming possibility of

catastrophic failure forcing the colonists to take back to the skies, in 2055, the colony was officially dubbed ‘self-sufficient’. This was celebrated euphorically on Aetheria: for the first time in history, the Etherians were one step closer to attaining essential immortality.

Two decades later, the colony on Lusia was a marvel of Etherian engineering and endurance. It was in the year 2077 during an excavation into a mountain to obtain additional minerals that the first ruins of the Precursor were discovered. Before the hour was out, the information had reached the media outlets on Aetheria, who were blasting the most impactful headline in Etherian history: *Aliens finally discovered: Aetheria does not stand alone*. The Central Executive Council in New Harmony, the seat of government of the UGA, was quick to calm spirits in the hopes of containing the situation and guaranteed that any new discoveries would be immediately spread for the benefit of all Etherians.

The following months were filled with intense scientific research and the establishment of a cordon by the UGA in the mines, which were off-limits to anyone without the specific government-issued permits and protected by the small guard force sent after tourism and regularised immigration to Lusia was permitted in 2065. Finally, in the last week of 2077, Etherian scientists deciphered the language of the Precursors, allowing them to begin the thorough process of translating the enormous archives they'd discovered.

This discovery led to technological advances never-before-seen for the Etherians, ushering them further into a rich golden age. Although models, explanations, and various new technologies were pulled from the Precursor archives —such as new hydroponic technologies, improvements in computing and robotics science, etc.— the two most important discoveries made were the design blueprints of what are now known as 'slipspace drives', which would allow interstellar travel at faster-than-light speeds, and the intricate machine-learning technologies required to make sentient artificial intelligences. These two decisive technologies propelled the UGA into a new era of growth and prosperity throughout the entirety of the solar system.

2.3. Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth

In 2093, with the construction of hundreds of new stations prepared for the following decade throughout the solar system, many on Aetheria were beginning to wonder whether the era of interstellar travel and colonisation was truly upon them. FTL technology made it possible to vastly improve travel within the system, in such a way that a person could take a one hour commute from one station to another, or from one planet to another, in their daily work cycle. This augmented efficiency and specialisation made it evident that the system would have projects for complete colonisation before the century was out. However, one question continued to appear in the Etherian Assembly: *'Will we push to colonise beyond the confines of our solar system?'*

The debate continued in the Assembly for several years, with no true consensus found amongst the Etherians. The format that such a colonisation must take, the ways in which communication would work between them — since the advent of FTL technology, light-speed communications were essentially obsolete, making courier services at FTL speeds the norm—, as well as the territorial and political organisation to ensure the union of all Etherians.

It was not until 2095 that a project convinced the Assembly. This project, initially referred to as the United Commonwealth of Aetheria, was the accumulation of years of debate, finally bringing to the table the response to every aspect of such an interstellar organisation. Furthermore, the discovery of tachyon communications, thanks to the Precursor ruins, simplified the structure of administrative organisation throughout this hypothetical interstellar empire. After several more years of debate and years of preparing a constitutional basis for the succession of the Unified Global Alliance, on the first day of 2100, the Interstellar Constitution of 2100 —establishing, henceforth, the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth— was approved by the Assembly. As such, the modern state of the Etherian people was born.

3. Government

The evolution of the government of the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth is an important one, and one that must not be overlooked in order to fully understand the development of the modern state of the Etherian people. Originally, the UESC was significantly more ‘delegated’, meaning that it was more akin to a union of individually independent republics of Etherians rather than a single cohesive Etherian state. It was similar to how the Unified Global Alliance—and before it, the Union of Communes— had operated. However, the extreme lengths and intricate coordination required to fully colonise entire star systems, as well as its defence and cost-maintenance, forced the reorganisation of the UESC in 2130 to a significantly more cohesive, federalised republic.

In this new paradigm, the federal government would retake several competences from the constituent republics and maintain a coordinative nature in the remaining functions. This allowed the federal government to reorganise and redistribute resources across the star clusters, most importantly for the purposes of advancing the establishment of new developments in nascent colonies. However, each individual republic would still maintain a great deal of political autonomy, which was a tenet that remained at the root of the democratic nature of the Etherian people.

In the end, the construct that emerged from the Assembly was akin to a supranational union of states, with the exception that these states could not secede from the UESC. In this sense, the modern state is more of a federal union of these republics; however, since the Interstellar Constitution of 2100 was merely modified in order to reorganise it into a federalised union, rather than repealed to establish a new constitution, it was decided that that name of the state itself would remain.

3.1. Executive Branch

The federal executive branch of the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth is embodied in the Stellar Commission. This commission, formed of twenty-eight members that divide amongst themselves the various tasks and duties of the federal government, is a collegiate body that acts as the centre of executive power within the UESC. The members of the Stellar Commission are elected by the Galactic Assembly, which first chooses the First Speaker and two Deputy Ministers. After these three members –which shall collectively embody the head of Government of the UESC– are elected, they shall form the rest of the Commission and present it to the Galactic Assembly for approval.

Despite the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth maintaining a direct democracy in which each and every denizen of the Commonwealth can participate in the legislative body –and, thus, there is no need for a physical

representation of this body, as it is merely through forums and online connections that bills are debated upon—, the executive body of government does physically meet and operate in unison. This is done on the planet of Aetheria in the ‘capital’ city of New Harmony, where the enormous Presidium building resides.

The First Speaker shall be the head of State of the Commonwealth and shall act both as a representative figure for the Commission to the people as well as to other interstellar powers. However, the Stellar Commission also operates with a figure that acts as the spokesperson of the Stellar Commission to the Public Administration itself, in order to ensure that any and all actions undertaken by the Stellar Commission are in accordance with the law. This is the position of the ‘Arbiter’, which is a high-ranking member of government selected at random each year for the six years of the Commission’s duration.

3.2. Legislative Branch

The legislative branch of the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth is a single-chamber e-democracy. There is no physical representation of the chamber itself; rather, what this means is that all bills passed in the legislative branch receive the approval of all citizens of the UESC that operate underneath the organism that is approving the bill. For instance, a bill passed in a specific colony requires the collective approval of all Etherian citizens that live in the colony in question, but for a bill to pass in the Galactic Assembly, it requires the approval of all citizens in the entirety of the UESC. This is true for all levels of legislative branches across the Commonwealth.

In a bid to seek consensus amongst the parties concerned, rather than the rule of the majority over the minority, the Assembly’s most common bills – known officially as ‘acts’– require 60% approval. The less common bills –the ‘constitutional acts’, which are exclusive to matters pertaining to the fundamental rights as stated in the Interstellar Constitution of 2100 as well as other topics specifically reserved for it by the Constitution— require 70% majority. The only

item requiring a minimum of 50% approval in the Assembly is the approval of the composition of the Stellar Commission.

Though the Assembly does not harbour parties nor representatives for the people, there do exist various factions in the body. These factions are legally recognised groups of people that have a specific end in mind or wish to carry out the defence of a specific ideal or ethic. There is no limit to the number of factions that may exist in the Assembly, nor are there limits to the number of factions a particular citizen may form a part of. Factions must be of free entry and exit, and cannot have quotas, payments, or financial accounts tied to their judicial person. However, for a faction to be formed, at least 100,000 citizens must sign up to approve of the creation of said faction.

For a private bill to reach the Assembly, it needs to be supported by at least three factions. Bills presented in the Assembly then have thirty days to speak with other factions to discuss the bill and garner support, as well as debate amongst themselves on any modifications that need to be made. For every period of ten days, there are three days of debate, two days of rest (from an institutional point of view), another three days of debate and two days to vote on all bills presented in that time frame. This means that, in total, any bill will have a total of eighteen days of debate to discuss the bill with all other citizens.

If a bill is passed in the Assembly, the federal Government have five days to communicate it to the various regions and thirty days to present a general plan to the Assembly regarding its implementation. After this, the Assembly will approve a timeframe set by the government, depending on the necessities of the bill in question, to carry out its implementation.

Though there are certain topics for which a citizen must go to the appropriate federal delegation in their closest office of government (be it local, regional, or federal) to vote —such as the approval of the selected candidates for the Stellar Commission— this is not usually the case for voting in the Assembly. In these votes, it is sufficient to connect to an intranet application maintained by

the Assembly for this purpose, sign in using personalised biometrics and then submit the vote in favour, against or in abstention to all proposed bills.

The Assembly also has an administrative body which is chosen by the internal apparatus of the State itself, which selects high-ranking officials of the Administration –unlinked to the members of the incumbent Commission– as simple managers of the Assembly itself, from an administrative standpoint. These must follow the clearly-established rules of the Assembly to ensure the safeguard of the valuable Etherian democracy. Amongst these members of the administration is the Arbiter, who is the singular person who has risen to the position of being ‘in charge’ of the administrative body of the Assembly and guarantees the fluid operation of the legislative body of the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth.

3.3. Structure of Government

The entire structure of the varying levels of government in the Commonwealth is organised down to the smallest dot, thanks to the great efficiency of the artificial intelligence systems that help manage the day-to-day administration on the enormous scale of the UESC. The structure is built in such a way that the federal government maintains a degree of control over the rest of its subservient sectors while also allowing these to maintain some autonomy in their own organisation.

Below this level is the 'Local Colony'. This is the government of each individual planet or habitat and oversees the more day-to-day organisation of the colonies. This includes providing food at the stores, organising events and entertainment, etc. They are presided by the 'Local Conclave', headed by the Governor, and the 'Local Consensus'.

At the root of each of these governments are the UESC's artificial superintelligences, known in truth as 'associated intelligences'. These AI partake in the organisation of the society and are arbiters of the governments to ensure that corruption is non-existent, and that efficiency is as maximised as much as possible. These AI also take care of the menial administrative tasks of each of the governments they're coordinated with.

Each solar province shall have one AI, which will coordinate tasks, shipments and other duties amongst the various inhabited and uninhabited stations and colonies throughout a system. It will have direct control over all unmanned equipment, such as agricultural machines, mining drones, supply depots, etc., and shall coordinate important activity such as loading and shipping –as well as unloading– at space elevators, should they be present in-system. Apart from these AI present in each system, the capital of each cluster –be it a colony or a special orbital station– shall have an additional AI, which shall be in charge of all AI on subservient levels in order to coordinate cluster-wide activities.

4. Communications

Communications are organised throughout the entire UESC in a point-to-point fashion, with various layers of communication requiring different platforms and locations throughout Etherian space.

The first level of communication is local, on par with the colonial level of governance. This communication uses standard luminal communication to connect the Etherians amongst themselves. All Etherians in a station, planet, outpost, moon, etc. are connected amongst themselves for near instant

communication and sharing of knowledge, experiences, memories, and others. This information is then sent to various superluminal communication relays throughout the station, which send all information to the system's main station or other nearby stations, if necessary.

Each star system has one main station, which is usually the largest, most defended, and most populated orbital station in the star system. This station handles communications between different stations of the star system, if it is useful, as well as communications incoming and outgoing from the star system. This station is equipped with a tachyon superluminal communication array, which allows for constant (though not instant) communication with the capital of the cluster.

This leads to the third level of communication, which is centred around the capital station of the cluster, which receives and retransmits all incoming and outgoing messages throughout the system. This is mainly because of two reasons: one, the tachyon superluminal communication arrays outfitted at each star system's main orbital station are primed exclusively to the capital station of the cluster due to construction efficiency, meaning that any messages between neighbouring systems in the same cluster necessarily must go through the cluster's capital. Furthermore, the cluster's capital system is outfitted with quantum-communication buoys, which allow instantaneous communication between the cluster's capital and the capital of the Commonwealth. As such, the cluster's capital system becomes a key bottleneck for all communications between and throughout the entire star cluster.

5. Military

The military of the UESC is an arm controlled by the federal government, which both sends and receives strategic and



Oasis Orbital station, capital of the *Eden Star Cluster*. This is the first orbital capital station of a cluster of the UESC, after the *Pearly Gates Orbital* station in Aurelis.

tactical information from all the fleets and armies stationed through the UESC. They are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defence for the protection and both the domestic and foreign interests of the UESC. It is tasked with ensuring the integrity of the UESC as well as the protection of its citizens and residents from foreign and domestic threats. This does not only include operations against hostile foreign militaries or insurgent groups operating within or outside the UESC, but also reacting in the event of great calamities, such as devastating natural disasters, crippling pandemics or other emergencies that put at risk the safety of the denizens of the UESC that cannot be handled by standard cluster or local governments or even other national organisms (such as the Galactic Security Service and its Commonwealth Guard regiment).

The commander in chief of the military is the First Speaker of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the Government have an integrated organism dubbed the Chiefs of Staff Directive with which the Commission is provided advice in the face of needing military deployments. Despite this fact, individual military operations can and are organised at a sectoral level, needing only the approval of the Chief of Staff Directive to move forward.

The Etherian military is headquartered in the home building of the Department of Defence: the *Pearly Gates Orbital* station over Aetheria. This, however, is only the location where the Chiefs of Staff Directive work on a regular basis and where coordination between the different branches of the military takes place. Each branch has a base in accordance with its own field of operation that acts as its 'headquarters,' in a manner of speaking.



ESV *Eden*, one of the flagships of the Unified Etherian Navy.

The Department of Defence is also in charge of the Commonwealth Guard regiment of the Galactic Security Service (which is, in its entirety, otherwise organised by the Internal Security Office, except during wartime and in extreme necessities). Because of the vast expanse of space and the need to provide garrisons and support against piracy and other malevolent acts throughout the space of the UESC, military service in the UESC has been established as compulsory, although the way this is carried out is extremely specific. Individuals can freely enlist at the age of eighteen (or seventeen, if they have express permission from their parents, tutors or guardians and have completed tertiary education) years of age. Mandatory levying, as it is called in the UESC, begins after the end of tertiary education if the individual in question does not have the intention (or otherwise fails to) inscribe into university.

The main difference between enlisting after tertiary education and being levied is the time; enlisted soldiers will undergo Professional Combat Training. This consists of approximately twenty-one weeks, after which soldiers are transferred to Specialised Individual Training, which can last anywhere from ten to forty weeks, depending on the chosen specialisation. Afterwards, they must serve a minimum of three years active service before being able to solicit their first transfer to the reserve forces of the military. Furthermore, there are no restrictions with regards to the location to which they can be deployed; they can be stationed on bases in the Inner Core systems as well as bases in the frontier territories or even deployed to combat theatres, should the need arise.

In contrast, levied personnel undergo a Basic Combat Training regimen of only twelve weeks, after which they are transferred to Advanced Individual Training for another eight weeks. After their training is complete, they are transferred to active service for one year before being automatically retired (unless otherwise stipulated by the individual in question). They are not allowed to be deployed to any territory other than those deemed safe by the Department of Defence, which are habitually restricted to the most established of Etherian colonies in the Inner Core systems.

Compulsory service can be waived in several circumstances, the most obvious being the individual in question having some form of physical or medical impediment that prohibits their participation in military service. If this is not the case, military service can also be waived if the individual is attending university, as under no circumstances can military service interrupt education. Should the individual in question graduate university and find a job in their respective field (which they must justify with the appropriate paperwork at the Bureau of Levied Military Service) within six months, they can definitively waive their service. Should they not find a job, they will be immediately required to present themselves to their nearest military recruitment station. Should the individual continue their education and complete a master or doctoral cycle, they can also definitively waive their service if they so request it; should they not, they can be levied, but go through PCT or the specialised military academy of their choosing.

6. Economy

The economy of the UESC is a complex machine which, in part, relies on the self-sufficiency of each individual star system. Each star system must be capable of providing, to some degree, the various prime resources and machinery they require in order to fulfil its internal demand. However, this does not imply that there is not specialisation; there are various 'specialised' colonies throughout Etherian space which focus on the production of a specific set of goods. For instance, the colony of *Harvest* focusses primarily on the production of foodstuffs for consumption throughout the Commonwealth, given its incredibly fertile soil; meanwhile, the colony of *Neos Atlantis* is essentially an enormous manufactory, producing all types of basic and advanced products for use throughout Etherian space. There are even certain systems –such as the *Epsilon Eridanus* system– which are specifically designated 'military systems', where a majority of weapons productions –from rifles and munitions to corvettes and capital ships– take place.

In general, within a specific cluster, private enterprise is permitted. However, these private enterprises cannot be in fields that provide the necessities to the civil population, such as medicine, agriculture or housing. Furthermore, these private enterprises must be cooperatively owned and democratised by councils directed by the workers themselves to ensure there is no exploitation of the people and to ensure the equal redistribution of wealth. They must also adhere to the five-year plans as established by the government of the cluster under which they operate, along with any specific limitations and directives from the federal government.

7. Culture

7.1. Artificial Superintelligences

Artificial superintelligences, called 'associated intelligences' in the UESC, form an incredibly important part of the lifeline of the Commonwealth. Individualised intelligences are available at practically every station or planet occupied by the Etherians, and they control an enormous amount of the administrative and menial tasks of Etherian colonies with the use of drones and other automated equipment.

Associated intelligences are present usually at provinces and above. The province's AI usually handles all equipment in the star system, including but not limited to patrol drones, mining drones, agricultural equipment, shipments manifests, travel control, interstellar trade and others. They are an integral part of the day-to-day of the Etherians and the logistical marvel of the UESC would be impossible without the constant communication between these artificial intelligences.

Apart from this, associated intelligences are also prevalent within the military branch of the UESC. This is done in both a marine and naval capacity; each fleet, when formed and assigned a capital ship, is assigned an artificial



One of the first models of associated intelligences developed from Precursor technological blueprints.

intelligence. These ships will then be coordinated in movement, weapons discharge, refuelling, FTL engagement, and others entirely by the artificial intelligence. This allows the actual Etherian crew to be reduced greatly and allows for the construction of far larger,

more diverse fleets.

The associated intelligences of the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth have a specific naming convention that consists of three different sections. The first section consists of three letters which do not necessarily correspond to a word in Etherian, but habitually is the base upon which the eventual colloquial name of the associated intelligences arises. For instance, from EVR rises the word *Evar*, meaning 'creator' in Etherian. These are then followed by a set of 3 numbers, which are randomised during creation of the intelligence to obtain distinction between them. The last section is followed by a dash and consists of one additional number. As such, a name could be EVR 843/9.

Despite this fact, it is quite common for associated intelligences to choose words in alien languages when interacting with members of that species to make it easier for them to pronounce.

7.2. Precursors

The futuristic technology wielded by the Etherians was not product of their own research in the fields of spaceflight or interstellar travel, and much less

so in the field of neural networks or artificial superintelligences, both concepts beyond the reach of the smartest Etherians at the time of their discovery. Rather, it was due to the discovery of Precursor (known to the Etherians as the *Kuthrúa*) ruins on the first colony established on another world by the Etherians.

However, for a long time after the discovery of these ruins and the development of advanced technologies, the Etherians desperately searched the stars for proof of the existence of other alien species. The universe was of such enormous dimensions that, statistically, it was probable that other alien species besides the Etherians existed throughout the galaxy. However, if this is the case, then organic life should be evident, not so scarce that, with the enormous quantity of telescopes and sensory data being collected by the Etherians, only the *Kuthrúa* had been detected, and at that, because they made themselves so prevalent in their home system.

With this, the belief that the *Kuthrúa* were the only other intelligent organic species existent in the galaxy began to settle among the Etherians. The discovery of the *zolaith*, a furry creature with pre-sapient intelligence but with the potential for so much more —and the first uplifting project of the Etherians themselves— did not help settle this problem. The discovery of biological creatures was never doubted, as there was evidence of this throughout their own system. However, the lack of intelligent species made it seem that there was some sort of barrier that limited species' growth towards the stars.

As such, this has created a sort of collective obsession with the *Kuthrúa*. The discovery of additional precursor ruins throughout the entire system of Aurelis made it evident that the planet and the Etherians were of some interest to the *Kuthrúa*, and as such, the obsession with these precursors —which, to the Etherians, were the only other intelligent species known to exist or have existed— could only continue to expand. It eventually grew to be one of the purposes of the Etherians themselves; zealously searching the galaxy for clues as to where the *Kuthrúa* may have gone, they eventually came to develop and believe that alien life was a paradox.

The nature of the *Kuthrúa* is unknown, and it was in fact impossible to discern whether they were one species or multiple species in one empire. Both conceptions were terrifying to the Etherians; the first, because the existence of one single organic species in the rest of the galaxy spoke of the enormous risks that species must face in order to develop spaceflight and survive galactic hardships. The second, because this implied that whichever species was considered 'supreme' in this empire would have a level of technological advancement far superior to the rest and, by deduction, the Etherians. This would allow them to potentially answer the greatest questions of the universe; as such, it then became the mission of all Etherian expeditionary forces to conduct a rigorous search of the galaxy to continue to find *Kuthrúa* ruins and eventually discern what happened to this precursor species. To date, no additional ruins have been found.

7.3. Calendar

Prior to the discovery of the first ruins in 2077, the world had standardised the use of a calendar known as the Lithal Calendar. This was based off the birth of Lucretia, one of the many prophetesses that is said to have come to Aetheria in representation of the goddess Auriel, who lived on the surface of Aurelis. However, the discovery of these ruins and, far later, the development of the first artificial intelligence vastly changed the perception of the population with respect to this calendar.

As such, implemented in the year 2100, the Aurelis Calendar has become the standardised calendar for use by the Unified Etherian Stellar Commonwealth. The Aurelis Calendar presents several modifications to the previous system; the first of these is the number of weeks, as it changed to fifty-five nine-day weeks. These weeks are then separated into eleven five-week months throughout the entire year. More precisely, the entire Aurelis Calendar year has 497 27-hour-long days.

Furthermore, the starting year of the calendar was changed to 9,882 BCE on the galactic standard calendar. As such, the current year is the Year 12,167.