



## European Satellite Operators Association ('ESOA') elects new Chairman

**Brussels, 5 May 2006**

The Chief Executive Officers of Europe's satellite operators met on 5<sup>th</sup> May in Brussels for a Board meeting followed by the Annual General Meeting of ESOA, the European Satellite Operators Association. The Board elected Mr. Michael Butler, Chief Operating Officer of Inmarsat, as Chairman of the Board. He will succeed Mr. Enrico Saggese, Director for Space for Finmeccanica and former CEO of Telespazio. Mr. Christodolous Protopapas, CEO of HellasSat, was elected Vice Chairman of the Board. Both appointments are for one-year.

***Mr. Butler said: "ESOA is at a turning point: last year we streamlined the workings of the Association and dedicated more resources to market access and regulatory issues. Now we see that these changes have started making a difference. I hope to build on the momentum set by my predecessor, Enrico Saggese, and make further inroads in areas such as European Space Policy as well. Governments need to realise that European satellite operators are successful assets for Europe who can contribute significantly to making the EU the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world that it seeks to be. We cannot be part of Europe's success story and maintain the lead in our sector unless we receive the support we need from governments and regulators to maintain our natural competitive edge."***

ESOA is presently very active in the regulatory arena: taking an aggressive stance towards changes in spectrum policy such as those being planned in the UK; working hard to ensure that the revision of the European Regulatory Framework takes due note of satellite operators interests and lobbying to ensure that the legal certainty provided by the present TV without Frontiers' Directive is maintained. In 2006, a top priority will be to improve on market access for operators in key markets around the world. Already in 2005 ESOA contributed to trade negotiations between the European Commission and third countries and helped regulators better understand the consequences their policies have on satellite operators.

Another crucial item on Mr. Butler's agenda is to improve the understanding, perception and position of satellite operators in the minds of those making Europe's Space Policy. Satellite operators are competitive players surviving in often imbalanced market conditions and providing communications services where other technology is unavailable or has been rendered useless. Rather than supporting satellite operators, policy makers too often fail to give the industry the support and recognition it deserves and needs. ESOA cannot let this continue.

On this occasion, the ESOA Board of Directors also appointed Mr. Christodolous Protopapas, CEO of HellasSat as Vice-Chairman of ESOA. Mr. Protopapas will support Mr. Butler in leading the Association over the next twelve months. The activities and other details about the Association can be found at ESOA's new website [www.esoa.net](http://www.esoa.net). Further Members of ESOA are: EADS Space Services, Eurasiasat, HellasSat, Hispasat, Inmarsat, New Skies Satellites, SES Sirius, SES GLOBAL, Telenor Broadcasting Holding and Telespazio. Arianespace, EADS Astrium and International Space Brokers are Supporting Members of ESOA.

For more information please contact:

Aarti Holla-Maini  
Secretary General  
European Satellite Operators Association,  
Bastion Tower, 20th Floor, 5, Place du Champ de Mars,  
1050 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32.2.550.35.75  
Fax: + 32.2.550.35.35  
[sg@esoa.net](mailto:sg@esoa.net)