



## **Satellite operators call for a true commitment from the EU to guarantee space services**

*Ministers in charge of Space Affairs agreed in Kourou on the need to strengthen Europe's common policy and foster development of new applications*

Brussels, 23 July 2008

European Ministers gathered for two days in Kourou, French Guiana, to discuss challenges and future initiatives for promoting a strong common EU Space Policy. They all expressed their desire to see the European Union become a “global player” in this sector, looking into areas such as exploration, research, financing mechanisms, competitiveness and monitoring climate change.

Satellite communications play a key role in achieving Europe's objectives. As the Chairman of ESOA and CEO of Eutelsat, Giuliano Berretta, explained, satellites are “an integral and indispensable part of everyday life whether we talk about TV or emergency communication, connectivity in villages, mountains, islands, in-flight and at sea”.

In this regard, ESOA members welcome the agreement achieved by EU ministers in Kourou to foster the development of new space applications and also to guarantee the permanent availability of services. According to Giuliano Berretta, it is “imperative” that satellite communications receive clear recognition in Europe's evolving Space Policy and any other related regulation.” In addition he noted specifically the increasing relevance of satellite communications to “green procurement” policies of the European Union, as they are the only communications technology able to operate today for 15 years using solar energy.

The European Parliament is now debating a new regulatory framework for electronic communications that may jeopardize the long-term stability of distribution of services provided by satellite operators. As part of this Telecoms Review, the new legislation does not account for the singularities and uniqueness of satellite communications required to protect their signal and guarantee access to required spectrum and quality of the service currently offered.

If the new legislation is adopted without any further amendments, many of the benefits brought to citizens by satellites could be negatively affected and the investment climate for the satellite sector as a whole drastically impacted. According to Romain Bausch, ESOA's Vice-Chairman and CEO of SES, the future of the satellite industry as a whole and the viability of the services provided by satellites depend “on the rights to use spectrum remaining stable over the next 20 years, and on signals from space being protected from interference.”

Both ESOA's board members coincide on the fact that “the inclusion of space policy at the highest political level in the EU is a major opportunity to highlight how European

satellite operators are at the forefront of a broad range of highly beneficial civil and public services". That is why in their opinion, Ministers responsible for space "must recognise the pivotal role of satellites and assist in preserving this sector, so that Europe can continue its leadership in advanced communication technologies."

The Kourou informal Ministerial meeting was conceived as a follow-up of the 4<sup>th</sup> Space Council held in 2007. The main objective was to start paving the way for a common Space Policy, which France wishes to have included in the EU financial perspectives 2013 – 2020. The next Space Council will bring together EU Competitiveness Ministers and representatives from the European Space Agency (ESA) on 26 September 2008.

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## **Editors Note**

### **About ESOA**

ESOA is a Brussels-based trade association whose membership brings together all European satellite operators and supporting members including service providers, manufacturers and launch service providers. Set up in 2002, the association goals include raising awareness of commercial satellite technologies and ensuring that satellites benefit from the appropriate political, industrial and regulatory environment to fulfil their vital role in the delivery of communications.  
[www.esoa.net](http://www.esoa.net)

**ESOA members:** Astrium Services, Eurasiasat, Eutelsat, HellasSat, Hispasat, Inmarsat, SES, SES Sirius, Telenor and Telespazio.

**ESOA supporting members:** Arianespace, Astrium Satellites, Avanti, International Space Brokers, Mansat, Marsh, Thales Alenia Space & Willis.

### The Telecommunications package

The Telecommunications package will set the new regulatory framework for electronic communication in Europe including some key issues such as principles for spectrum management, access networks, competition, licensing conditions and fees etc. Substantial changes to the original Commission proposal were introduced after it was voted in the ITRE Parliamentary Committee on 7 July. The adoption of this legislation is ongoing through a co-decision procedure which started in January with the first reading in parliamentary plenary due in September.