



**“50 Years of Satellite Communications, 50 Years of EU”**  
**Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007**  
**Christodoulos A. Protopapas, ESOA Chairman**

I would like to thank all the ESOA members for their kind decision to organize the 2007 General Assembly in Greece. I would also like to thank them for their decision to organize this event here, in Athens, the birthplace of Democracy and equality among citizens; the place where the values of Europe were developed 2500 years ago; in order to celebrate two important life-changing events for mankind in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that happened in the same year 1957: The foundation of the United Europe on March 25<sup>th</sup> in Rome and man's conquering of space.

The first launch to outer space of an artificial satellite constructed by the Soviet Union, named *Sputnik-1*, was set in motion in Kazakh SSR (now Baikonur Cosmodrome). The satellite traveled at a speed of 29000 kilometers per hour and emitted radio signals which were received by scientists and ham radio operators throughout the world. The signals persisted until the transmitter batteries ran out on October 26, 1957. *Sputnik 1* caught fire as it fell from orbit upon reentering Earth's atmosphere, after about 60 million km, made while orbiting.

These two important events promote in mankind and especially in Europe the same moral values of understanding, mutual respect among the nations, recognition of the individuality of each national team and free interchange of ideas and meanings.

European Union became the new Pnyx, the place for the free democratic expression among all the citizens of Europe without any discrimination of color, religious beliefs, language, nationality, financial status and national culture. Satellites are the tools and the medium to promote the values of the European Unity, because they are bridging cultures, ideas, languages and meanings in space.

Satellites today transmit more than 20.000 TV channels worldwide and 4.400 in Europe, which are increasing with an annual rate of 10%. Without the existence of satellite some citizens couldn't enjoy this plethora of languages, cultures and entertainment. Since satellites provide cheap and wide broadcasting coverage, they promote the technology in the electronic media content and they introduce innovations in the satellite broadcasting technology which increase the transmission quality with the new High Definition format or new approach to content delivery to households worldwide.

Today broadband internet connectivity is like literacy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and telecommunications and informatics are today the steam engine of the financial development of societies.

Satellites today are distinguished as the only “green” telecommunication service when compared with terrestrial transmissions, because they operate exclusively with solar energy. It is estimated that the energy consumed by terrestrial TV transmitters is phenomenal, so large that indeed one power station in the UK is required just to provide electricity for all the transmitters.

But the major benefit offered today by satellites is the contribution to sustainable development by bridging the broadband gap between those citizens in Europe who are connected with a cable and those who live in rural areas and do not have access to broadband internet services. With new, innovating techniques, satellites are capable of offering fast, reliable, stable and bidirectional broadband internet service anywhere. As a result of this technology, citizens in rural areas have equal opportunities with citizens in city areas.

Telecom Satellites also establish secure and uninterrupted communications with any ship, boat and car in motion. Inmarsat, one of ESOA Members, offers satellite mobile telephony and broadband services anywhere in the world with prices in some places cheaper than the roaming charges of the terrestrial mobile telephony providers.

When the satellite broadband link is available in the rural areas, then there are unlimited important applications that raise the standard of living of the citizens in rural areas and help the Governments to offer electronic services anywhere in their territories, protecting the environment: Tele-medicine, tele-education, Teleconference, Security, e-Governance, border monitoring, fire detection in forests, telemetry in water dams, wind parks and water and oil pipes.

We request from the European Commission officials to understand the importance of the broadband connectivity as the only available method today capable of establishing sustainable growth and development in rural areas of Europe that will never be connected with cable. It is estimated that in the year 2012, 15 million of European Households will still no cable connection. Satellites are up there, in space, pointed towards us; the technology is ready and is being improved every day. The willingness from the satellite operators to contribute to the development is still very strong.