



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 27 September 2012 - Europe's Satellite day was launched today in Brussels to highlight Europe's success in this strategic high-tech sector that has the potential to contribute more than €100 billion to Europe's economy, to save billions in the roll-out of broadband networks and to significantly increase European GDP by quickly closing the digital divide. Despite its strategic and economic importance, however, industry representatives warned that the key role of satellite communications is often overlooked in policymaking at EU level and in international negotiations potentially jeopardising future operational capabilities.

Satellites are extremely vulnerable and dependent on a well-protected and managed spectrum on a global level, since signals from the orbits are susceptible to interference from terrestrial applications. One example would be C-band services, which are in high demand in Africa but not as widely used in Europe. Due to the broad coverage zones of satellites, any regulation in Europe also affects North African service delivery. Satellite operators expressed concern that the one size-fits-all approach of policy-making towards enabling Europe's digital future and the lack of awareness and narrow perception of the satellite contribution might impact their ability to access key satellite spectrum in the future.

Speaking at the conference, **Aarti Holla**, ESOA's Secretary General said: *"Satellites need to maintain unrestricted access to orbital resources and associated spectrum to safeguard uninterrupted service provisioning for the full range of use-cases they enable today."* The European satellite industry, home to the world's four leading satellite operators, the world's foremost launcher and 2 leading satellite manufacturers, today accounts for more than half of all commercial communications satellites in space, with a total investment value of over €20 billion. It directly and indirectly creates more than 200,000 highly qualified jobs and €10 billion of revenue, as well as playing a significant strategic role, enabling independent launch and defence capabilities and putting Europe at the leading edge of new state-of-the-art technologies.

Yet, according to **a new independent report** presented today to the conference, the current, mostly fibre-driven vision of the Digital Agenda does not take into account that an efficient communications ecosystem will require satellites in order to cope with immense volumes of data that will have to be distributed throughout these networks, and to ensure fast roll-out, superior economics and robust network operations. Referring to forecasts by Cisco, the report says that the sum of all forms of video will be approximately 86% of the consumer IP traffic by 2016. Terrestrial networks will not be able to cope with those volumes alone: satellite will have to be used for offloading traffic. Thanks to new technologies, fast broadband access via satellite is also the most viable option for consumers and businesses in remote and low-density-population areas, where alternative technologies are not available, not appropriate because of delicate or protected eco-systems or simply too costly to roll out.

Entitled **“Why satellites matter: The relevance of Commercial Satellites in the 21st Century – a perspective 2012 – 2020”**, the study by international management consulting experts Booz&Co, shows that broadcast and multicast services are in fact most efficient with satellites, making them a key building block of **hybrid networks**. Satellite communications can speed up broadband rollout in Europe and allow access for all, already today. The report highlights also that emergency services, positioning and navigation, disaster recovery and Earth observation for a multitude of uses rely on satellites, which stay operationally independent from events on earth, including in the most remote areas and over difficult and inaccessible terrains, oceans and mountains.

Speaking at the conference **Claus Sørensen**, Director-General of DG ECHO, European Commission acknowledged the vital role of satellites in delivering aid to remote regions in crisis and to disaster-hit communities: *“DG ECHO relies on solid communication capabilities for its operations, especially for coordinating efforts in the field and with HQ. Satellite communications are a vital component of ECHO's operational capacity and the establishment of its Emergency Response Centre in 2013 will bolster the use of satellite communication and imagery.”* **Paul Margie**, Representative of Télécoms Sans Frontières said: *“Through its emergency deployments and long term development programs, TSF seeks to make a positive difference to the world and contribute to its development through satellite communications, engaging in the dynamic recovery and development processes at local, regional and global levels.”*

Other speakers, including **Paul Weissenberg**, Deputy Director General, DG Enterprise & industry, European Commission; **Jean-Claude Thébault**, Director General, Bureau of European Policy Advisers; **Elisabetta Gardini**, Member, European Parliament; **Michel de Rosen**, Vice-Chair ESOA, & CEO EUTELSAT; **Mercedes Bresso**, Vice-President, Committee of the Regions; **Magali Vaissiere**, Director of Telecommunications and Integrated Applications, European Space Agency (ESA) and **Giuseppe Viriglio**, Vice President, EUROSPACE looked at the socio-economical as well as strategic and scientific contribution of satellites.

Michel de Rosen, CEO of Eutelsat and Vice-chairman of ESOA, welcoming the launch of European Satellite Day, said: *“Satellite services make peoples' lives better but they may not always know it. In order to reap the benefits they have to offer, policy makers need to promote a better integration of satellite into the technology mix of Europe's communications ecosystem; this will allow a range of policy objectives to be achieved and contribute to the emergence of hybrid networks that play each technology to its strength for the benefit of the end-user.”*

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For further information on **European Satellite day 2012** please visit visit: www.satelliteday.eu

TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE REPORT or to get in touch with speakers and experts, please contact:

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