



FOREWORD

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It is an honour and a privilege for me to introduce this 2008 edition of the European Space Directory, a valuable source of information in this sector.

Last year we celebrated the 50th anniversaries of spaceflight and the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Over this period, Europe has built up a strong or even leading position in many areas: space science (Venus Express, Rosetta, Smart-1, Mars Express, Huygens/Cassini), earth observation and meteorology (ERS-1/2, Envisat, Meteosat), telecommunications (Artemis) and launchers (Ariane). These ambitious projects and missions have brought significant advances in knowledge for the scientific communities as well as benefits to European citizens. Credit should be given to all the actors involved, whose combined determination and commitment have made these achievements possible: ESA Member States, space industry, commercial satellite operators, national agencies and institutes, intergovernmental organisations and institutions, without forgetting the EU which is becoming increasingly active in space.

In 2007 Europe adopted a new common political framework for such activities. The European Space Policy supported by 29 governments sets out new ambitions and for the first time refers to the synergy between space, security and defence. It marks an important step forward in enhancing cooperation between organisations and should give Europe a stronger voice in pursuing its space ambitions.

After a period of uncertainty, the EU decisions on Galileo taken last November likewise mark an important milestone towards developing one of Europe's highest-profile space infrastructure projects. Clearly, when Europe is united, it can achieve tremendous results. The decision to move from public private partnership to Community funding in just six months was a major turning point. The European

Commission will be the programme manager and the European Space Agency will be prime contractor for system development and is working closely in support of the Commission to implement these decisions speedily. Once the ESA Council has approved the EC-ESA delegation agreement, development contracts with industrial companies are planned to be signed end-2008 to ensure the satellite navigation system is in service by 2013.

Regarding GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security), another joint ESA/EU flagship initiative designed to provide services to citizens, much progress has been made over recent months to place the programme on a sound footing. GMES is run by the Commission to ensure the sustainability of these services, to which ESA's member governments are contributing very significantly. Segment 1 of the programme covers development of the first three dedicated Sentinels to be launched in 2011-12 plus the related ground segment.

I would also like to highlight a major first: Alphasat, to be launched around 2011/2012, under a partnership project involving ESA Member States, industry and Inmarsat selected after tough competition between operators. Indeed, this is the first genuine space PPP on a large scale. This too heralds a major breakthrough, paving the way for more and more programmes to be undertaken on this basis, with government, industry and operator interests converging to fulfil a common purpose. We are also applying this partnership model to the small geostationary platform activities which ESA Member States are funding under Artes 11.

Having successfully carried out six Ariane 5 and three Soyuz launches last year, Arianespace is preparing for the introduction of Soyuz and Vega operations from the CSG launch base.

2008 promises to be a particularly busy and challenging year for Europe's space sector. The Columbus laboratory due for launch shortly will feature two European astronauts: Hans Schlegel of Germany and Leopold Eyharts of France. Although several items built by European industry are already assembled aboard the International Space Station, Columbus is our most prominent contribution to the ISS. The ESA Member States that have invested in this project will finally be able to reap the benefits by providing the user communities with a unique laboratory that is permanently accessible.

Soon after, the Jules Verne ATV will be launched by Ariane from Kourou. This further major European contribution to the ISS is probably our most complex project to date. It also marks a number of firsts: the first ever automated docking of a European spacecraft in

