European GNSS Agency (GSA) celebrates four years in Prague

The second annual GSA Open Days, taking place 2 – 3 December 2016, is a chance for the public to get a behind-the-scenes look at the Galileo and EGNOS space programmes.

Prague, 29 November 2016 - Four years ago, the European GNSS Agency (GSA) moved its headquarters from Brussels to Prague. To celebrate this anniversary and to highlight the many benefits the GSA brings to both Europe and the Czech Republic, the Agency is holding its second annual Open Days 2 – 3 December 2016.

This year’s event follows on the heels of the successful Ariane 5 rocket launch, which added four new satellites to the Galileo constellation. The launch increased the number of satellites in orbit to 18 and represents an important milestone as the programme moves towards the declaration of Initial Services later this year.

“Over the past four years the GSA has been transitioning the Galileo programme from a deployment phase to an exploitation phase,” says GSA Executive Director Carlo des Dorides. “The upcoming declaration of Galileo Initial Services will confirm the GSA’s role in overseeing the service provision and monitoring the security of the overall system, with our Prague Headquarters serving as the epicentre of this mission.”

Last year, over 2000 people visited the Open Days, including 500 students as part of a classroom visit. This year’s edition will highlight the impact that Europe’s space programmes has on Czech businesses and will feature several successful Czech space-based companies, along with an array of lectures, competitions and interactive exhibits. Visitors of all ages are welcome to explore a Galileo satellite model in various configurations, take a space selfie, attempt to land an aircraft using satellite navigation and view the Earth from a satellite. On Friday 2 December, students are invited to join for a special event entitled Satellite Navigation + Europe = GSA.

Benefiting the Czech Republic

In addition to giving locals a chance to get an inside look at all that is happening at the GSA, Open Days also serves as an opportunity to highlight how the GSA’s location in Prague benefits the Czech Republic. “We planted the seeds by relocating here, and today we are seeing the results as more...
space applications and products are coming onto the market that originate from the Czech Republic,” says des Dorides.

According to a GSA study, the Agency’s move has impacted the Czech economy both directly and indirectly. For example, since 2012, the direct benefits to the Czech Economy has reached CZK 800 million. Czech companies also benefit from the GSA’s location in Prague, with an increasing number of companies and consortia of Czech companies and institutions applying for R&D funding via the EU’s Horizon 2020 framework programme for research and innovation.

More information

GSA Open Days will take place at the GSA Headquarters, located at Janovského 438/2, Prague 7. More information can be found here.