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## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

### **New Executive Director for the European GNSS Agency**

**The new Executive Director of the GSA, Carlo des Dorides, is confident that Europe's satellite sector is entering an exciting era. Having spent almost seven years directly involved with the Galileo and EGNOS programmes, three years in the air traffic management and thirteen years in the private aerospace sector, the Italian brings with him a wealth of experience and an understanding of the complexities involved.**

"We are starting a new phase," says des Dorides, who officially took up his post on 1 February 2011. "Both internally and externally, this is a new page for the GSA."

The European GNSS Agency, a European Community agency, works with the European Commission, among other things, on a range of market development activities aimed at helping European entrepreneurs and businesses – especially high tech small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), business incubators and related networks – commercially exploit EGNOS and Galileo. Such promotional activities ensure that European industry maintains a competitive edge in the global satellite navigation marketplace.

This is a key year for Europe's GNSS services Galileo and EGNOS, when development and deployment give way to operation. Within a month, EGNOS will be declared fully operational for civil aviation. This represents a major milestone for a project that started some 14 years ago.

The European Commission also expects to conclude – by summer at the latest – two remaining contracts for the deployment of Galileo. These contracts deal with ground control centres. And perhaps most importantly of all, the first two of 30 flight standard satellites will be launched by September. "This is very important," says des Dorides. "Today, Galileo has to gain credibility. It is important that there are no delays or slippages."

#### **Rising to new challenges**

The new Executive Director is therefore taking the helm at a critical time. A number of challenges must be met. The upcoming launch of the two Galileo satellites for example means that preparations for the launch must be carried out on time. "It will be a major challenge to cope with the pace of the programme, for instance on security accreditation" says des Dorides.

One of these challenges will be to ensure that the two Galileo security monitoring centres are up and running by 2014. "This is three years away, but really, we don't have much time," says des Dorides. "Teams have to be established, qualified, and ready by the due date when early Galileo services are scheduled to start."

Another priority identified by des Dorides is improving and increasing cooperation with the Commission. "One of my main tasks is to be synchronised with the Commission," he explains. "The Commission recently promoted an Action Plan, in which tackling the commercialisation of the service was a major part. The transition from development and deployment to operation requires a delicate touch. This is key. We will therefore need to work closely with the Commission in order to achieve this."

This Action Plan also advocates the creation of user groups in order to improve communication channels. "I see a need to improve communication with users," says des Dorides. "We need to be able to establish a regular exchange, and react to external input."

As someone who has devoted much of his life to aerospace, des Dorides is passionate about the role the GSA can play in helping Europe get the most out of the European GNSS Programmes. The main message he has is that, it is time to deliver.

"I know people say this is the most complex project in Europe. We should not underestimate difficulties. Certainly, from our experiences in the past, we know this will not be easy. But I believe Europe needs Galileo, and we know how to make it happen. Having spent seven years on this, I have special motivation to make this work."

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**For more information:**

**Donna Reay**

Head of Information and Outreach

European GNSS Agency (GSA)

Rue de la Loi, 56 (L-56, 08/81), B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 298 52 10, Fax: +32 2 296 72 38, Mobile: + 32 498 98 52 10

[donna.reay@gsa.europa.eu](mailto:donna.reay@gsa.europa.eu),

<http://www.gsa.europa.eu>