

EU and Israel seal their agreement on GALILEO

On 13 July, negotiations between the European Union and the State of Israel reached final approval and agreement on the European satellite radio navigation programme was signed by both parties. Welcoming the outcome of the negotiations, Vice-President Ms de Palacio said: "This is a very important step for the development of GALILEO as an international programme and its future use worldwide".

Since the Council invited the Commission to start formal negotiations with Israel on GALILEO on 16 January 2004, intensive exchanges have been held between the parties. An agreed text was approved in record time at the round of talks held in Tel Aviv on 17 March and yesterday the final agreement was signed in Brussels by Vice-President Loyola de Palacio, representing the European Commission, Mr. Ehud Olmert, Vice-Prime Minister, representing Israel, and Mr. Bernard Bot, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands representing the Presidency of the European Union.

This agreement provides for co-operative activities on satellite navigation and timing in a wide range of sectors, notably science and technology, industrial manufacturing, service and market development, as well as standardisation, frequencies and certification. Israel is also invited to take part in the programme financially through a stake holding in the GALILEO Joint Undertaking, the body managing the programme. The GALILEO Joint Undertaking will immediately start discussions with Israel to that effect so that the activities can start as soon as possible.

Israel is one of the eight countries within the world space community demonstrating significant technological assets on space programmes and achievements on GNSS applications, equipment, user segment and technology.

After the recent signatures of the agreements between the EU, the People's Republic of China and the United States, the signature of the agreement with Israel represents a big boost for the GNSS market which is indeed potentially considerable: 3 billion receivers and revenues of some €250 billion per year by 2010 worldwide, and the creation of more than 150.000 high qualified jobs in Europe alone.

This agreement confirms the ambition of the EU to further stimulate international cooperation around itself. By the end of this year, the Commission is expected to sign further agreements with the Russian Federation on the compatibility between the GALILEO and GLONASS systems, and with other third countries such as India, Ukraine, Brazil, South Korea, Mexico and Australia.

Background

GALILEO is Europe's satellite radio navigation programme. It was launched on the initiative of the European Commission and developed jointly with the European Space Agency (ESA). It will make for the development of a new generation of universal services in areas such as transport, telecommunication, agriculture or fisheries, and promises to be highly profitable. The GALILEO programme will be administered and controlled by civilians and offers a guarantee of quality and continuity which is essential for many sensitive applications. Its complementarity with current systems will increase the reliability and availability of navigation and positioning services worldwide.

For more information about Galileo, please visit:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport/galileo

<http://www.esa.int/export/esaSA/navigation.html>

<http://www.galileoju.com>