

Brussels, 8 November 2005

EU and Morocco reach agreement on Galileo

The European Union has reached agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco on its participation in the GALILEO programme. This agreement was initialled in Brussels today by Mr. Heinz Hilbrecht, Director at the European Commission, and S. E. M. Alem Menouar, Ambassador of Morocco to the European Union. The agreement will cover industrial and scientific cooperation and the development of specific GALILEO applications for Morocco and its region (the western Mediterranean and West Africa). Vice-President Jacques Barrot in charge of EU Transport policy said: "I welcome today's agreement. Morocco is the first African country to join the Galileo project".

Intensive exchanges took place since formal negotiations started on 21 April 2005. The agreement reached today lays the basis for Morocco's active participation in the programme and creates a framework for cooperation. It also represents a great opportunity for Galileo to become established in the western Mediterranean region. The agreement will be submitted to the next meeting of the EU Transport Council meeting in December 2005 for formal approval by the EU Member States.

Morocco is the fifth country joining the Galileo programme, after the conclusion of the agreements with China, Israel, Ukraine and India. Discussions are also under way with Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Norway, Chile, South Korea, Malaysia, Canada and Australia.

The ever growing interest of third countries to participate in the GALILEO programme represents a big boost for the GNSS market, which has indeed considerable potential: 3 billion receivers and revenues of some €275 billion per year by 2020 worldwide, and the creation of more than 150.000 highly qualified jobs in Europe alone.

Background

GALILEO is Europe's satellite radio navigation programme. It was launched at the initiative of the European Commission and developed jointly with the European Space Agency (ESA). It heralds the advent of a technological revolution similar to the one sparked off by mobile phones. It will also make for the development of a new generation of universal services in areas such as transport, telecommunication, agriculture and fisheries. To date, this technology, which promises to be highly profitable, is mastered only by the United States' GPS system and Russia's GLONASS system, both of which are financed and controlled by the military authorities. The GALILEO programme will be administered and controlled by civilians and guarantees 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>