

Brussels, 4 April 2005

GALILEO: European Commission proposes to open negotiations with Argentina on satellite navigation

Today the Commission sought Council approval for its recommendation to start negotiations on a cooperation agreement with Argentina on the development of a Civil Global Navigation Satellite system (GNSS). "This proposal for a new international cooperation agreement clearly underlines the success of GALILEO and demonstrates again the widespread interest in the project", stated Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of transport. The Commission intends to start the negotiations immediately after approval of the Council.

Latin American countries confirmed their interest to collaborate in the field of satellite navigation at the last joint EU-LA summit of May 2004 in Guadalajara. Since then, the Commission, together with the European Space Agency and the GALILEO Joint Undertaking, held information events in Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina.

Following the successful Information Day and bilateral meetings in Buenos Aires mid-December 2004, Argentina formally expressed its wish to pursue negotiations leading to an agreement on GALILEO. Preliminary talks identified possible co-operation in the areas of market development, industrial applications, ground segments, and possibly also satellite elements, training, regional and local augmentation systems.

The GALILEO Joint Undertaking has also launched a call for specific projects in Latin America to set up a GALILEO information centre and to conduct awareness raising, training and demonstration activities in the region.

International cooperation on GALILEO is developing rapidly. Agreements have already been signed with China and Israel and discussions are under way with India, Russia, Ukraine, South Korea, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Malaysia and Australia. Moreover, the signature of the EU/US agreement on 26 June 2004 confirmed the full interoperability and compatibility between GALILEO and GPS, thus giving a strong boost for the GNSS market which is potentially considerable: 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 on the initiative of the European Commission and developed jointly with the European Space Agency (ESA). It will prepare for the development of a new generation of universal services in areas such as transport, energy, telecommunications, agriculture and fisheries. To date this technology, which promises to be highly profitable, is only available through the United States' GPS system and Russia's GLONASS system, both of which are financed and controlled by military authorities.

The GALILEO programme will be administered and controlled by civilian authorities and offers a guarantee of quality and continuity which is essential for many applications. It is complementary with current systems and 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/index_en.htm

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

<http://www.galileoju.com>