

Brussels, 27 September 2004

GALILEO: Strengthening of the cooperation between the European Union and the Mediterranean Countries

On 27 September 2004, an important step in the cooperation between the European Union and the MEDA countries was taken when the European Commission inaugurated the GALILEO Euro-Med Cooperation Office and launched the MEDA GNSS¹ project. Vice-President Loyola de Palacio and Mr Shafik, the Egyptian Minister of Civil Aviation both attended the ceremony held in Cairo. Welcoming this event, Vice-President Loyola de Palacio said: "I believe this cooperation will allow the MEDA countries to find the place they deserve in the GALILEO programme. I expect that our cooperation will build bridges between European and MEDA industrialists in the GNSS market".

The inauguration ceremony, as well as the Information Day organised for the launch of the GNSS project, were hosted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Cairo and were attended by officials and business executives both from the European Union and the MEDA partners.

The Office, created for the benefit of all MEDA partners, will constitute a focal point for the promotion of GALILEO and EGNOS² services and applications in the MEDA region. Its mission is to implement awareness activities, facilitate interaction between GNSS actors in the region and assure information exchange with other regions.

The GNSS project will allow training and demonstration activities on satellite radionavigation services in the Mediterranean area, along with relevant infrastructure development. The project was launched by the European Commission and will be managed by the GALILEO Joint Undertaking.

The Information Day successfully reached its main target, confirming the numerous applications of interest in the MEDA region in various sectors such as border control, tourism, transport safety, trade and national resources management.

¹ Global Satellite Navigation System

² European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service

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, telecommunications, agriculture and fisheries.

International cooperation on GALILEO is developing rapidly. Agreements have already been signed with China and Israel and discussions are under way with India, Russia, Brazil, South Korea, Mexico and Australia. Moreover, the signature of the EU/US agreement on 26 June 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 €250 billion per year by 2010 worldwide, and the creation of more than 150,000 highly qualified jobs in Europe alone.

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>