

Brussels, 19 September 2007

Galileo: the Commission proposes practical measures to ensure the programme's future

The European Commission today adopted a Communication to ensure that the European satellite radionavigation programmes (EGNOS and Galileo) continue, together with an amended Regulation on the funding of the programmes. The proposal provides for the deployment phase of Galileo to be funded entirely from the Community budget to ensure that the project continues.

Mr Barrot, Commission Vice-President said: "I am still convinced that Europe needs Galileo. Today I have come up with all the facts and figures to enable the European Parliament and Ministers to take the necessary decisions on the programme and its funding by the end of the year."

The failure of the concession contract negotiations for the deployment and commercial operation of Galileo, and the subsequent question mark raised over the plans for the programme, mean that changes are needed to the Commission's initial proposal for a Regulation on the funding of the European satellite radionavigation programmes. The proposed Regulation provides for the responsibility for the deployment phase of Galileo to be fully assumed by the European Community acting on its own. The budgetary resources required for funding EGNOS and Galileo are therefore set at €3.4 billion for the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013. The proposal also aims to improve the public governance of the programmes.

The Commission Communication, which is accompanied by a detailed Working Document, responds to the issues raised by the Council and the European Parliament. It sets out the main details regarding the Galileo and EGNOS programmes and covers, among other things, the infrastructure costs, the risks in terms of completing the programmes and their management, the benefits and revenues expected, the funding of the European GNSS programmes and public-sector governance.

Galileo is a strategic programme that is vital for the independence of Europe and full of promising applications. Galileo and EGNOS should be regarded as an essential investment that will enable Europe to emerge in this area and retain a large share of the satellite radionavigation market.

The Commission therefore calls upon the Member States and Parliament to support its proposals politically, financially and in terms of programme management to ensure that the project is successfully completed within a period of time that is compatible with market needs.

Background

Galileo is Europe's satellite radionavigation programme. Launched at the initiative of the European Commission and developed together with the European Space Agency (ESA), it will lead to the development of a new generation of universal services in sectors such as transport, telecommunications, agriculture and fisheries. 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 to current systems and will increase the reliability and availability of navigation and positioning services worldwide. EGNOS is the acronym for "European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service". This is a European system developed to improve GPS performance and enable GPS to be used to increase air transport safety since the American GPS satellite positioning system alone is not sufficiently reliable for use when human lives are at stake. EGNOS is the first stage of Europe's satellite navigation strategy and therefore paves the way for the arrival of Galileo. Galileo will combine, within a single system, all GPS + EGNOS functions which will then be available without geographical limits.

For further information on Galileo, please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/index_en.htm

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