

Press Release

Communications, Intelligence and Security

Airbus-led consortium to provide European Union with seamless satellite-based coverage of Europe at unprecedented scale and speed

Toulouse, 12 July 2018 – The European Commission and the European Space Agency (ESA) have awarded an Airbus-led consortium a contract for the provision of satellite-based seamless coverage of the whole of Europe at very high-resolution. The consortium includes Airbus Defence and Space, Planet, Deimos Imaging, IGN-France and space4environment. This agreement is part of the Copernicus Earth Observation programme for the European Union (EU).

As part of the contract, six million square kilometres over 39 countries will be covered in 2018 with freshly acquired very high-resolution optical satellite imagery. The result-based approach of the procurement has led European EO industry to federate and respond with a coordinated offer bringing together the strengths of each partner. The contracted solution leverages the latest in remote sensing and imagery processing technologies to deliver new data at an unprecedented scale and speed. The data will feed the geo-information services coordinated by the European Environment Agency with which European institutions and governments implement their environmental and land management policies.

“This contract shows the confidence of ESA in Airbus and its partners to fulfill such a demanding satellite imagery programme,” said François Lombard, Head of the Intelligence Business at Airbus Defence and Space. “We are very proud to drive a consortium gathering such a unique combination of assets and together, we are confident we will deliver high quality full European coverage in record time.”

The high revisit rate of Planet’s imaging system will allow it to image regions that are often covered in cloud, such as Northern Europe or the Alps, while Deimos Imaging and Airbus satellite resources will concentrate on Southern and Central Europe, where higher resolutions are required to map dense urban and suburban areas. A dynamic acquisition strategy and imaging redundancy within the consortium will guarantee the achievement of the coverage objective. Valid images, cloud and haze free, will be selected and combined with a specific Digital Elevation Model (DEM) in order to meet the European Commission and ESA geolocation accuracy specifications.

“This is an important partnership for Planet as it brings together major players in the private and public sectors to leverage our global, daily imagery to do something that has historically been very difficult to achieve,” said Will Marshall, CEO and cofounder of Planet. “Europe is very much ahead of the curve in terms of public-private cooperation and turning data into a public good, and we’re proud to be a part of this.”

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“We are very excited to be part of this landmark project,” said Fabrizio Pirondini, CEO at Deimos Imaging. “Our company has enjoyed a long, successful history of supplying satellite products and services to European public entities, such as ESA and EMSA. This contract, one of the largest we have been awarded in our history, demonstrates the value of our partnerships, as well as our increasing role as a key provider of imagery and geo-information products worldwide.”

This dataset will be available to institutional users on a European and national level, and it will serve to create updated information about land cover, as well as land use (for example forests, urban areas, or lakes and rivers) over 39 countries in Europe.

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2017 it generated revenues of € 59 billion restated for IFRS 15 and employed a workforce of around 129,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners from 100 to more than 600 seats. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

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