

CIS

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The SpaceDataHighway is Open for Traffic

Airbus Defence and Space starts the initial service of its SpaceDataHighway. This represents a step change in the speed of space communications. Ultra-broadband laser communications and the geostationary orbit of the relay satellites combine to deliver a unique, secure, near real time data transfer service, - making data latency a thing of the past.

Thanks to the laser technology developed by Tesat Spacecom, the SpaceDataHighway can transfer high-volume data from Earth observation satellites, airborne platforms, or even from the International Space Station at a data rate of 1.8 gbps and can transmit up to 40 terabytes per day. The European Commission's Earth observation satellites, Copernicus Sentinels will be the first spacecrafts to benefit from those next generation services.

"The SpaceDataHighway is no longer science fiction. It has become reality and will revolutionise satellite communications. The SpaceDataHighway will completely change the way humanitarian crises, maritime safety and the protection of the environment can be managed", said Evert Dudok, Head of the Communications, Intelligence & Security (CIS) business line at Airbus Defence and Space.

The SpaceDataHighway programme is a result of a public-private partnership (PPP) between the European Space Agency (ESA) and Airbus Defence and Space. The German national aeronautics and space research centre (DLR) is also a key sponsor.

"As the first commercial data relay service in the world to utilise lasers, the EDRS-SpaceDataHighway represents forward-thinking innovation at its best. ESA will continue working with our partners, Airbus Defence and Space and the European Commission, to keep pushing the envelope of technological progress by extending this success to worldwide coverage with GlobeNet", said Magali Vaissiere, ESA's Director of Telecommunications and Integrated Applications.

EDRS-A, the first relay satellite for the SpaceDataHighway programme was launched on 30 January 2016. Positioned at 9° East, this first communication node offers coverage from American East Coast until India. A second satellite will be launched in 2017, which will extend the coverage, capacity and redundancy of the system.

Airbus Defence and Space is willing to expand the SpaceDataHighway with a third node, EDRS-D, to be positioned over the Asia-Pacific region. This third node will be the next step towards global optical fibre in the sky. EDRS-D will have several laser terminals performing optical bi-directional links in order to serve multiple customers, satellites and aircraft, simultaneously. It will also be able to transfer data to another relay satellite, in order to relay data straight back to the other side of the globe while being at the cutting-edge of security standards.

#SpaceDataHighway

Video animation can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/1SR8pSi>

Airbus Defence and Space

Airbus Defence and Space, a division of Airbus Group, is Europe's number one defence and space enterprise and the second largest space business worldwide. Its activities include space, military aircraft and related systems and services. It employs more than 38,000 people and in 2015 generated revenues of over 13 billion Euros.

Contacts:

Bruno Daffix

+33 6 48 09 96 50

bruno.b.daffix@airbus.com

www.airbusdefenceandspace.com