

Press Release

SPACE SYSTEMS

Airbus launches photonics payload technology project - OPTIMA

Stevenage, 15/03/2018 - Airbus has launched the OPTIMA project, which will deliver a proof of concept demonstrator for the use of photonic payloads in telecommunications satellites.

The OPTIMA project, which is led by Airbus Defence and Space in Stevenage and part of Horizon 2020 funded by the European Commission, comprises specialist partners from across Europe, including: DAS Photonics, CORDON Electronics, SODERN, IMEC and Polatis. Airbus Defence and Space will define, assemble and test a photonic payload demonstrator based on the components and equipment developed by the other members of the consortium.

Photonic payloads have the potential to revolutionise the design, capacity and capability of future generations of telecommunications satellites. The photonic payloads will use light to transfer the signals throughout the spacecraft, replacing current RF technologies, allowing for the development of more efficient and powerful satellites which are able to meet the increasing complexity and sophistication required by customers.

The use of optical fibre based equipment has already transformed Information Technology for ground applications, and its compact, lightweight and low power nature should enable reductions in mass on telecommunication satellites as they replace currently used technology.

Javad Anzalchi, Airbus project manager said: "By bringing together our industry partners who have complementary skills and expertise, we will develop OPTIMA to provide a roadmap for photonics technology available for telecommunications satellites - and we are targeting an in orbit demonstration as early as 2020. Full development of this technology should not only allow the European space industry to address the challenges of the EU's Digital Agenda for Europe 2020, but also strengthen its position in a very competitive, global marketplace."

About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2017 it generated revenues of € 67 billion 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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