

Pretoria, 19 April 2011

FURTHER PROGRESS IN SOUTH AFRICA-EU SPACE COOPERATION

The European Commission, the European Space Agency, the South African Department of Science and Technology and the South African National Space Agency met in Pretoria today. The meeting reviewed the South Africa-EU space cooperation and identified new opportunities for further collaboration in space activities. Participants acknowledged the high level of space cooperation already underway between South Africa and the EU, especially the South African participation in EU-funded space-research projects, EU-South Africa partnerships in satellite navigation systems and cooperation with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in areas including desertification, water management and crop monitoring. With the recent establishment of South Africa's space agency, the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), SANSA and the European Space Agency agreed to develop cooperation, which may include ground support to space missions, space-science research projects and science-advancement programmes.

This marks the third meeting of the South Africa-EU Space Dialogue policy, an initiative of the Strategic Partnership between South Africa and the European Union. The objectives of the Space Dialogue are to deepen the Earth observation partnership between South Africa and the EU, develop cooperation in global navigation satellite systems and strengthen space-research cooperation. The Space Dialogue has proven to be successful in all three areas. In the area of space research South African research institutes have received funding to date of more than €1 million under the space theme of the EU's Seventh Framework Research Programme (FP7), which puts South Africa among the top three FP7-funded international participants.

Significant work is underway between the European Commission, the Department of Science and Technology and SANSA to extend the European Global Navigation

Overlay System(EGNOS) to South African airspace. EGNOS is a European system that enhances the Global Positioning System (GPS) signal and has considerable benefits for aviation safety, as well as important applications for the rail, maritime and agricultural sectors. Participants at the Space Dialogue meeting agreed to work towards the objective of finalising the implementation plan for EGNOS in South Africa by mid-2011.

The participants took advantage of the meeting to express their support for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (*GMES*) *and Africa* initiative and for multilateral cooperation frameworks in the Earth observation area, namely the Group on Earth Observations and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites.

The Space Dialogue meeting was preceded by a public conference on the role of EU-South Africa space cooperation in contributing to the South Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

More information:

[Joint Conclusions of South Africa-EU Space Policy Dialogue]

GMES and Africa initiative

<http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/partnerships/gmes-and-africa>

<http://www.satellite-navigation.eu/>

<http://www.earthobservations.org/index.html>

Also include also GEO link.