

European Industry Gathers to Discuss Galileo's Post-2020 Future



With Europe's Galileo satellite navigation system now only one launch away from full global coverage, representatives of European industry gathered at ESA's centre in The Netherlands to talk about the transition towards the future Galileo Second Generation. An Ariane 5 launch later this year of another quartet will bring the constellation to the point of completion with 24 satellites plus two orbital spares.

A steady stream of orbital spares, ready to replace satellites reaching the end of their operational lives, is necessary to ensure Galileo continues operating seamlessly. A further 12 satellites were therefore ordered from industry in June 2017.

Future Galileo Generation

Looking further ahead, with the aim of keeping Galileo services as a permanent part of the European and global landscape, a replacement set of Galileo satellites will be required post-2020, serving as transition to a future generation.

The Galileo Second Generation is foreseen to offer improved performance and added features. This is why the European Commission has decided on a Transition Programme, with ESA in charge of its technical definition and implementation.

Together with the European Commission and the European Global Navigation Satellite System Agency, the Agency invited leading European space companies to its technical centre in Noordwijk to discuss Galileo's future and present short-term plans in relation to this transition programme.

Transition Programme

Having started with the ESA European Global Navigation Satellite System Evolutions Programme (EGEP), the system and technology development of Galileo Second Generation is being supported through the EU's GNSS and Horizon 2020 HSNV Programmes, with ESA being delegated its technical definition and management of its related implementation.

Eleven Phase-B contracts were signed at the meeting for the Design Phase for both the Galileo Second Generation and the Transition Programme, complementing the more than 50 technology contracts signed in 2017 to prepare for Galileo's future.

In recent years, innovations have been analysed and predevelopments performed in various technology fields (system, ground, space, receiver technologies) in order to assess their suitability for future Galileo activities, while ensuring backward compatibility and continuity of Galileo Services.

In the next eight months, all major public and private stakeholders will be involved in the detailed assessment of the different evolution scenarios and associated technologies, in order to come to decisions on the Transition Programme baseline for the evolution towards Galileo Second Generation.

Source: ESA.



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