

Independent Galileo Indispensable: Experts

Experts attending the INTERGEO Round Table in Karlsruhe, Germany, made it infinitely clear that the European satellite programme Galileo is essential. The unanimous conclusion was that Europe must be independent of other referencing systems such as America's GPS and Russia's GLONASS if it is to safeguard its future as a hub for research and business.

The patron of INTERGEO, DVW e.V. - the German Society for Geodesy, Geoinformation and Land Management and the event's organizer HINTE GmbH invited a number of high-profile speakers to the offices of HINTE GmbH to discuss "Unlimited Navigation - The Way Ahead?" Joining the debate were Ulrich Reinfried, consultant at the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS), Prof. Reiner Jäger from the geomatics faculty of Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences, Dr. Frank Zimmermann, Managing Director of cesah GmbH Centrum für Satellitennavigation Hesse and Ulrich Hermanski, Senior Sales and Marketing Manager at TOPCON Europe.

Satellite navigation and geoinformation "are two areas that are increasingly converging. It is becoming ever clearer that interdisciplinary cooperation is crucial to enabling the development of new applications," said Reinfried. As the BMVBS official responsible for the Germany-wide network in the Forum for Satellite Navigation, he anticipates valuable synergies from the Navigation Conference being staged by the BMVBS and BITKOM e.V. on the occasion of INTERGEO 2011. For the first time, the conference is being held in parallel with INTERGEO in Nuremberg from 27 to 29 September 2011.

"The sooner Galileo comes, the earlier we can tap into an even broader range of applications," believes Ulrich Hermanski. The TOPCON executive listed areas such as agriculture, forestry and infrastructure as examples. Frank Zimmermann from cesah - the expertise, information and startup centre for satellite navigation in the Hesse region of Germany - works with highly innovative, young companies. "Our entrepreneurs come from specific sectors, they understand the problems in these areas and they want to offer a solution," he explains, underlining his view that GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) presents a "cross-sectoral technology".

"There are not many technologies that are as universally applicable," adds Hermanski. Jäger also believes that GNSS presents an ideal basis when researching next-generation navigation systems: "Seamless navigation from the outside in." The professor indirectly alluded to the performance of future smartphones, which Jäger suggested could be used as possible terminals.

Host Hagen Graeff, Chief Representative of DVW GmbH, summed up the Round Table's conclusions: "The result is always a coordinate. By answering the all-important question of 'where?', GNSS gives us the opportunity to make anything possible." The participants agreed that if the entire spectrum of application fields is to be fully utilised, there will need to be more communication and cooperation, not least between satellite navigation and geoinformation.

The debate will be continued at INTERGEO 2011 in Nuremberg, Germany. Olaf Freier, CEO of HINTE GmbH, invited the participants to share knowledge and demands from politics, research and business with a broad international audience at the event.

INTERGEO is being held from 27 to 29 September 2011 in Nuremberg.