

Critical situation for European GNSS Research

In March 2010 European GNSS Industry together with key universities' representatives launched the Manifesto for "a More Committed Europe towards the Development of GNSS Applications".

At the time of the Growing Galileo Information Day 2010, held today at the quarters of the European Commission in Brussels, it is essential to remind the so critical situation encountered by European GNSS applications Research. The budget of 350M€ initially allocated within European Commission FP7 for GNSS applications R&D, although consented between the European Council, Parliament and Member States as an obvious minimum, was radically cut in 2007. As European industry already stressed several months ago, after the 3rd GNSS Call - issued in July this year, the budget for GNSS applications research will be completely exhausted, and have represented less than 100 M€ in total over 7 years.

"GNSS applications remain among the very few opportunities for growth in Europe and must be prioritized, especially in these times of crisis, and despite any potential delay or problem the Galileo programme may meet" noted Miss Axelle Pomies, Galileo Services Permanent Representative.

It is worth noticing that in comparison several 100s M€ are wisely invested by Europe every year to support the development of Internet applications, without waiting for a pure European Internet Infrastructure.

"While EGNOS and Galileo obviously will increase applications market size, the GNSS technology is developed NOW. If Europe wants to take advantage of the growth and become a key player in the marketplace – now is the time to act. Thus, the support to GNSS applications development in Europe can not be delayed any further." Mr G. Ueland, President of Kongsberg Seatex and President of Galileo Services pointed out.

Supported by more than 350 key players within GNSS industry, research and development, associations and universities, the Manifesto has been widely promoted towards the European and National decision makers during the past few months. It has put the spotlight on a crucial matter that has not been apparent to politicians and the initiative has been very well received.

In the shortest term, the signatories advocate restoring the GNSS Research initial budget within the 7th Framework Programme and thus urge the European Institutions and the Member States of the European Union to take action now, more specifically at the time of the FP7 mid-term review and of unspent budget reallocation process.

In the medium term, the EU should provide the European GNSS downstream Industry with the means to become and to remain competitive by increasing the level of EU's GNSS R&D funding through FP8 to match other continents public R&D investments.

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