



EUROPEAN UNION

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Press Release

.../for immediate release

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 to review South Africa – EU space cooperation and identify new opportunities for further collaboration in space activities. The participants acknowledged the high level of space cooperation already underway between South Africa and the EU. Particular highlights include South African participation in EU-funded space research projects, EU-South Africa partnership 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, 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.

Vice President of the European Commission responsible for industry and entrepreneurship emphasised the importance of this cooperation: *"The development and use of earth observation satellites can help monitor problems relating to climate change and to promote agricultural production, which is of particular importance for African nations. A strong cooperation in global satellite navigation and space research between the EU and South Africa is crucial for economic growth for both partners."*

This marks the third meeting of the South Africa-EU space policy dialogue, an initiative of the Strategic Partnership between South Africa and the European Union. The objectives of the Space Dialogue are to deepen Earth observation partnership between South Africa and the EU, to develop cooperation in global navigation satellite systems and to 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 "EGNOS" (the European Global Navigation

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

The participants took advantage of the meeting to express their support for the *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.

For more information:

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

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

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