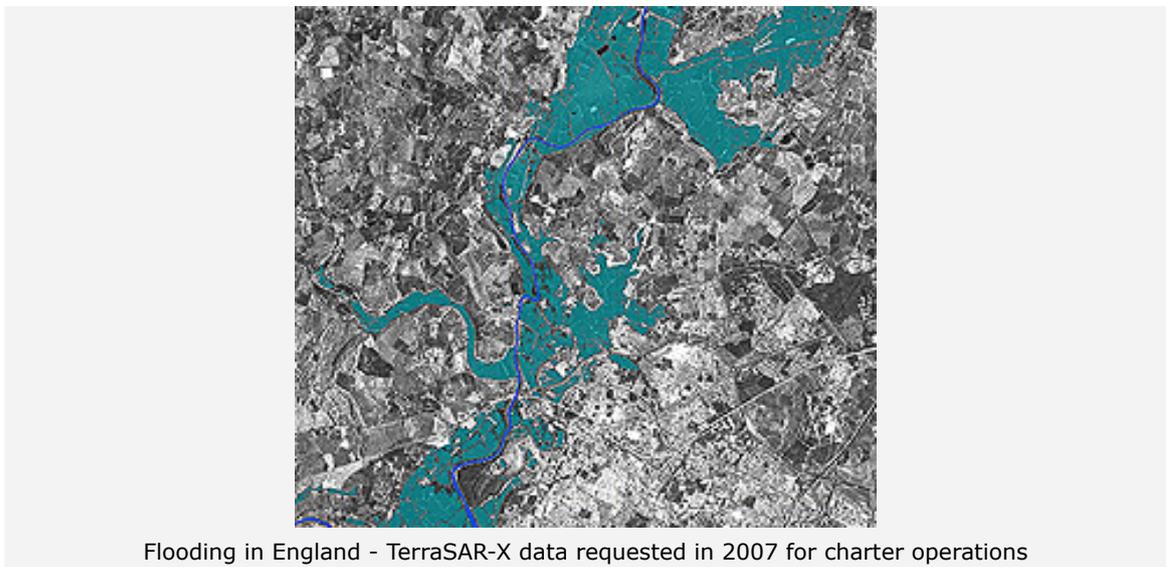


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DLR becomes a member of the International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters'

19 October 2010



The German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR) has become a member of the International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters'. At an event in Paris to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its founding, Johann-Dietrich Wörner, Chairman of the DLR Executive Board, signed the charter, marking DLR's accession. With this signing, DLR has become the 11th space agency to pledge its expertise and resources, particularly those associated with global monitoring, to address natural disasters and major accidents.

DLR can make important contributions

"In the 10 years since it came into being, the charter has convincingly demonstrated just how valuable space-based Earth observation can be, when natural disasters occur. These activities have saved human lives and mitigated suffering," said Prof. Wörner, praising the services provided under the charter. With its TerraSAR-X synthetic aperture radar satellite, Germany has a highly capable Earth observation system, which is able to provide valuable mapping data during natural disasters and accidents. "We are convinced that TerraSAR-X will make an important contribution towards the aims and objectives of the charter," said Prof. Wörner, addressing representatives of other signatories to the charter.

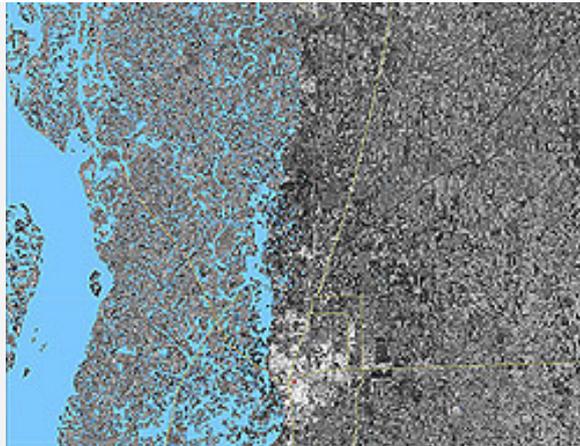


Germany's TerraSAR-X radar satellite

In the first instance, the core contribution DLR can make is through the radar imaging data provided by its TerraSAR-X satellite. "TerraSAR-X supplies detailed images very rapidly and is able to acquire those radar images irrespective of cloud cover or time of day. It is therefore very useful for incidents such as severe flooding," explained Stefan Voigt, Coordinator of the DLR Center for Satellite Based Crisis Information (Zentrum für Satellitengestützte Kriseninformation; ZKI), speaking at a meeting held during the event.

A great deal of experience in Germany

With its accession to the charter, DLR adds to its role as Germany's Space Agency the broad commitment to provide support using its satellites in the event of natural disasters, major accidents or humanitarian relief operations.



TerraSAR-X imaged the flooding in Pakistan during July and August 2010

ZKI is one of the world's leading centres for processing satellite data for application in crisis situations. Alongside this, the German Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (Bundesamt für Bevölkerungsschutz und Katastrophenhilfe; BBK) has been a co-developer for many years and a leading user of the European Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) emergency service. The DLR Space Agency has also promoted the development of technical capabilities in this sector, under the auspices of the 'DeSecure' project. In addition, the German Federal Government, through its Ministry of Economics and Technology (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie; BMWi), supports the Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response programme (UN-SPIDER) operated by the United Nations. All these activities share a common objective, namely the improvement of the worldwide availability and use of satellite information for emergency response and crisis resolution.



Celebration of the Charter's 10th anniversary

No newcomer to the charter

DLR has already played an active role in the charter prior to accession. TerraSAR-X data has repeatedly been requested and duly provided to numerous charter projects since its launch in June 2007. Scientists at ZKI have produced a wide range of mapping products for charter activities and, in several instances, have also coordinated charter operations.

About the charter

The charter is an international treaty between space agencies and satellite operators. The signatories to the charter are committed to supporting crisis management work in response to disasters by making their space-based infrastructure available to the parties involved. Participation is voluntary and is based on the principle that all members will incorporate their systems to the best of their abilities within the mechanism of the charter. At present, the charter has 10 full members, including the European Space Agency, ESA, the French space agency, CNES, the Canadian Space Agency, CSA, the Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, JAXA, and two American organisations, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, and the United States Geological Survey, USGS.

Since it was founded, the charter has been invoked 280 times; meaning that it has been possible to quickly supply maps derived from satellite imagery. Examples include the flooding of the River Elbe in 2002, the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010.

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