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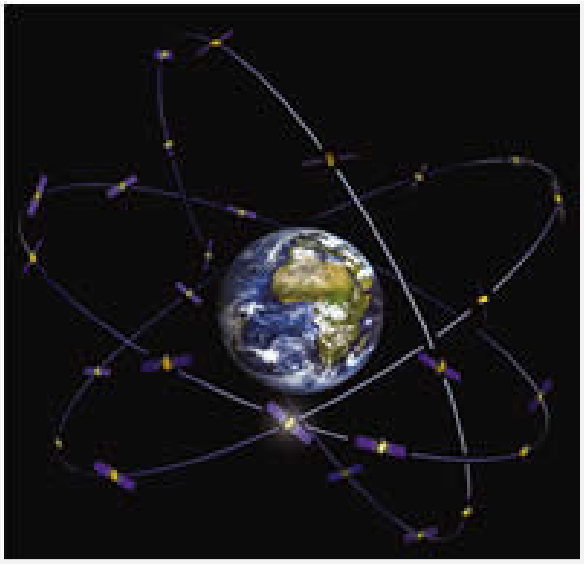
Germany and Italy to operate Galileo control centres

5 December 2005



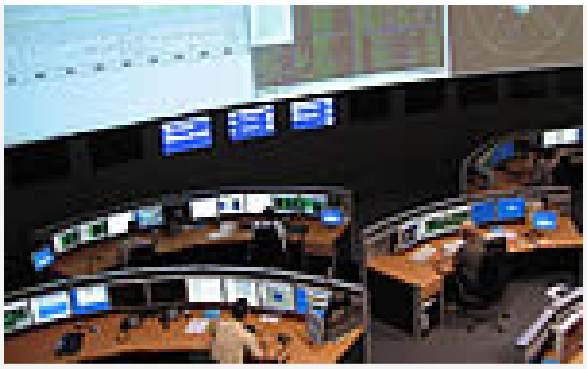
The Galileo Satellite Navigation System

German Space Operations Centre at Oberpfaffenhofen to operate satellite family

Negotiations between the companies responsible for building the European satellite navigation system Galileo have resulted in a unanimous decision regarding the distribution of responsibilities and location. The decision includes an assurance that a Galileo control centre will be set up at the German Space Operations Centre facility at Oberpfaffenhofen, from where the group of 30 satellites will be operated for at least 20 years.

One key factor which influenced the decision was the expertise of the team at the German Space Operations Centre (GSOC) at Oberpfaffenhofen, the result of 40 years' experience in managing space missions. This expertise has been gained through carrying out highly complex commercial, scientific and manned space missions and through the intensive involvement of the German Aerospace Control Centre in a network of expert institutions including DLR's institutes at Oberpfaffenhofen and the local aerospace industry.

The mission will be managed in cooperation with European operations centres. Another control centre is to be established at Fucino in Italy. The European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany, and the French Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) in Toulouse will collaborate in the positioning of the satellites.



Control Room in the German Space Operations Centre

The Galileo control centres are the core of the entire Galileo system, and the construction of two centres minimises the risk of malfunction during the controlled operation phase. In line with the timetable drawn up by DLR, construction of the new control centre at Oberpfaffenhofen should begin next year. This would allow for full operation using an initial four satellites as of 2008 during the 'In-Orbit Validation' phase (IOV).

Once the whole family of satellites has been built, they and their payloads will then be controlled and monitored from Oberpfaffenhofen. The control centre will also process navigational data and coordinate the global ground segment with the associated communication networks. This choice of location will create 100 highly skilled jobs at the control centre and a large number of additional jobs in the region, for example in the nearby Galileo Applications Centre.

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