



## Gerd Gruppe takes office as Director of DLR Space Administration

01 April 2011

Gerd Gruppe took up his post as Director of Space Administration at the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR), joining DLR's Executive Board and filling a vacancy that had been open for 18 months. DLR's Supervisory Board, the Senate, unanimously appointed him on 25 November 2010.

DLR Space Administration is responsible for the management of national space programmes and bilateral cooperation with and contributions to the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT). The total annual budget for this area is about 900 million Euros. DLR Executive Board Chairman Johann Dietrich Wörner expressed his pleasure at the beginning of the term of office of his new colleague.

### **Space for the benefit of society and the economy**

After working for the Bavarian State Government for more than 20 years, Gruppe is now looking forward to his new field of work. "I am grateful for this challenge in space - it is an area I'm familiar with from my previous role and I can relate to its goals," he said as he took up his post at the DLR Space Administration office in Bonn. "At the interface between politics, technology and the stimulation of research, I will be working to ensure that space benefits both society and small and medium-sized companies in Germany."

As well as promoting scientific projects, Gruppe will also stress the importance of space as a technology of the future; this includes the commercial exploitation of space technology. He says the European Galileo satellite navigation system and the EU Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) project are outstanding examples of good marketing opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses. These large-scale European projects offer these companies a multitude of opportunities to develop innovative devices and services. Gruppe believes that DLR should actively shape the process of networking with industry by encouraging companies to establish themselves in the vicinity of DLR's research sites or through the formation of spin-off companies.

### **Experience in politics and space**

Gerd Gruppe was born in 1952 and grew up in Eschweiler near Aachen, in Germany. He received a degree in mining from RWTH Aachen University. Upon completion of an internship at the Bureau of Mines in Munich, he obtained a doctorate degree in Energy Marketing at Augsburg while continuing to pursue his career. He then transferred to the Bavarian State Ministry for Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology. Initially, he was responsible for promoting research and for technology transfer, and later had his first professional experience with space - in the late 1980s he was involved in the establishment of the German Space Operations Center (GSOC) at DLR's Oberpfaffenhofen site. Later, as Head of the Department of Research, Innovation and Technology at the same ministry, he greatly advanced the development of Bavaria as a location for space activities, particularly with his involvement in the Galileo Control Centre and the world-renowned Robotics and Mechatronics Center - both based at DLR Oberpfaffenhofen.

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### **Gerd Gruppe took up his post as Director of Space Administration at DLR on 1 April 2011**



Christoph Hohage, DLR Director of Space Projects (left) and Rolf Densing, DLR Director of Space Programmes (right) welcomed Gerd Gruppe, the latest member of the Executive Board, to Bonn.

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