

EDA Activities to reinforce EU resilience with Secure Satcom for Defence

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The current use of Satcom by military users across Europe is relatively low and varies significantly between participating Member States of the European Defence Agency (EDA). In 2018, a consortium led by Airbus Defence and Space and supported by Euroconsult was awarded a framework contract for the Provision of Services in Support of EDA Satcom Activities (PS3A). This contract is dedicated to the support of the EDA Member States and European Defence actors to achieve and maintain the ability to provide unclassified and classified information through a distributed, flexible, secure and resilient Satcom environment.

Due to significant changes in the political and security environment, the nature of threats to which the European Union is exposed, within its territory and beyond its borders, has considerably evolved in recent years.

In order to perform critical missions, European Union (EU) and national actors involved in security-related activities need access to secure communication in situations where ground-based systems may not be available. As well as requiring immediate communication between themselves, with command centres or to provide relevant services to users, they may also have to exchange sensitive information in a manner that avoids interference, interception, intrusion and cybersecurity risks.

In December 2013, when the European Council for the first time held a thematic debate on defence, it identified priority actions for delivering key capabilities and addressing critical shortfalls. Amongst these actions, satellite communication was one focus and the Council called for "preparations for the next generation of Governmental Satellite Communication through close cooperation between the Member States, the European Commission and the European Space Agency". From 2014 onwards, the work towards the EU GOVSATCOM program started under the lead of the European Commission with the aim to achieve an appropriate level of European non-dependence in terms of guaranteed and secure satellite communications technologies, assets, operations and services. This work is still ongoing and the new EU Space Programme for the years 2021-2027 has established EU GOVSATCOM as one of four components.

In parallel, the European Defence Agency was tasked to pursue its work on GOVSATCOM coordination with its participating Member States (pMS), the European Commission and the

European Space Agency, in order to propose a comprehensive programme for Member States who wish to participate.

To achieve this, the EDA has taken a sequential approach to support the development of this capability. Firstly, the satellite communication operational needs for European civil and military actors involved in the conduct of national and EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations / missions were gathered; Secondly, a feasibility study was conducted that could be leveraged to develop the GOVSATCOM requirements (approved by the EDA Steering Board in 2017); Thirdly, the EDA GOVSATCOM Pooling and Sharing demonstration project was developed together with (as of today 16) contributing Member States and the EU's Peace Facility, leading to its execution phase starting in 2019, and now recently extended until 2025. Work is continuously being undertaken to enhance the portfolio of GOVSATCOM services to better respond to the contributing Members' needs and expectations.

Heinrich Krispler, EDA Project Officer GOVSATCOM stated, "The EDA GOVSATCOM project is the ultimate example of pooling and sharing between national capitals based on a pay-per-use principle with no binding financial commitments upfront, providing reliable, secure, and cost-effective pooled SatCom capabilities from our pMS, including space capacity leasing, anchoring, backhauling, satellite ground terminals (terrestrial, airborne, seaborne) lease services and associated services such as technical support, engineering support, transport, logistic and training".

Thanks to the Provision of Services in Support of EDA Satcom Activities (PS3A) contract, the EDA pMS and EU CSDP actors will be given support in their knowledge, usage of Satcom solutions and services. In the frame of this contract, Euroconsult, the space consultancy firm, leads three specific activities:

- Establishment of a mapping of satellite related applications and requirements, including dynamics leading to potential requirements in five and ten years (to the extent they can be anticipated).
- Production of an Awareness Campaign Plan dedicated to increase awareness of the benefits of Satcom, and especially Secure Satcom for European national and EU CSDP actors.
- Definition of measures to stimulate the demand for Secure Satcom, including proposing mitigation actions to overcome current barriers to the use of SATCOM solutions.

Satellite communications have become an intrinsic part of everyday life, though positioning and navigation are typically the aspects the wider public are aware of, the technology impacts all manner of commerce, communications and timing requirements. Effective, guaranteed and secure satellite services are key to government responses to critical situations, whether traditional defence and security, or in civilian emergencies.

Chief Editor for Euroconsult's Government Space Programs 2021 report, Simon Seminari said, "According to Euroconsult's Government Space Programs 2021 report, which tracks all public

space spending worldwide, governments in 2021 spent \$6.6 billion on government telecommunications programs, representing a 5-year CAGR of 4%. Of the \$6.6 billion, \$3.6 billion were spent on secured satellite communications, with less than \$3 billion on civilian satcom capabilities. European countries (including ESA and the EU) spent over \$2 billion on satcom, with France, the UK and Germany as leaders. Over the decade, governments worldwide are forecasted to invest over \$70 billion in both civil and defence satellite communications systems”

EDA, by being the leader for the provision of Secure Satcom to its Members and any European Defence actor, is at the forefront of the EU GOVSATCOM program which aim is to make available all the benefits of secure and satellite communications to European governments, military and institutional stakeholders.

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