



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 18 July 2008
S258/08**

**Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the CFSP,
signs agreement on security of information
with the European Space Agency**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), signed an agreement today, on behalf of the European Union, with the European Space Agency (ESA) on arrangements for exchanging classified information. The agreement, signed with the Director General of ESA, Mr Jean-Jacques Dordain, marks a further milestone in EU/ESA relations and will facilitate the work of those involved in advancing European policies and industries in the space sector.

Background

The European Space Agency (ESA) is Europe's gateway to space. Nearly all of the 17 members of this international organisation are also members of the EU. Its mission is to shape the development of Europe's space capability and ensure that investment in space continues to deliver benefits to the citizens of Europe. ESA's programmes are designed to find out more about the earth, its immediate space environment, our solar system and the universe, to develop satellite-based technologies and services and in so doing to promote European industries.

Although ESA is an independent organisation it maintains close ties with the EU. For example, the joint EU/ESA European Space Policy sets out a basic vision and strategy for the space sector and tackles issues such as security and defence, access to space and exploration. On the back of this policy ESA is able to provide the tools needed for Europe's activities in space. Cooperation between the ESA and the EU is formalised in particular through the ESA/European Commission Framework Agreement, which establishes a common basis and appropriate practical arrangements for efficient and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two. Recent tangible joint initiatives that have come about as a result of cooperation with ESA include the European global navigation satellite system, or 'Galileo', and the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security services, known as the 'GMES'.

Under these joint EU/ESA initiatives there is a pressing need for the EU to be able to exchange classified information with ESA. While to a limited extent this was already possible under an administrative arrangement dating from 2003, last year it was decided that the EU ought to have a fully-fledged agreement with ESA on the security and exchange of classified information.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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