

Satellite and Space Projects News

Space Protocol: The ITU was due to consider at its Plenipotentiary Conference (20 October to 7 November 2014) whether it should become the supervisory authority for the controversial Space Protocol. At the time of writing, the outcome as to whether the ITU will take on this role has not been made public. The Protocol establishes international rules for asset-based financings of space assets and a registration system for security interests. Its champions argue that this will make it easier for space sector businesses to obtain financing; but the Protocol is widely regarded in the industry as introducing an unnecessary administrative burden.

Newsat: Australian satellite company, Newsat, announced on 2 October its progress in satisfying conditions attached to a waiver of an alleged technical breach of its Jabiru-1 project financing facilities. Newsat must raise US\$40m of new equity and/or mezzanine funding by 30 November 2014. The company has confirmed that it will raise US\$10m capital (US\$6m of equity at 20 cents per share and US\$4m of mezzanine loan funds, convertible to equity at 20 cents per share) and that it will raise the balance of the US\$40m target within the deadline.

India commercial launches: Spacenews.com reported on India's plans to further expand its commercial launch operations. Five slots will be available on India's PSLV launcher for sun-synchronous orbit missions between 2015 and 2017, and one commercial launch per year is planned on the GSLV Mark 3 rocket from 2017.

Cause of Proton failure: The likely cause of the failure of the Russian Proton mission in May this year has been identified as loss of structural integrity of a bolted interface attaching the Stage III steering engine turbopump to the main engine structural frame, according to the International Launch Services Failure Review Oversight Board. Following the failure, the Russian state satellite operator put a freeze on launches, but has since successfully launched two Proton rockets, most recently on 21 October 2014 with the launch of the Express AM6 satellite.

Terrestrial use of C-band: Recent reports suggest that the European Commission is to allow the lower portion of the C-band spectrum, from 3.4 to 3.8GHz, to be shared for terrestrial broadband use. The upper part of the C-band, from 3.8 to 4.2GHz, will be reserved

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A digest of recent news from the satellite and space projects sector

for satellite services. Satellite stakeholders have lobbied hard against sharing the spectrum. C-band allocation will feature high on the agenda of the 2015 ITU WRC Conference, with significant regional differences in C-band spectrum usage for essential services.

UK space sector growth: Latest figures from the UK Space Agency show that the UK space sector is currently worth £11.3 billion. The findings are contained in the Agency's twice-yearly report – [The Size and Health of the UK Space Industry](#) – which also reports that the sector is growing at over 7% per year, employs over 34,000 people and supports a further 65,000 jobs in other sectors.

Copernicus: The European Space Agency confirmed on 6 October 2014 that Sentinel 1-A has completed commissioning and is operational. Sentinel 1-A is the first of a two-satellite constellation delivering imagery of the Earth's surface using advanced radar under the EU's flagship Earth Observation Programme, Copernicus.

SES joint venture: Luxembourg is to enter into a joint venture with satellite operator SES Astra SA for the build and launch of a government and military communications satellite. The Luxemburger Wort reported on 22 October that SES and the government will each invest €50m. The venture will obtain a further €125m of loan finance. The government plans to buy €100m worth of satellite capacity from the joint venture over the next ten years, and make that capacity available to NATO.

Airbus Defence and Space: Airbus Defence and Space has signed a deal worth €1.3bn to design and build the second generation of satellites for the ESA's operational meteorology programme (MetOp).

Contacts

To find out more about our expertise in the satellite and space sector, please contact:



[John Worthy](#)

Partner - London

E: john.worthy@fieldfisher.com

T: +44 (0)20 7861 4392

Find out more about our [Satellite and Space Projects](#) team.