

*Press release*

## Telespazio 50 Years of Space History

19 - 21 October  
at the Ara Pacis Museum, Rome

*Rome, 4 October 2011* - Telespazio, a joint venture between Finmeccanica (67%) and Thales (33%), as part of its series of initiatives celebrating **50 years since the foundation of the company**, presents the exhibition **"Telespazio – 50 Years of Space History"** at the **Ara Pacis Museum** in Rome, **from 19 to 21 October 2011**.

The exhibition, conceived and organised by Telespazio, explores, through **historical images, installations and a documentary produced by RAI Storia**, the most significant milestones in the 50-year history of the company founded on 18 October 1961 thanks to the vision of Italcable and RAI. The creation of the company opened the doors of Space to Italy and enabled the country to take part in the experiments with new forms of telecommunications via artificial satellites.

When the foundations of what would become the largest space centre in the world were laid on the Fucino Plain in Abruzzo in 1962, the Telespazio engineers led by Piero Fanti could already see the extraordinary possibilities offered by modern communications, which thanks to satellites could make the prospects and dreams envisaged by scientist and science fiction writer **Arthur C. Clarke** in 1945 a reality. Clarke had calculated that three satellites in orbit around the Earth in the equatorial plane 120 degrees apart would make communication global and instantaneous. And that is what happened.

The development of telecommunications from the 1960s until now has changed the life of millions of people beyond recognition. One only has to think of television, which with the advent of satellite transmissions beamed worldwide has brought continents closer. As a result, viewers all over the world can simultaneously watch sporting events – as in the case of the 1968 Olympics or the 1970 Football World Cup - or epoch-making events such as the Moon Landing on 20 July 1969. It is also interesting to note that – as evidence of the huge impact that the new satellite communications had on public opinion – the football used by FIFA for the 1970 World Cup in Mexico was called "Telstar", with its name and colours inspired by the satellite launched in 1962, and which offered the historic opportunity of making the first satellite transmissions between Europe and the United States.

All this will be recounted at the Ara Pacis in an exhibition route divided into **five sections, each representing a decade of space history**, running along two parallel lines: one strand will relate the main stages in the growth of Telespazio and the Italian space industry, with the progressive development of technology and increasingly complex expertise, dictated by the development of telecommunications and space services. The other strand will show the significant milestones in the history of the conquest of space, encompassing Gagarin's first flight, the Moon Landing, the International Space Station, the new COSMO-SkyMed satellite constellations and Galileo, up to the future conquest of Mars.

One section of the Ara Pacis exhibition will be dedicated to Earth observation, with the **video installation "Love Planet Earth"** – kindly loaned for the occasion by the Italia 150 Committee and also currently on show at the *Stazione Futuro Qui si rifà l'Italia* (Future Station: The remaking of Italy) exhibition at the Officine Grandi Riparazioni in Turin. Created with extremely high-resolution satellite images, the installation takes visitors on a virtual flight, departing from space, which enables them to explore with a satellite's-eye view some of the most spectacular places on Earth, flying over oceans, rivers, mountains, deserts, forests and cities.

Each of the large images presented introduces a topic of environmental interest, which it is now possible to monitor, study and control thanks to space technology. The beauty of the satellite pictures of our planet is in contrast to the dramatic nature of some of the issues tackled: desertification, the intensive use of resources, melting ice caps, the expansion of megalopolises, deforestation, the use of the land and the irreversible damage that it does to the landscape.

Further information and some of the historic images on show at the exhibition are available on Telespazio's website: [www.telespazio.it/gallery50.html](http://www.telespazio.it/gallery50.html)

The exhibition "Telespazio – 50 Years of Space History" is a Telespazio – Communication project, created by Viviana Panaccia, promoted by Finmeccanica and *Roma Capitale, Assessorato alle Politiche Culturali e Centro Storico – Sovraintendenza ai Beni Culturali*, under the auspices of the President of Italy and with the support of the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, the Italian Space Agency (ASI), the Lazio Regional Authority and the Province of Rome.

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