

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Italian satellite SICRAL 1B ready for launch on April 19**

**Rome, April 9, 2009** - The SICRAL 1B satellite is scheduled for launch on April 19, on behalf of the Italian Ministry of Defense. It will be launched at 10.16 am (CET) by a Zenit-3SL rocket operating from the Sea Launch platform, positioned at the equator in the Pacific Ocean. The SICRAL 1B program is under the joint responsibility of Thales Alenia Space and Telespazio, partners in the Space Alliance for their parent companies Finmeccanica and Thales.

Once it is in geostationary orbit at about 36,000 km, SICRAL 1B will provide strategic and tactical communications services for the Italian armed forces, in Italy and abroad, as well as ensuring mobile communications with land, naval and air platforms. It will also provide NATO forces with UHF and SHF satcom capabilities, based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2004 by the Italian, French and British ministries of defense and the Atlantic Alliance.

SICRAL 1B is the second satellite in the SICRAL program, following the launch of SICRAL 1 in 2001. It will expand in-orbit communications capacity to meet the evolving military satellite communications requirements of both Italy and NATO. The new satellite has a design life of 13 years.

Thales Alenia Space (a Thales/Finmeccanica company) was in charge of developing the system and building the SICRAL 1B satellite as prime contractor. It is also in charge of parts of the ground segment, including the Telecommunications Control Center in Vigna di Valle, Italy.

Telespazio (a Finmeccanica/Thales company) is responsible for the satellite launch services, the launch and early orbit phase (LEOP) and testing. It also manages the ground segment (Satellite Control Center in Vigna di Valle and the Space Center in Fucino).

The SICRAL 1B program is a public-private partnership between the Italian Ministry of Defense and Finmeccanica. Based on this agreement, Telespazio contributed a significant part of the direct costs of the SICRAL 1B program, giving it part of the satellite's capacity. Telespazio can therefore take on the role of satellite operator in selling capacity and services to NATO and to the European and US defense markets.

#### **About Thales Alenia Space**

A joint venture between Thales (67%) and Finmeccanica (33%), Thales Alenia Space is the European leader in satellite systems and a major player in orbital infrastructures. Thales Alenia Space sets the global standard in solutions for space telecoms, radar and optical Earth observation, defense and security, navigation and science. The company has a total of 7,200 employees and 11 industrial sites, with locations in France, Italy, Spain and Belgium. [www.thalesaleniaspace.com](http://www.thalesaleniaspace.com)

#### **About Telespazio**

A joint venture between Finmeccanica (67%) and Thales (33%), Telespazio is one of the world's leading operators in satellite services. The Rome-based company employs around 1,700 staff, and operates a network of four space centres and 25 sites spread all over the world. Telespazio plays a leading role in the reference

markets harnessing technological experience acquired over the years and through its participation in major European space programmes. [www.telespazio.com](http://www.telespazio.com)

**Thales Alenia Space Press Contact**

Sandrine Bielecki

Tel: +33 (0)4 92 92 70 94

[sandrine.bielecki@thalesalieniaspace.com](mailto:sandrine.bielecki@thalesalieniaspace.com)

**Telespazio Press Contact**

Paolo Mazzetti

Tel: +39 06 4079 6252

[paolo.mazzetti@telespazio.com](mailto:paolo.mazzetti@telespazio.com)