

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Agreement between the Civil Protection Department and Telespazio (Finmeccanica/Thales) to create a national satellite backbone for emergencies**

*Rome, 21 June 2007* - The Civil Protection Department has signed an agreement with Telespazio, a Finmeccanica/Thales company, to create and manage the Italian satellite backbone for broadband communications for use during emergencies.

The satellite backbone, part of the Civil Protection telecommunications programme, is based on Telespazio's SkyplexNet communications platform, and gives the Civil Protection Department interoperability with all the components of the national civil protection system (fire service, prefectures, regions) during any emergency. This important agreement will see the launch of an advanced telecommunications project in the security field, using cutting-edge technology and entirely developed and implemented in Italy by Thales Alenia Space. The agreement is worth around EUR 15 million.

The satellite backbone will be managed by a primary service centre located in the Italy emergency control room of the Civil Protection Department in Rome, and by emergency centres of the regional Civil Protection service spread throughout the country. The network will also be equipped with a special nomadic satellite communications system that can be transported by land or helicopter to enable wireless and satellite connections between the emergency rooms and theatres of operations.

The satellite network was first demonstrated on 20 June 2007 during the cross-border emergency trial of the RIVES civil protection project, organised by the Italian and French civil protection services, and involving the Prefectures of Barcelonnette, Larche, Digne, Cuneo and the civil protection of the Piedmont region with the EmercomSat satellite system, the regional component of the new satellite backbone.

Guido Bertolaso, the head of the Civil Protection service, said: "we are committed to the creation of this strategic infrastructure for the national civil protection system, the first of its kind in Europe. Interoperability with other telecommunications components is the next challenge, and will make Italy a model of best practice for Europe".