



## PRESS RELEASE

### Third COSMO-SkyMed satellite ready for launch from Vandenberg

**Rome, October 21, 2008** – Everything is ready at the Vandenberg Air Force base in California for the launch of the third satellite in the Earth Observation constellation, COSMO-SkyMed, on a Boeing Delta II rocket. The liftoff is scheduled for October 24 at 7:28 p.m. local time.

The Italian system COSMO–SkyMed, which represents the first dual-use constellation for Earth Observation, includes four satellites equipped with synthetic-aperture radars capable of “seeing” day or night and under any weather conditions.

The COSMO-SkyMed program is designed to enhance the monitoring and management of our planet for applications including civil protection (management of environmental hazards), defense and security, as well as scientific and commercial applications. The total program cost is approximately 1 billion euros.

This launch follows the two earlier launches, on July 7 and December 9, 2007, both from Vandenberg AFB. With the first two satellites in orbit, COSMO-SkyMed successfully passed all initial tests and became fully operational on August 1, 2008. It has already proven its performance and operational capabilities by supplying images of natural and environmental disasters such as Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, the earthquake in China in spring 2008, and Hurricanes Hannah and Ike over Haiti in September 2008. These images have often been utilized by the International Institutions and by humanitarian organizations to plan aid efforts.

With the launching of the third satellite, COSMO-SkyMed will further increase its image acquisition and production capacity, to 1,350 images per day from the current capacity of 900 images.

The orbital position of the third satellite will allow it to operate in tandem with another satellite, in order to develop interferometry-based applications. This function enables the observation of a given geographic zone at different moments and angles, to measure possible deformations in the earth’s surface.

COSMO-SkyMed thus enhances its ability to supply services encompassing environmental monitoring, security and hazards management, covering a wide range of application.

The fourth satellite is currently scheduled for launch in early 2010.

***The COSMO-SkyMed program was originally developed through an agreement between the Italian space agency (ASI) and Ministry of Defense. Thales Alenia Space (a Thales/Finmeccanica joint venture) is the prime contractor, with responsibility for the entire system. Telespazio (a Finmeccanica/Thales joint venture) was responsible for manufacturing the civil and military ground segments. It manages the constellation’s in-orbit operations and data acquisition and processing.***

***For civil applications, COSMO-SkyMed data are marketed by e-geos, a company created by the Italian Space Agency and Telespazio.***

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