The European Commission and the European Space Agency look forward to first-rate co-operation to bring the European satellite radio navigation project to a successful conclusion, it has been reported.

On 10th February the Commission Vice-President responsible for transport, Antonio Tajani, met Jean-Jacques Dordain, Director General of the European Space Agency, in order to give official endorsement to their continued co-operation in the Galileo programme. This meeting comes after the signing of a delegation agreement covering Galileo’s deployment phase by the European Commission and the European Space Agency (ESA) on 19th December 2008.

“Signing this agreement represents a commitment to quality and efficiency and marks the beginning of an exemplary co-operation between the Commission and the European Space Agency. Galileo is now entering a new era where space age technology brings down-to-earth benefits for every citizen and business in Europe. With Galileo, the European Union will buy a state-of-the-art satellite navigation system which will increase economic efficiency and reduce congestion and energy consumption throughout the transport sector. That means boosting growth and jobs and helping to tackle climate change, whilst also making everyday life safer and easier”, said Vice-President Antonio Tajani.

Since 25th July 2008, the European Commission has been responsible for the management of the Egnos and Galileo programmes. The role of the European Space Agency is no less crucial since, as the guardian of European technical space know-how, it is acting as project manager for the two programmes. Establishing a framework to optimise co-operation between the Commission and the European Space Agency is a key element for the successful outcome of the two projects. In this case, the instrument chosen, namely delegating implementation of the budget, as provided for by the Financial Regulation applicable to the Community budget, enables the European Space Agency to manage the technical part of the two programmes effectively while allowing the Commission to exercise its power of audit fully.

For the Galileo programme, the delegation agreement concerns the deployment phase of the system, the implementation of which consists of six main work packages to be put out to public tender (system support, ground mission segment, ground control segment, space segment, launch services and operations). The overall programme objective for Galileo is the deployment, by 2013, of a European navigation system generating signals that provide a total of five main services, namely the Open Service, the Safety of Life Service, the Commercial Service, the Public Regulated Service, and the Search and Rescue Service.