



## Calibration transponders set to receive MetOp information

The first MetOp spacecraft was launched on Thursday 19th October on a Soyuz/Fregat rocket. The spacecraft and its meteorological instruments will be commissioned over the coming weeks. One of the main instruments is the Advanced Scatterometer (ASCAT), which will be using the SEA-built Ground Calibration Transponders based in Turkey as part of its operations.

The ESA/EUMETSAT instrument an enhanced C-band radar that will measure the speed and direction of winds over the surface of the oceans, and will also feed numerical weather prediction models, but in addition providing useful information on ice, snow and soil moisture.

For 28 years, Europe has been operating its famous Meteosat weather satellites in geostationary orbit. A brand new generation of meteorological satellites, MetOp, is designed to provide a closer view of the atmosphere from low earth orbit, delivering data that will improve global weather prediction and enhance our understanding of climate change.

MetOp is the most complete atmospheric probe ever and to fulfill its ambitious mission, spacecraft incorporates a comprehensive remote-sensing payload consisting of a set of new-generation European instruments, plus a set of 'heritage' instruments provided by the United States similar to those flown on current NOAA satellites.

Thanks to its advanced payload and broadcast capacity, MetOp will be able to detect and report the early development of localised severe weather conditions, such as violent thunderstorms, which cannot be observed from geostationary orbit. The satellite will thus make it possible to issue weather alerts at much earlier notice than at present.