



Galileo Test Range: an opportunity for Italy

**Industrial scenario: commitment, ramifications and prospects**

P. F. Guarguaglini

*Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica*

Rome, Tempio di Adriano, Piazza di Pietra – 16 December 2005

In November, Finmeccanica presented its second annual Innovation Award. One of the three projects honoured this year is the atomic clock developed by Galileo Avionica for the Galileo programme, with half the weight and volume of other clocks, double the life span and extremely low sensitivity to magnetic fields: qualities that will make it the world's authority on time.

In December, the consortium that will be managing the Galileo system signed an agreement assigning Italy one of the two Constellation Mission Control Stations and one of the two Performance Assessment Centres.

These two achievements highlight Finmeccanica's commitment to the Galileo programme in terms of both technological development and industrial and operational aspects, and emphasise its strong results.

Thanks to Finmeccanica's extensive participation in Galileo Industries, the international consortium building the infrastructure, the satellite integration will take place in Rome at the Italian premises of Alcatel Alenia Space, which is also in charge of integrating and testing the entire system upon completion of the development phase.

For Telespazio and the Fucino Space Centre, the assignment of the Constellation Mission Control Station to Italy is a great responsibility and a chance to boost their profiles, offering significant prospects for the future.

Moreover, with the Performance Assessment Centre based near Rome, the Galileo Test Range will take major strides towards fulfilling its identity as a permanent national laboratory for signal validation, terminal testing and certification, and support for the development of applications and services.

At the same time, however, this responsibility means that the Galileo Test Range will have to come fully into operation without delay, and its medium- and long-term operations need to be ensured both financially and in terms of engineering and management support. It is important that Italy and Lazio maintain their advantage over Munich, where a similar structure is in the early phases of construction.

If it is built on time and on budget, the Galileo Test Range will also be a model for the rest of the country, in comparison with the many delays and false starts with other projects (the high-speed railway, for one).

The potential of the Galileo Test Range, however, does not end at this “institutional” level.

For its applications and services, the Galileo Programme is a unique opportunity for businesses large and small, for universities, and for national research centres in a variety of fields including transport (air, rail, sea and road), rescue services, telecommunications, topographical surveillance and geographical information.

The Galileo Test Range could be a catalyst for the development, in Lazio, of an area of national and international renown.

Finally, we should not forget that the success of the Galileo Test Range is also politically charged, as it could reinforce the bid by Italy and the Lazio region to have Galileo's supervisory authority housed in Rome.

Such an achievement could only strengthen our country and our national industry in the context of the Galileo Programme, and in European space endeavours in general.

Galileo is the EU's first important space programme and the first example of a public-private partnership at European level. The stakes are too high for Italy to miss out, even in part.