

# SpaceRISE

Space Consortium for a Resilient,  
Interconnected and Secure Europe

## IRIS<sup>2</sup> lifts off as European Commission and SpaceRISE sign contract in Brussels

- *Backed by €6.5 billion of public funds and over €4 billion of private funds, the multi-orbit satellite network project will enable Europe's strategic communications autonomy*
- *Designed, delivered and operated by the SpaceRISE consortium, the EU's 3<sup>rd</sup> flagship project to be launched into service by early 2030*

Brussels, 16 December 2024 -- SpaceRISE, the consortium comprising Eutelsat, Hispasat and SES, [has signed the agreement with the European Commission \(EC\) and the European Space Agency \(ESA\)](#) that will see the consortium design, deliver and operate the Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite (IRIS<sup>2</sup>) for a period of 12 years. The contract was signed today in a ceremony at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels.

With the network of 290 new Low Earth Orbit and Medium Earth Orbit satellites expected to provide services by the beginning of 2030, the IRIS<sup>2</sup> constellation of satellites for a resilient, interconnected and secure Europe is an EU flagship initiative. IRIS<sup>2</sup> will be the preferred and trusted network for Europe in delivering secure and reliable high-performance communication solutions to the EU and its Member States as well as high-speed broadband connectivity for European citizens, governmental authorities and businesses, playing a transformative role in reinforcing Europe's digital sovereignty, and low-latency connectivity.

Under the agreement with SpaceRISE, the project will be backed by €6.5 billion of public funds representing nearly 60% of the total project costs – comprising funding from the European Commission, EU Member States, the European Space Agency and private financing from the consortium members. The SpaceRISE consortium will lead the wider European space industry to accelerate innovation throughout the supply chain, enhancing Europe's leadership and competitiveness in the space sector.

Additionally, the Public-private Partnership (PPP) model in the form of Concession will unite public and commercial interests in an unprecedented way, paving the way for continuous implementation of innovative solutions and platforms for the future.

**Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner for Defence and Space:** “Today we are not just launching a satellite project. We are launching a vision - a vision of a stronger, more connected, and more resilient Europe. IRIS<sup>2</sup> demonstrates the Union's resolve and commitment to strengthening Europe's space global posture both in terms of security and competitiveness to the benefit of our governments, businesses and citizens.”

“In an increasingly complex geopolitical world, ensuring resilient, secure and fast governmental communications is essential. ESA will play a crucial role in the technical implementation of the IRIS<sup>2</sup> programme. ESA's excellence will foster innovation in the European space industry, boost European competitiveness, create high-skill jobs and attract talents to Europe. The Commission's trust in ESA to oversee the development of the constellation and its ground infrastructure speaks volumes of ESA's successful track record in the delivery of European flagship programmes. ESA is ready to deliver again, for Europe and its citizens,” said **Josef Aschbacher, ESA's Director General**.

**Adel Al-Saleh, Chief Executive Officer of SES,** said, “We are honoured to lead the SpaceRISE consortium to work with the European Commission and the European Space Agency on the IRIS<sup>2</sup> project. IRIS<sup>2</sup> is integral to Europe's space strategy and is already fostering enhanced collaboration and

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innovation between the industry and public sectors. By strategically coming together, we will be able to ensure architecture resiliency and security from Day 1 of the system launch. With EC as an anchor customer of the constellation, our investment into IRIS<sup>2</sup> will see us augment our MEO capabilities while executing our required rate of return, maintaining investment grade balance sheet metrics, and returning cash to our shareholders.”

**Eva Berneke, Chief Executive Officer of Eutelsat** commented, “IRIS<sup>2</sup> programme is a landmark initiative that embodies Europe’s commitment to digital sovereignty, resilience, and strategic autonomy. At Eutelsat, we are uniquely positioned to bring unparalleled expertise to this mission, leveraging our pioneering capabilities, including our cutting-edge LEO constellation. By combining this advanced infrastructure with the collective strengths of the SpaceRISE consortium, we will deliver a transformative communications backbone that addresses Europe’s most critical connectivity needs of our governments, reinforces its leadership in space innovation, and bridges the digital divide for millions of citizens and businesses across the continent. This project is a testament to Eutelsat’s vision of driving secure and sustainable connectivity for a resilient Europe.”

**Miguel Ángel Panduro, Chief Executive Officer of Hispasat** added, “The signing of IRIS<sup>2</sup> is a historical milestone for European space. Hispasat was born out of public-private collaboration to provide government and commercial communications in geographical areas of interest to our country. We are therefore convinced that, through SpaceRISE, we will not only guarantee the secure communications of the Member States, but also contribute to generating a more innovative and competitive ecosystem at a time of special relevance for the European space industry.”

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## About SpaceRISE

SpaceRISE which stands for Space Consortium for a Resilient, Interconnected and Secure Europe is dedicated to fostering a resilient, interconnected, and secure Europe through space innovation. Comprising Europe’s key space and telecom companies including Airbus Defence and Space, Deutsche Telekom, Eutelsat, Hisdesat, Hispasat, OHB, Orange, SES, Telespazio, Thales Alenia Space, and Thales, SpaceRISE aims to bring SMEs and New Space players together in a multi-national footprint throughout the EU27 Member States to expand its collaboration. By harnessing the strengths of established industry leaders and emerging innovators, SpaceRISE is set to drive Europe’s secure and sustainable future in space.

## Press contacts

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