

First Commercial Satellite Constellation Successfully Launched

The next generation of earth observation and geoinformation services begin with RapidEye's constellation of five satellites.

Brandenburg/ Havel, August 29, 2008 – A DNEPR-1 rocket was successfully launched earlier today from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan carrying five earth observation satellites owned by the geospatial information provider RapidEye AG. This marks the first successful launch of a commercial satellite constellation worldwide.

The satellites will download their image data to an X-band antenna in northern Norway. The data will then be transmitted to the processing facilities at RapidEye headquarters in Brandenburg/Havel, where it will be processed and analyzed, and the products for customers generated. Another part of the ground segment is the control station, which monitors and controls the satellites. The combination of the satellite constellation, the control station and the data processing facilities enables RapidEye to offer cost-effective and efficient solutions for its customers in the agriculture, forestry and cartography industries and others. The RapidEye system is supported by the German Aerospace Center (DLR) as the next generation of optical earth observation and as an important public/private partnership in aerospace.

A countdown and launch celebration held at the RapidEye headquarters, attended by Jochen Homann, State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, Head Official of the Ministry of Economics, Michael Richter, as well as the Mayor of the City of Brandenburg, Dr. Dietlind Tiemann. The RapidEye team along with their family and friends also shared the exciting day with several hundred interested citizens of the city of Brandenburg.

Wolfgang Biedermann, CEO of RapidEye AG, explains what expectations customers from around the globe have of the RapidEye satellite system, “With our satellite constellation, we are able to observe large areas of our earth with a high revisit rate in high spatial resolution. The earth observation data obtained with our system is the basis for important management information services that haven’t been commercially available until now, especially in the agriculture and forestry industries. We expect to play a decisive role in the quickly growing geospatial information market.”

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“Earth observation satellites achieve weather, climate and environmental monitoring with the highest precision worldwide. The federal government pursues a leading position for Germany and wants to offer German companies a better chance in the European and global markets to commercialize their products and services. For this purpose, the government has created a positive business environment for the industry and specifically targets projects concerned with this topic. Germany has supported the RapidEye project through the German Aerospace Center (DLR) in this Public/Private Partnership,” explains State Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology Jochen Homann when discussing the commitment of Germany to RapidEye.

Brandenburg's state Minister for Economic Affairs, Ulrich Junghanns, who was represented at RapidEye's launch event by Brandenburg's Head Official of the Ministry of Economics Michael Richter, explains, “There is a growing need for geospatial information. Market surveys show good chances for the geoinformation sciences to tap into new and innovative markets, therefore it's a growing area which is supported by the state of Brandenburg's Business Development in particular. RapidEye AG is a key investment project for the development of this industry with a bright future in Germany's capital area. Their abilities will be particularly needed and recognized worldwide for their environmental monitoring and early detection of risks, since RapidEye can monitor large areas within a short amount of time.”

Mayor Dr. Dietlind Tiemann emphasizes the impact of RapidEye's location in Brandenburg/Havel and surrounding region, “When RapidEye AG, a global company for geo information, moved into our city center two years ago, it was a clear sign of business development in Brandenburg. In our over 1000 year old city, we have now one of the most advanced optical earth observation systems. We are very proud about this. We are also pleased that the coat of arms of the city of Brandenburg/Havel was displayed on the rocket that carried the satellites into space. I wish the international team of specialists at RapidEye and all companies involved with this project all the best for the future.”

The significance of RapidEye's data for scientific purposes is highlighted by Dr. Hans-Peter Lüttenberg, Head of the earth observation department at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), “We have been convinced from the beginning about RapidEye's business model and have been supporting them from the start. From the image data from the RapidEye satellite constellation, we hope for new findings in research for Geo-sciences and Environmental studies. A long existing gap in demand will be closed with RapidEye's service offerings.”

Dr. Dietrich Heine, Deputy Chairman of RapidEye's Supervisory Board emphasizes the importance of this project: “This constellation of five satellites with their special sensors makes RapidEye the first Geospatial

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Service Provider worldwide able to reliably deliver large quantities of high resolution images from every point of the earth. A wide variety of information can be derived about the earth for a myriad of uses. The possibilities are endless thanks to our team of specialists and a highly automated data processing system that catalogs and analyzes images for our customers. RapidEye's services for the agricultural sector will become more and more important in the course of globalization, since they can provide better planning tools and allow for more efficient land utilization.“

“This has been a huge undertaking that could not have been realized without the commitment of our investors, partners and our dedicated team in the last 10 years. I would like to thank everyone that contributed to this project on this special day. We are looking forward to the first images from the satellites, which will set another important milestone in the Geo-Information sector,” remarked Wolfgang Beidermann, RapidEye's CEO.

About RapidEye AG

RapidEye is an ISO-certified geospatial information provider focused on integrating customized and industry specific solutions into the workflow of global customers in agriculture, forestry, energy, infrastructure, government, security and emergency. RapidEye's experts and the satellite system – a constellation of five satellites capable of downloading over 4 million km² of high resolution, multi-spectral imagery per day, a control station and a ground segment for processing and archiving data – allow for cost effective, customized services. The unique combination of large area coverage, high spatial resolution and the possibility of daily revisit to an area provide for superior management information solutions. Currently more than 90 experts from more than 20 countries worldwide are employed by RapidEye. Following a successful launch, plans are being made to increase the team to over 140.

For more information, please visit www.rapideye.de

For updated information on the launch, please visit www.rapideye.de/launch2008

About DLR

DLR is Germany's national research center for aeronautics and space. Its extensive research and development work in Aeronautics, Space, Transportation and Energy is integrated into national and international cooperative ventures. As Germany's space agency, DLR has been given responsibility for the forward planning and the implementation of the German space program by the German federal government as well as for the international representation of German interests. Furthermore, Germany's largest project-

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management agency is also part of DLR.

Approximately 5,700 people are employed in DLR's 29 institutes and facilities at thirteen locations in Germany: Koeln (headquarters), Berlin, Bonn, Braunschweig, Bremen, Goettingen, Hamburg, Lampoldshausen, Neustrelitz, Oberpfaffenhofen, Stuttgart, Trauen and Weilheim. DLR also operates offices in Brussels, Paris, and Washington D.C.

For more information on the DLR please visit www.dlr.de

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Picture 1: RapidEye's satellites lift off in Baikonur, source:MDA

Picture 2: Final fairing closure, source: SSTI

Picture 3: Launch Logos on the rocket nose, source: SSTL

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