



PRESS RELEASE

## **ALTEC AND TELESPAZIO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY FOR THE GROUND SEGMENT OF THE SPACE RIDER MISSION**

Rome, 9 December 2020 - ALTEC (Thales Alenia Space 63,75% and ASI 36,25%) and Telespazio, a joint venture between Leonardo (67%) and Thales (33%), today signed a contract with the European Space Agency (ESA) to manage the ground segment and operations for the Space Rider mission.

Space Rider is an unmanned space vehicle with a payload capacity of about 600 kg, able to carry out scientific and technological experiments in microgravity conditions, while orbiting at an altitude of about 400 km. At the end of the mission it will return safely to Earth, thus ensuring full recovery of the load. The reusable vehicle will be built by an industrial team led by Thales Alenia Space, a joint venture between Thales (67%) and Leonardo (33%), and AVIO, and will consist of two main elements: the AVUM Orbital Module (AOM) and the Re-entry Module (RM). The unit covered by the development contract will be able to carry out at least 5 missions, in addition to its inaugural launch.

The missions, lasting at least 2 months, will be launched from the European Space Port at Kourou, in French Guiana, on board the VEGA-C carrier, and will conclude with an autonomous landing.

Within the Space Rider mission, ALTEC and Telespazio will be responsible for managing the entire ground segment and subsequent mission operations and act as Co-Prime, in an integrated manner.

ALTEC will manage the scientific and technological experiments on board the vehicle during the nominal mission phase, as well as the phase that relates to the vehicle's non-destructive return into the atmosphere.

Telespazio is responsible for the development, integration and validation of VCC-OC (Vehicle Control Centre - Operations Control) and the development, validation and execution of flight operations, for both the launch and early orbit phase (LEOP) and the "routine" phase. In addition, Telespazio will be responsible for the construction and management of the Ground Stations Network.

All flight operations will be managed from the Fucino Space Centre. From there, Telespazio will control the return phase of the AVUM Orbital Module, while ALTEC will be responsible for the return and landing phases of the Re-entry Module (RM), which it will follow from VCC-LC (Vehicle Control Centre - Landing Control). This is an integral part of the Vehicle Control Centre and is housed in its own Space Centre in Turin. The same Centre will also host the Payload Ground Control Centre, or PGCC, from which ALTEC will manage experiments during the orbital phase of the mission.

*"This contract is the crowning achievement of the efforts that my colleagues and the entire company have made over the years, on various programmes, in various fields and sectors. It fully summarizes what the company is today: a cohesive group of enthusiastic and passionate people whose energy and professionalism have allowed ALTEC to have the international recognition it enjoys today. It is with this same spirit that we are preparing to face this new, exciting adventure together with Telespazio and with the support of the Italian and European Space Agencies, aware of the difficulties but at the same*

time certain of the success that Space Rider will achieve at an international level”, said **Vincenzo Giorgio**, CEO of ALTEC

*“Telespazio is proud to contribute to the development of a highly innovative European space programme that the Italian Space Agency has been very keen to see come to fruition, and which will be run by the leading companies in the Italy's aerospace industry. The strategic value of a vehicle like Space Rider is that it gives Europe access to space in low orbit. The signing of this contract, which sees us in partnership with ALTEC, rewards the firm's consolidated experience in the field of space operations and setting up the ground segment of important international missions and programmes”,* said **Luigi Pasquali**, Leonardo's Space Activities Coordinator and Telespazio CEO.

Space Rider represents the evolution of the IXV mission, successfully carried out on 11 February 2015, with a suborbital flight that left from Kourou and ended with the recovery of the spaceplane after ditching in the Pacific Ocean. Within the industrial team for the IXV mission, headed by Thales Alenia Space in Italy, ALTEC was responsible for the ground segment and the mission control centre, hosted at its headquarters in Turin.

#### **About ALTEC:**

ALTEC – Aerospace Logistics Technology Engineering Company – is the Italian centre of excellence for the provision of engineering and logistics services to support operations and utilization of the International Space Station and the development and implementation of planetary exploration missions. ALTEC is a public-private company owned by the major European space company, Thales Alenia Space and the Italian Space Agency, ASI. ALTEC is based in Turin and has liaison offices at NASA and ESA. ALTEC services range from engineering and logistics support, training of astronauts, to support experiments in biomedicine in particular, the processing of scientific data, the development and management of the ground segment of space programmes and the promotion of space culture.

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#### **About Telespazio:**

Telespazio, a Leonardo and Thales 67/33 joint venture, is one of the world's leading operators in satellite services. Its activities range from the design and development of space systems to the management of launch services, from in-orbit satellite control to Earth observation, from integrated communications, satellite navigation and localisation services to scientific programmes. Telespazio plays a leading role in the reference markets harnessing technological experience acquired over the years. Since its establishment, the company has participated in major European space programmes such as Galileo, EGNOS, Copernicus and COSMO-SkyMed. In 2019, Telespazio generated sales of EUR 535 million while employing approximately 2,600 people worldwide.

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