



The Third COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation Satellite Successfully Launched

This state-of-the-art Italian dual use radar Earth observation constellation, owned by the Italian Space Agency and the Italian Ministry of Defense, offers the highest level of performance in terms of security and sustainability

Rome, 3 January 2026 – The third satellite part of the COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation (CSG) constellation, owned by the Italian Space Agency and the Italian Ministry of Defense, built by Thales Alenia Space, a joint venture between Thales (67%) and Leonardo (33%) and operated in orbit by Telespazio, a joint venture between Leonardo (67%) and Thales (33%), has successfully been launched from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California (USA), aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

59 minutes after the separation from its launcher, the satellite's signal was acquired and controlled by Telespazio's Fucino Space Center located in Abruzzo, Italy. The nominal duration of the LEOP (launch and early orbit phase) will last approximately 9 days.

Massimo Claudio Comparini, Managing Director of Leonardo's Space Division, stated: *"Each COSMO-SkyMed launch represents a significant achievement for the Italian national space system and its supply chain. The program, developed to meet the requirements of the Italian Space Agency and the Italian Ministry of Defense, reflects the technological and industrial excellence led by Leonardo together with the joint ventures Thales Alenia Space, Telespazio and e-GEOS. Earth observation and the data it provides are a strategic asset for security and sustainability, enabling increasingly targeted and timely services and interventions. This commitment strengthens Italy's role in space and helps generate value for the country and the international community."*

Giampiero Di Paolo, CEO of Thales Alenia Space Italy and Senior Vice President Earth Observation, Exploration and Navigation, commented: *"Being responsible for the overall COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation program, Thales Alenia Space is extremely proud of this successful launch, which further demonstrates the company's excellence in radar technology and highlights the dedication of our teams. Once fully deployed with its four satellites, it will provide substantial technological and performance progress, strengthening Thales Alenia Space's global leadership in space-based earth observation infrastructure."*

COSMO-SkyMed (Constellation of Satellites for the Mediterranean basin Observation) is a dual use Earth observation constellation owned by the Italian Space Agency (ASI) and the Italian Ministry of Defense. Regarding the development of the constellation, the Italian industry plays a leading role with Leonardo and the joint ventures Thales Alenia Space, Telespazio and e-GEOS, plus a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises.

This third Second Generation satellite, built by Thales Alenia Space like the other satellites in the constellation, will guarantee the operational continuity of radar (SAR, Synthetic-Aperture Radar) services of the COSMO-SkyMed constellation, further enhancing the already high performance of the system in terms of image quality and area coverage. With a third satellite in orbit, COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation, using the latest technologies and engineering solutions, is progressively replacing the first-generation system, which features four satellites including two operational to date. The new generation increases the overall performance of the system and significantly expands the range of applications offered, given the final configuration of four satellites. The entire system, including the ground segment, is setting the performance standard for space-based radar observation systems in terms of accuracy, image quality and flexible user services.

Over the years, the data obtained by the COSMO-SkyMed system have provided fundamental information for environmental and territorial monitoring, security, and emergency management. Since the launch of the first COSMO-SkyMed satellite in 2007, about 4.3 million images have been acquired by the satellites and archived. As a mission participating in the European Copernicus program, COSMO-SkyMed's images are of great importance to the European Commission's Emergency Rapid Mapping service, also operated by e-GEOS, which provides satellites maps of areas affected by natural disasters of humanitarian crises within a matter of hours.



Industry role

For COSMO-SkyMed, Italian industry plays a leading role, with Leonardo and the joint ventures Thales Alenia Space and Telespazio, together with a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Thales Alenia Space is responsible for the entire Second-Generation COSMO-SkyMed programme, including satellite development and manufacturing, as well as the design, integration and commissioning of the end-to-end system.

Telespazio is responsible for the design and development of the CSG ground segment and the provision of Integrated Logistics and Operations Services. Telespazio's Fucino-based Space Centre, from where the first telemetry data sent by the satellite has been acquired, will manage all the satellite's Launch and Early Orbit Phase (LEOP) up to IOT, Commissioning and Routine Phases.

Leonardo contributes to the programme by providing attitude control equipment, as well as state-of-the-art units for the management and distribution of electrical power.

COSMO-SkyMed data is marketed worldwide by e-GEOS - a company jointly owned by the Italian Space Agency (20%) and Telespazio (80%) - which holds exclusive commercialisation rights. In addition, e-GEOS as mission user, processes COSMO-SkyMed data for the development of applications and operational services including support for emergency management, security, infrastructure monitoring, maritime traffic management, precision agriculture, and the monitoring of natural resources and ecosystems.

About Leonardo

Leonardo is an international industrial group, among the main global companies in Aerospace, Defence, and Security (AD&S). With 60,000 employees worldwide, the company approaches global security through the Helicopters, Electronics, Aeronautics, Cyber & Security and Space sectors, and is a partner on the most important international programmes such as Eurofighter, JSF, NH-90, FREMM, GCAP, and Eurodrone. Leonardo has significant production capabilities in Italy, the UK, Poland, and the USA. Leonardo utilises its subsidiaries, joint ventures, and shareholdings, which include Leonardo DRS (71.4%), MBDA (25%), ATR (50%), Hensoldt (22.8%), Telespazio (67%), Thales Alenia Space (33%), and Avio (19.3%). Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (LDO), in 2024 Leonardo recorded new orders for €20.9 billion, with an order book of €44.2 billion and consolidated revenues of €17.8 billion. Included in the MIB ESG index, the company has also been part of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) since 2010. www.leonardo.com

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About Thales Alenia Space

Drawing on over 40 years of experience and a unique combination of skills, expertise and cultures, Thales Alenia Space delivers cost-effective solutions for telecommunications, navigation, Earth observation, environmental monitoring, exploration, science and orbital infrastructures. Governments and private industry alike count on Thales Alenia Space to design satellite-based systems that provide anytime, anywhere connections and positioning, monitor our planet, enhance management of its resources and explore our Solar System and beyond. Thales Alenia Space sees space as a new horizon, helping build a better, more sustainable life on Earth. A joint venture between Thales (67%) and Leonardo (33%), Thales Alenia Space also teams up with Telespazio to form the Space Alliance, which offers a complete range of solutions including services. Thales Alenia Space posted consolidated revenues of €2.23 billion in 2024 and has more than 8,100 employees in 7 countries with 14 sites in Europe. www.thalesaleniaspace.com

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About Telespazio

Telespazio, a Leonardo and Thales 67:33 joint venture, is one of the world's leading operators in space services. Its activities range from the design and development of space systems to the management of launch services and in-orbit satellite control, from Earth observation, integrated communications, satellite navigation and localisation services to scientific programmes. The company plays a leading role in the reference markets, supported by its infrastructure and the technological experience acquired in over 60 years of activity, which include participation in space programmes such as Galileo, EGNOS, Copernicus, COSMO-SkyMed and Moonlight. Telespazio, which is Thales Alenia Space's partner in the "Space Alliance", generated sales of EUR 750 million in 2024 while employing 3,300 people in 15 different countries. www.telespazio.com