

ESA astronaut Paolo Nespoli
at the ESRIN Open Day on
22 March

More than 30 000 people visited ESRIN in Frascati (I) in 2004 and participated in scientific international conferences, working meetings, launch retransmission events and VIP visits.

In March, ESRIN opened its doors to the general public for an 'Open Day' that attracted around 1000 people. This initiative was organised in the framework of the Italian Science Week, in conjunction with other research institutes based in the Frascati area.

Several major international scientific and user conferences took place at ESRIN during the year, such as the GMES Information Day in May, the Telemedicine Workshop in July, a Telecommunications Applications Workshop in November and a major Earth Observation User Consultation meeting. The 100th meeting of the ESA Earth-Observation Programme Board was held at ESRIN on 27 May.

The arrival of the new Director of Earth Observation Programmes and Head of ESRIN gave new impetus to ESRIN's activities, in particular its role as a focal point and reference centre in Europe for Earth-observation activities.

A major event for ESRIN was the organisation of the Envisat Symposium in Salzburg from 6 to 10

September. It attracted more than a thousand participants, most of whom were scientists, users and representatives of industry working with Envisat data.

ESRIN devoted considerable effort during the year to its ground-infrastructure activities and liaison activities with receiving stations worldwide. The User Helpdesk has a database of about 8000 users, as well as managing mission planning and operations requests from institutional entities and commercial users and supporting pilot projects. It also managed the distribution via Earthnet of data from 25 satellites operated by third-parties.

The ESRIN Satellite Multimedia Infrastructure responded to a number of requests for support from external institutional and commercial users in 2004, such as the French and Italian Civil Protection Authorities. A laboratory area was set up with appropriate uplink facilities to ensure good connections to the Internet and academic networks, to provide access to satellites and to serve as a showcase for ESA's telecommunications activities in the fields of telemedicine, tele-education, secure communications and other applications.

The Vega Management Team based at ESRIN was consolidated during the year and activities



associated with the Vega ground segment in Kourou were initiated in October.

The ESA Web Portal, managed from ESRIN, experienced a considerable increase in visitor numbers in 2004 and implemented new measures targeting improved security and wide broadband access.

ESRIN supported various university and other educational activities in Europe during the year. It made arrangements with Italian universities, such as Rome's Sapienza University, to support Masters courses devoted to space-technology infrastructure and applications, as well as hosting numerous stagiaires of European and other nationalities.

The European Centre for Space Records (ECSR), established at ESRIN in 2002, further supplemented its technical and project-related documentation during the year. It now includes documentation on the ERS-1 and ERS-2, Envisat, SOHO, MOP, Silex and Hermes programmes.

A new Informatics Service Desk area was set up in the context of a rationalised approach to offering services across the whole Agency.

A Virtual Reality Theatre was installed, to serve both as a working environment for scientific meetings and to provide external visitors with 3D presentations on Earth-observation activities.

A new social centre with childcare facilities was inaugurated at ESRIN in December.

The Agreement with the Italian Space Agency (ASI) for hosting its Science Data Centre at ESRIN has been renewed for three years.

The official opening of the
Envisat Symposium in the
Salzburg Congress Centre on
6 September