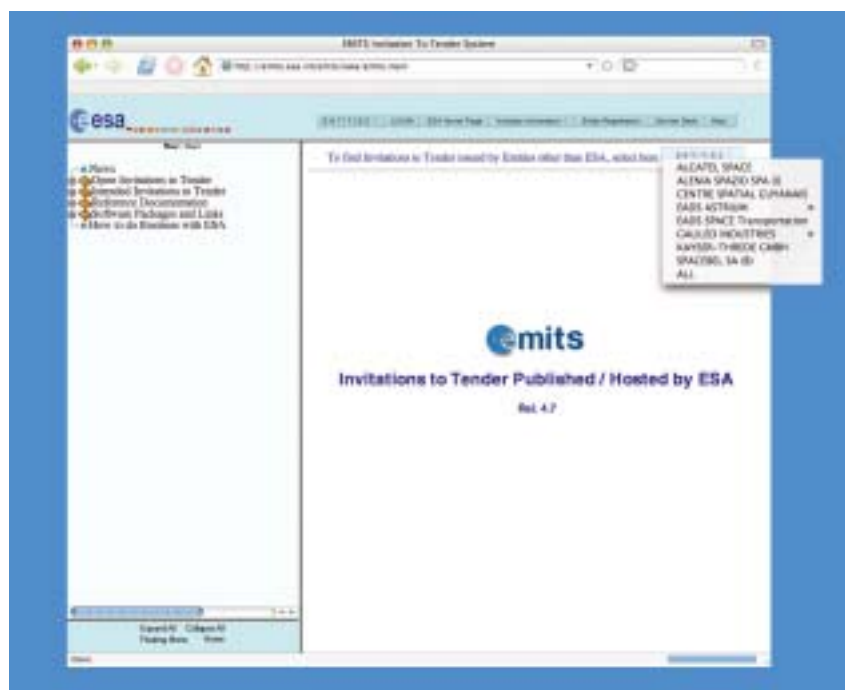


Industrial Relations



Expanding communication with European Space Industry and improving the Agency's knowledge of its capabilities, and those of European research organisations, was a continuing priority in 2005, in pursuit of greater speed and efficiency in the ESA decision-making process.

An analysis of the potential for space activities in Industry and research institutes in Greece, Luxembourg, Hungary, Poland and Romania, was presented to the Agency's Industrial Policy Committee (IPC) and Industrial Relations Committee (IRC). The study identified the scientific communities, and major and niche competencies that these States can bring to ESA, their degree of maturity in the different fields, and promising areas for future cooperation in European space programmes. In preparation for the Ministerial Council in December in Berlin, an analysis was made together with Industry to identify key critical industrial capabilities, and projections of associated workload. The results were synthesised in a document package prepared for the Ministerial Council Preparatory Working Group.

A new release of EMITS (Electronic Invitation to Tender System) was prepared, simplifying access for Industry and research organisations working with ESA. ESID (European Space Industry Database) was considerably updated based on significant contributions from Member State Delegations, and its scope was enlarged to include the PECS (Plan for European Cooperating States) countries.

Industrial Policy measures for non-Large System Integrators were applied to R&D programmes. The results of their past implementations were analysed and a way forward was proposed and discussed with the Delegations in the framework of the IPC. In order to improve the quality of both technology action selection and the technology-harmonisation process, a new analysis process was initiated to develop market estimates, and the first contributions were provided during the latest European Space Technology Harmonisation meetings.

The Small and Medium-size Enterprise (SME) Initiative continued to support SMEs through the specific mechanisms that have been put in place. Training courses organised at ESTEC allowed more than 100 engineers from 70 SMEs and research organisations to familiarise themselves with specific aspects of space activities. In the framework of the Announcements of Opportunity (AO) for the Leading-Edge Technologies for SMEs (LET-SME) initiative, launched at the end of 2004, eight contracts were issued. The second brochure highlighting the successful results of past SME spin-in activities was published. Last but not least, cooperation between the European Commission and ESA on support to SMEs was reinforced by an EC contract to ESA to define and develop an expert network focussing on engineering and processes.