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Foreword

Proceedings of DASIA 2004, NICE:

The DASIA conference is the European forum for space related data systems, hardware and software, as evidenced by the yearly participation of about 150 people dominantly employed by European space industry and from institutes and universities involved in space related research. DASIA, however, also attracts participants from non-European space industry and from branches with similar requirements to reliability and safety, e.g. the aircraft and communications industry.

At DASIA 2004 about 65 of the participants were presenting 76 papers over 3 1/2 days in two parallel sessions. These figures demonstrate very clearly the high activity level at the conference. With this large proportion of the participants presenting papers you also find that there is quite a large amount of new faces when comparing to previous years. However, a little less than 50 of the participants were also present the previous year.

The good blend of – sometimes not totally filtered – technical ideas and approaches and project experience is important for the success of DASIA. DASIA is the forum for presenting and discussing as well the details of technical concepts and their implementation – to a large degree based on application projects but also as the results of technology research - as well as management and system level engineering methods. In addition to the paper presentations DASIA thus always includes panel sessions - concentrating on major managerial and system level aspects on a European scale, topics here being analysed by selected people and discussed in plenum.

The overall trend for European Space Industry towards higher efficiency – this most likely also applies to other branches as well – can be expressed as better quality and hopefully more applications and performance for the same money. This trend was apparent throughout the DASIA 04 conference – from the opening session, all the way through the paper presentation sessions and certainly during the two panel sessions.

The DASIA 2004 key note opening session ‘The European Space Industry in Context’ presented very well the composition and status of European Space Industry. The need for higher efficiency was here emphasized through the present stagnation in space spending and the competitive situation.

The panel ‘From S/W Crisis to System Solution’ concentrated on how to solve the ‘European space software crisis’ – this ‘crisis’ actually was introduced in a panel at the DASIA 01. There was general consensus on the overall approach – although this may not be sufficient - of using improved system engineering approaches, including improved and standardised s/w development methods with early modelling, simulation and prototyping and automated code generation. Incremental development and short schedules is here to stay. Reuse should be strongly promoted. The diverging interests of large (usually prime) and smaller (usually subcontracting) companies became apparent – not so much in the overall approach but rather in its implementation, e.g. what is to be reused from whom and how.

The panel on ‘Pros and Cons for Open Source’ in a detailed manner shed light on the complex set of situations under which the exploitation of open source may provide a cost-benefit solution.

The trend towards efficiency was further apparent in the considerable amount of papers covering such topics as satellite integration improvement via harness minimizing (wireless communication, new transducers and buses) and the use of simulators to secure quality of the final delivery on schedule.

As always at DASIA the use of software development methods and tools was well covered by papers and tool vendors exhibiting their offerings.

The DASIA 04 was originally planned for Istanbul but potential terrorism put an end to that. However, the conference secretariat at EUROSPACE still managed to spread Turkish delight on the – as usual very well arranged and activating – social event on the first evening. The amiable and industrious atmosphere will be maintained also next year in EDINBURGH at DASIA 2005 – your abstract being expected by mid January.

Finn Hass, DASIA Chairman.