

“Galileo Train” about to depart European GNSS applications incentives still at the station

Despite a vast potential for industry growth and new jobs in Europe, European government bodies are not taking up the challenge. The budget dedicated to GNSS – including Galileo – application Research in European Commission FP7 was dramatically cut in 2007, and no specific budget line for GNSS application R&D is foreseen for the period post-2013.

In times of much-needed jobs, at European level as well as at EU MS level, decision makers seem to plan to leave out the GNSS application R&D. This short-term strategy, depriving European citizens the opportunity to take full advantage of a booming market, is going to cost European GNSS downstream industry and Europe dear.

The primary risk of not supporting GNSS application development is to strongly slow down the GNSS technology innovation process. GNSS technology, while omnipresent, still requires major improvements through cutting-edge R&D that requires EU public support. Europe needs to reach excellence and provide top quality products to remain competitive at worldwide level. The downstream segment, representing growth and employment, is too important for Europe to be left out. Europe’s Competitors – US, Russia, China, India, etc. – realized this opportunity, and stake a lot on GNSS by investing a significant budget in GNSS application R&D.

The GNSS downstream market is a truly burgeoning market, right at the beginning of its growth phase. Europe must not miss this window of opportunities and secure its piece of the pie.

During the last decade most of the EU funding has been dedicated to the development of space and ground segment of the EU satellite navigation systems, neglecting the user segment and applications. Without dedicated significant budget for GNSS end-users applications, in the next couple of years it will be difficult or nearly impossible for European Industry – already significantly lagging behind the past five years – to survive on the GNSS global market. Another risk at this stage is that Galileo and EGNOS will not be used as intended. Europe may lose its benefits, whereas they are today within arm's reach.

All stakeholders, from European Institutions to downstream Industry, must team up and share the same ambition to seize a significant portion of the global GNSS application market.

The establishment of a long-term strategy with continued innovation and market development – through, among other initiatives, continued GNSS application R&D public funding – combining the strengths of Galileo System and the downstream industry, is essential to ensure benefits in Europe.

Ref.: Galileo Services Position Paper “Satellite Navigation Applications realizing the Ambitions of EU2020”, “Manifesto for a more committed Europe towards the development of GNSS applications”

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