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Future European Ground Segment

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ABSTRACT

Title: FUTURE EUROPEAN GROUND SEGMENT

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The existing European ground infrastructure is capable to support earth observation satellites, the present ARIANE program and scientific manned space-flight missions as demonstrated during the first German Spacelab D 1 mission flown as payload onboard NSTS in October 85.

Future European space program like EURECA, COLUMBUS, HERMES, ARIANE 5, DRS and scientific satellites will require a ground based end-to-end operation and verification infrastructure (GEOVI) of a new order of magnitude.

Individual program needs and required user support ground segments exceed the very tight budgetary frame available for the European space community (agencies and industry). Investments are necessary for industrial development facilities to support the AIV phase, support facilities for development and operation, launch and landing facilities operations facilities for mission and payload control and payload data facilities for data dissemination, archiving, retrieval etc.

Operational cost including maintenance and refurbishment will exceed the investments by far until the year 2000.

Reduction of cost can be achieved by harmonization of the ground segment, common developments and reusable investments, and by rationalization of the industrial capabilities.

Establishment of a coherent and organized European industrial policy is aimed at under consideration of national- and international interests.