Snecma and Thales Alenia Space to team up on electric propulsion for satellites

Vernon, France – May 27, 2014

Snecma (Safran) and Thales Alenia Space France signed an agreement on May 20 to work together on new-generation Spacebus satellite platforms with “all electric” propulsion.

According to this agreement, Thales Alenia Space France will offer the Snecma PPS®5000 plasma thruster as standard equipment on its new Spacebus platforms, while Snecma will integrate Thales Alenia Space’s requirements in its thruster qualification program.

“Snecma is delighted with the selection of our PPS®5000 thruster as the standard solution for all-electric propulsion on this prestigious platform. This selection confirms our strategy, while reflecting the ongoing support of French space agency CNES for electric propulsion, one of Snecma’s centers of excellence,” said David Quancard, head of the Space Engines division at Snecma.

Bertrand Maureau, Vice President, Telecommunications at Thales Alenia Space, added, “This agreement consolidates our long-standing collaboration with Snecma. Their thrusters are already standard items on Spacebus and Alphabus platforms. This latest product, now under development with the support of CNES and the French investment board CGI, allows Thales Alenia Space to expand our portfolio to include large platforms with all-electric propulsion, already being offered in the market.”

Snecma has been developing electric thrusters for satellites for more than 30 years. It now offers a range of Hall effect plasma thrusters and associated propulsion systems, at power ratings from 500 W to 20 kW. Electric propulsion technology reduces the weight of a geostationary satellite by some 40% when used in an all-electric configuration.

Snecma’s PPS®1350 plasma thrusters (power rating of 1.5 to 2.5 kW), already in service on the Alphabus platform, provide orbital positioning and stationkeeping for satellites. Thales Alenia Space had already chosen the PPS®1350 thruster for its current line of Spacebus platforms.

Snecma’s higher-power PPS®5000 (5 kW), now under development, is designed to meet the needs of all next-generation satellites using all-electric propulsion.

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About Thales Alenia Space:
Thales Alenia Space, a joint venture between Thales (67%) and Finmeccanica (33%), is a key European player in space telecommunications, navigation, Earth observation, exploration and orbital infrastructures. Thales Alenia Space and Telespazio form the two parent companies’ “Space Alliance”, which offers a complete range of services and solutions. Because of its unrivaled expertise in
dual (civil/military) missions, constellations, flexible payloads, altimetry, meteorology and high-resolution optical and radar instruments, Thales Alenia Space is the natural partner to countries that want to expand their space program. The company posted consolidated revenues in excess of 2 billion euros in 2013, and has 7,500 employees in six countries. www.thalesaleniaspace.com

About Snecma (Safran)
Snecma is part of Safran, an international high-technology group with three core businesses: aerospace, defence and security. Snecma designs, builds and sells propulsion systems for air and space, including a wide range of commercial engines that are powerful, reliable, economical and environmentally-friendly, led by the global best-seller CFM56* and the new-generation LEAP°. The company also makes world-class military aircraft engines, as well as rocket propulsion systems and equipment for satellites and launch vehicles. Snecma is a leading provider of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for civil and military aircraft engines, under the new EngineLife® brand, offering comprehensive support for customers around the world.

*CFM56 and LEAP engines are produced and marketed by CFM International, a 50/50 joint company of Snecma (Safran), France and GE of the United States. For further information go to the website: www.snecma.com and follow @Snecma on Twitter.

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