

# Communications



In general terms, 2003 was a challenging year for the ESA Communication Department. Firstly, because of a number of serious incidents which occurred at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003: the aftermath of Ariane flight 517 in December 2002 and the postponement of the Rosetta launch led to a complete change of communication strategy, with a new focus on media activities mainly linked to troubleshooting and crisis communication. Although the news to be communicated was of a critical nature, communication strategies established ad hoc managed to minimise, yet not totally avoid, negative headlines. A major challenge in terms of crisis communication resulted from the Columbia accident in February 2003. Internal working groups, established immediately afterwards, allowed for well-coordinated information and guaranteed that the Agency spoke with one voice.

In other respects 2003 was also an extremely successful year with various highlights, such as the communication campaigns around Mars Express, SMART-1 and the Cervantes mission.

## Communication Campaigns

Apart from numerous single communication activities, ESA's Communication Department carried out three campaigns combining various tools. These campaigns were organised in close cooperation with both the respective ESA Directorates and the national Delegations.

### Mars Express

The Mars Express communication campaign proved to be the most successful in ESA's

history. Around the launch, several hundred articles were published in Europe's leading magazines and newspapers. Analysis of a selection of more than 300 of them showed an Occasion To Read (OTR) indicator of more than 50 million readers, while a qualitative analysis of European press clippings indicated a positive attitude towards the project. 150 million viewers followed reports on the mission and the live transmission of the launch on TV. Online services, such as Tiscali Europe and T-Online, accepted ESA's offer to link to the ESA Web Portal, which logged more than 68 000 visitors on the day of the launch, the highest number so far recorded in the ESA web site's history. Communication contact points in all Member States were invited to organise national launch events with in-kind support from ESA, such as the live transmission of the launch, exhibition panels, information material, and provision of speakers. In total, 22 VIP events were organised, bringing together more than 10 000 guests and media representatives.

### SMART-1

Although it was not expected that the huge success of the Mars Express campaign could be repeated for SMART-1, the results were surprisingly positive:

- The challenge in terms of a communication strategy was to convey three key messages: (a) the mission's scientific objectives, (b) the innovative technologies paving the way for future missions, and (c) the successful Ariane-5 launch, indicating that Europe's launcher programme was back on the track. The written press and, in particular, the TV



ESA at the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Madrid with an exhibition coinciding with the 'Cervantes' mission of Spanish ESA astronaut Pedro Duque to the International Space Station (ISS)

networks picked up on this 'package' of messages in numerous articles and reports, making the media coverage very satisfactory in both quantity and quality.

- VIP launch events in ESOC (including 30 journalists) and events in other ESA establishments attracted hundreds of visitors, and the key event in Stockholm (S), supported significantly by ESA, was also considered a big success.
- Other activities, such as a press trip, press releases, various interviews, special web pages, etc., contributed to the success.

### The Cervantes mission

Given the current situation of the ISS programme, ESA's Communication Department gave high priority to achieving a successful campaign around this first ISS mission, involving an ESA astronaut, Spaniard Pedro Duque, after the Columbia accident. Similar to the previous campaign linked to the ISS mission involving the Belgian ESA astronaut Frank De Winne, the concept was to combine various innovative elements, including:

- media partnership agreements with the most important newspapers in Spain, and a highly professional TV setup
- special web pages in both English and Spanish, including streaming video transmissions and other special features
- an impressive exhibition on European space programmes in general, and the Cervantes mission in particular, in a non-space museum in the centre of Madrid
- involvement of high-ranking politicians (inauguration of the exhibition, various in-



flight events), to demonstrate that involvement in space will result in positive media coverage.

Schoolchildren participating in a telephone link-up with Pedro Duque during his stay on the ISS

These new elements, combined with the more 'classical' activities, led to very positive results. All of the activities were designed to achieve balanced visibility for ESA and Spain's CDTI, based on a win-win strategy.

### Media Relations

In 2003, the Media Relations Division handled more than 500 interviews in ESA Headquarters



The ESA Pavilion at the 45th Le Bourget International Air and Space Show in Paris in June



One corner of the ESA Pavilion at Le Bourget

alone, responded to over 2500 photo requests, issued approximately 100 Press Releases and Information Notes, and produced 1000 photographs. It also organised more than 15 press trips and press conferences addressing directly some 300 journalists.



The visit of French President Jacques Chirac (left) to the ESA Pavilion on 14 June, accompanied by ESA's former and current Director Generals, Antonio Rodotà and Jean-Jacques Dordain (right)

The main subjects covered by the media were:

- the Columbia accident, the future of the ISS and Europe's contribution
- Rosetta, including the postponement of the mission
- the ESA Council at Ministerial Level



Excited young space enthusiasts watching an Earth-observation film on the ESA stand at the 54th International Astronautical Congress (IAC), held from 29 September to 3 October in Bremen, Germany

- Galileo
- Mars Express
- SMART-1
- the Cervantes mission to the ISS.

There were very few negative articles on ESA despite the difficult situation in the first quarter of the year, which greatly challenged the Agency's crisis-communication and trouble-shooting strategies. The Media Relations Division scrutinizes 95 of the most important national daily newspapers in all ESA Member States, news agencies, magazines, and internet sites on a daily basis. ESA and its programmes were described in more than 1200 articles, reaching a public of more than 170 million, in the first six months of 2003. A good example of the positive media coverage was the Council at Ministerial Level, as the following figures indicate:

- Number of articles in major international papers: 80
- Number of readers (number of contacts): 8 254 160
- ESA mentioned in 95% of the articles
- ESA representatives quoted in 55% of the articles
- Percentage of articles positive or neutral in tone: 90%.

The three major television events were associated with the Mars Express, SMART-1 and

Cervantes missions, each generating media coverage far beyond the ratings for past such events. Every European who watched television news on the days of the Mars Express and SMART-1 launches saw one or more pieces of positive reporting about these missions.

This was achieved through a combination of:

- distribution to journalists of suitable new stories and video images in the weeks before the launch
- invitation of key broadcasters, such as the BBC or TVE, to the launch, with facilities on site for editing stories and interviews and transmitting them via satellite
- production by ESA of its own live televised launch transmission, plus news-oriented delivery of video images in the hours before and after launch.

Through the production of over 70 'exchanges', all ESA Programmes were covered with the production of new material, and it was possible for all ESA events to be supported with video material for broadcasters.

### Exhibitions and Events

Of the approximately 100 exhibitions organised in 2003, the ESA pavilion at Le Bourget was undoubtedly the one with the highest visibility. As CNES was unable to



The Home Page of the ESA Web Portal

participate in a joint pavilion as in the past, ESA faced the challenge of setting up a representative pavilion without a partner to share the costs and, at the same time, staying within the originally foreseen budget. There were more than 50 000 visitors to the pavilion, including numerous high-ranking VIP guests and a strong media presence. It also hosted several specially tailored events and workshops that allowed ESA's Programme Directorates to address their key audiences in impressive surroundings. ESA's latest policy of co-promoting all Member State space agencies whenever possible was implemented by, for instance, displaying their logos within the exhibition area.

Another highlight in ESA's new communication approach aimed at closer cooperation with national agencies was the exhibition in central Madrid on the occasion of the ISS mission

involving Spanish ESA astronaut Pedro Duque. 'Europa en el Espacio' was inaugurated in the 'Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales' by the recently appointed Spanish Minister for Science and Technology, in the presence of more than 100 invited guests and a huge number of journalists and TV crews.

Other major exhibitions with ESA participation in 2003 were: IAC (Bremen, Germany), the Moscow Air Show (Russia), the British Space Festival (Guildford, UK), Communication – Pavilion of Knowledge (Lisbon, Portugal), IAA International Car Show (Frankfurt, Germany), Avaruus (Helsinki, Finland), Eurospace Centre (Redu, Belgium).

### Online Communication

Recent figures indicate that the ESA Portal is now a far-reaching phenomenon and one of the most recognised sites on the web. The

arrival of Mars Express at the Red Planet on Christmas Day attracted a record 285 000 external visitors, with a total of 2 224 000 for the whole month of December. The previous record was 70 000 in one day. Throughout 2003 the Portal had an average of 700 000 external visitors per month, compared with 200 000 in 2001. A number of specific initiatives have contributed to this growth in traffic.

Firstly, special efforts were made to improve the quality and quantity of information offered in Member State languages. While two years ago the information on the Portal was almost exclusively in English, by mid-2003 national pages already offered a variety of stories covering ESA programmes from a national angle. In July, an additional service was launched whereby the most relevant web stories are now regularly translated into all Member State languages. Some programme highlights, such as the multimedia features dedicated to Mars Express, are also available in all languages.

Secondly, external partnerships with well-visited web sites and online services were further improved. Numerous providers such as Tiscali and T-Online, as well as the news services of major TV networks, newspapers and magazines (BBC Online, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Natural Geographic, etc.), have established permanent links to ESA's Portal. Special cooperation projects were also put in place in connection with Mars Express, SMART-1 and the Cervantes mission (El País, etc.).

Furthermore, two web projects have been launched based on intensive discussions within the Communication Working Group, which consists of representatives from all Member States. The first project, providing an entry point to all national online multimedia galleries, was completed in the summer. The second, a 'Virtual European Space Tour', featuring the most interesting space places (research establishments, control centres, etc.) in Member States in a very popular manner, is in preparation.

Finally, as part of the expansion of multimedia activities, in December the ESA Portal launched a new multimedia feature called 'VideoTalk', in

which a presenter discusses key topics in space exploration in an accessible and interactive way.

## **ESTEC**

The strong public interest in the ESA missions to the Moon and Mars, plus the announcement of the flight of the Dutch ESA astronaut André Kuipers, kept the team at ESTEC especially busy throughout the year. In all, more than 500 interviews were organised (compared with about 200 the previous year), 26 TV teams filmed in Noordwijk, and eight special events associated with launches, etc. were targeted at the Dutch and/or Nordic media as part of the new Country Desk liaison function.

During the year, there were 61 000 visitors to the ESTEC site, and more than 200 VIP guests received briefings at the Establishment or attended ESA-organised events in the Nordic countries. Sixty-five educational visits – thus more than one per week – were organised. The very popular 'Space Train' took about 6000 of the 74 000 Space Expo visitors into ESTEC to get a better feeling about what space research and technology really entails. Last but not least, ESTEC staff were invited on 16 occasions to participate in events or presentations with their colleagues, to improve internal communication.

Other highlights when looking back over 2003 were: the tremendously successful 'Avaruus 2003' exhibition in Helsinki, Finland; the Dutch student team's triumph in winning the World Solar Challenge race again, in a record time, with its space-technology-enhanced car 'Nuna 2'; and the large media responses to astronaut appearances by Christer Fuglesang in Sweden and André Kuipers in The Netherlands. The production of a new video about ESTEC in several languages was also a major accomplishment in 2003.

## **ESOC**

ESA's Space Operations Centre attracted more outside interest than ever before in 2003, with over 6000 visitors, ranging from school children to high-ranking European representatives, passing through the gate. The SMART-1 launch event in September attracted close to 300 media representatives and guests to witness the lift-off of the first European mission

to the Moon. At the event to mark the arrival of Mars Express at the Red Planet in December, the distinguished guests included Mrs Edelgard Bulmahn, German Minister of Education, Science and Research, who currently chairs the ESA Council at Ministerial Level. Addressing the 100 media representatives and 250 guests present at ESOC on Christmas Day, she stressed the significance of the success of the Mars Express mission for Europe.

The current interest in Mars also inspired the preparation of a major year-long exhibition in the Swiss capital of Bern, which opened in November at the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, and a new three-dimensional show at the Vienna Planetarium which opened in December. Both initiatives are being supported by ESA within the framework of the Mars Express communication campaign and are attracting lots of interest. ESOC also participated successfully in a large exhibition about space activities in three shopping malls in Germany, in Neu Isenburg, Augsburg and Munich, from September to late-October.

The Centre also hosted the 'Jugend Forscht' competition, which has been running for several years and is aimed at young students in Germany to foster their interest in science. The regional round took place on 13 February, with over 100 young people between the ages of 12 and 18 taking part. In April, the Centre's doors were opened to allow school girls to meet ESA engineers and discover the world of space technology, as part of the national Girl's Day organised to encourage them to pursue scientific careers.

### **ESRIN**

2003 was a very positive year for ESRIN. An Open Day during Science Week, organised in cooperation with Italian national research institutes, attracted more than a thousand visitors. ESRIN also participated in the third Italian Parliamentary Space Conference in May.

Several major ESA Workshops took place at ESRIN during the year, including the Telemedicine via Satellite in the Information Society Workshop in May, the GMES Services

Element User Workshop in September, and the Fringe and MERIS Workshops held jointly in October. They attracted a large number of international experts and users in the fields of telecommunications and Earth observation.

ESRIN also supported a key event associated with the Italian Presidency of the European Union, with an E-Screen event during the Venice Film Festival on Digital Cinema in late August, in the presence of the Ministers for Culture of the European Union.

Numerous VIP visits by the Ministries and Delegations of ESA's Member States were hosted by ESRIN, including a visit by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in July, and a visit by a Delegation from the European Parliament in September.

ESRIN also actively participated in the preparation of the GMES Forum that took place in Baveno (I) in November, and in the COP9 Meeting on Kyoto Protocol that took place in Milan in December.

In terms of activities in Spain and Portugal, the ESRIN Country Desk was involved in arranging, jointly with the Ministry and with GRICES, the first Portuguese Space Day, targeted at decision makers, industry and the media. In November, the Desk was involved in organizing the 25th Anniversary Celebrations at ESA's Villafranca Station near Madrid, including a visit by a Spanish Parliamentary Delegation and numerous external guests and media.

### **EAC**

During the year, EAC received more than 700 requests for public appearances by, or interviews with, ESA's astronauts, who served admirably as ESA ambassadors, furthering awareness both of the Agency and of EAC, and giving greater visibility to ESA's Human Spaceflight activities across Europe. Only 16% of such requests were rejected or had to be cancelled during the process (compared with 5% in 2002), a contributing factor being the limited availability of the German astronauts due to conflicting professional commitments. About 41% of the requests were for media interviews, particularly in the wake of the Columbia tragedy.

As the home base of the ESA Astronaut Corps, EAC is committed to organising human-spaceflight events related to the missions being undertaken or supported by the astronauts. In 2003 EAC organized several such events, with audiences of typically 100 VIPs from several different backgrounds, such as governments, embassies, private companies, universities and schools. They included:

- the Odissea Post-Flight Event
- the Cervantes Take-off Event
- DLR events with EAC participation.

EAC welcomed a total of 7609 visitors during the year.

### Internal Communication

The main means of communication used in addressing staff are:

- Publications, with the house journal 'ESA Today' (three regular issues and one special issue in 2003).
- Online communication, via 'Internal News' using Lotus Notes, via the ESA Workbench (Intranet), or via the ESA Web Portal, and answers to questions and comments from staff.
- Staff events organised around video transmissions and the Director General's presentations to staff.

Achievements in 2003 have included:

- Improvement of the content, style and graphical design of 'ESA Today', making it more journalistic and therefore more attractive. The network of contributors has been enlarged and better guidelines provided to authors.
- The quality of staff events organised around video transmissions of launches has also been improved through a more systematic search for speakers and the setting up of a more reliable video-transmission scheme, including back-up systems, etc.
- Contribution to the event organised by ESA's Diversity and Gender Equity Adviser in all ESA Establishments to mark International Women's Day.
- Great efforts were made to allow as many as possible of those working in the Agency's more remote outstations and offices to participate in the video transmission events for staff.

### Quality Management and Impact Monitoring

Anticipating the recommendations of the Audit Commission linked to quality control and impact monitoring, several new initiatives were begun in 2003. For instance, a qualitative and quantitative media-analysis service was launched at the beginning of the year. In one survey, journalists were asked their opinion of the services provided by the Media Relations Division. In another, visitors to museums and exhibitions were interviewed. A first 'Quality Report on Communication' was issued in mid-year, and a survey of public opinion on space was carried out in all ESA Member States.





## Publications

The focus early in the year was on the preparation of the ESA Annual Report to Council, and the publication and wide distribution of the brochure *The European Space Sector in a Global Context – ESA's Annual Analysis*, which had been prepared for the last Ministerial Council.



Work also continued on the transformation of the *ESA Bulletin* into a 'lighter', more easily understandable magazine targeted at a wider readership, embracing decision makers in both the space and non-space sectors. Initial feedback from readers has been extremely positive.



Considerable effort was devoted to *The Space Dimension*, a brochure intended to help promote wider interest in the European space programme by highlighting the broad sweep of the Agency's current and future missions. It was published in November.

In the context of the Division's primary role as an added-value service provider, many publications, ranging from the highly scientific and technical to PR-oriented material and Newsletters, were produced in support of all of the ESA Directorates, just a small sample being:

- *The European Utilisation Plan for the International Space Station*, and the *ISS Education Fund*, for the Directorate of Human Spaceflight.





- *Harmonization of European Technology – From Concept to Master Plan*, for the Directorate of Industrial Matters and Technology Programmes.
- *CryoSat: ESA's Ice Mission* and *GOCE: ESA's Gravity Mission*, for the Directorate of Earth Observation.
- *Business with ESA Telecom*, for the Directorate of Applications.
- *Report on the Activities of RSSD* and the *SOHO/SUMER Atlas*, for the Directorate of Science.
- *VILSPA: The ESA Ground Station in Spain*, for the Directorate of Technical and Operational Support.

Support was also provided to 25 ESA-sponsored Conferences and Symposia organised by the various Directorates during 2003, with Proceedings published in book form and on CD-ROM.

Support to ESA's sister space organisations during the year included assistance to the International Space Science Institute (ISSI) in the production of its mid-year Annual Report.

An important brochure in 2003 for ESA was the *Green Paper on European Space Policy: Report on the Consultation Process*, produced in the autumn for the EC/ESA Joint Task Force Secretariat.

Considerable support was also given to the Education Office during the year in the preparation of material for children and students in various age groups, including material for the major international science-teaching festival 'Physics on Stage 3' hosted at ESTEC in November. The great success of the *ISS Education Kit*, first published in October 2002, resulted in strong demand for its reprinting in English and production in 10 other Member-State languages.

