



## ESA EO Director to Address MPs

Jose Achache, the ESA director of EO, will be addressing the Parliamentary Space Committee on the subject of "Harnessing EO for Policy" on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> September. The debate will centre on his vision for EO to be accessible to institutional users. This includes the Oxygen Programme, GMES and Earthwatch. These programmes are seen as very important in bridging the supply gap between the current fragmented supply chain and the potentially large institutional market, thereby establishing EO as a critical information source for policy and operations. BARSC members are welcome to attend, though places are limited. Please contact Matthew Stuttard to arrange a place.



## Defra Looking to Remote Sensing to Help Scan the Horizon

Dr. Tony Burne, Head of Research Policy and International for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs addressed the annual BARSC lunch on the 7<sup>th</sup> July.

Defra have a research budget of some £155 million per annum, with a further £170 million spent on surveillance and monitoring. They have recently published a three-year science strategy, titled "Delivering the Evidence" (see [www.defra.gov.uk/science/S\\_IS/default.asp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/S_IS/default.asp)). A ten-year 'forward look' will be published later in the year.

Defra recognise that a wide variety of tools are required to deliver evidence on which to form and monitor policy. Whilst they have invested in hardware previously, notably in AATSR, Defra's preference is to focus on EO services, already in use in a wide variety of roles – from checking farm subsidies to potentially policing fisheries.

Tony explained that he sees a growing role for EO in Defra science and operations. Especially in helping in 'horizon scanning' – improving defra's capability to anticipate and prepare for new science risks and opportunities. He sees GMES as important in engaging the EC, and changes to the Common Agricultural Policy will only require more monitoring as it has a greater focus on environmental stewardship.

However, he is aware that Defra have been slow to exploit the efforts of BNSC to identify policies and requirements through the GIFTSS, and is actively seeking to accelerate the process. GIFTSS has shown that there are plenty of possibilities for the use of RS across the departments it is working in.

He is also aware that senior policy makers are not aware of what EO has to offer Defra, especially recent advances in high resolution and SAR based techniques. He invited BARSC to arrange a suitable forum to present to senior Defra staff to brief them on the exciting possibilities for the use of EO in defra.

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# Jason-2 Mission gets go-ahead

## UK subscription critical in ensuring mission can commence and provide continuity of data for ocean modelling and forecasting

BARSC hosted a Workshop on satellite altimetry held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002 in the rooms of the Linnean Society. During the presentations by mostly NERC scientists, Dr David Williams, Secretary of EUMETSAT, made the announcement that the future of JASON-2 was in jeopardy. An agreement had been reached between NASA and NOAA in the USA, and EUMETSAT and CNES in Europe to share the cost of this follow-on mission to Topex/Poseidon and JASON-1; but one of the EUMETSAT partners, the UK, had not yet agreed to contribute. The difficulty faced by national funding authorities was in defining the status of the mission which could be regarded as operational (the EUMETSAT connection), or research (NERC oceanographic requirements).

The UK's prevarication was causing other countries to draw back from full commitment. The data from Topex/Poseidon and JASON had been provided free to the UK research community over a period of 10 years and had generated more than 100 scientific publications.

BARSC resolved to lobby for the continuation of the programme and a letter was sent by the Chairman to the government's chief scientific advisor. It was announced recently that the situation had been resolved and preparations for the launch in 2005 are now proceeding.

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Agreement for the funding, which comes after a hard debate within Whitehall, shows a welcome realisation that agencies that will ultimately benefit from satellite based services, including, MOD, DEFRA, Met Office and NERC, should be prepared to contribute to the overall cost of the mission.

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This was a particularly apt example of the benefits that can flow when BARSC members meet, and are made aware of the concerns and priorities of the community of research scientists in this country.

## MEMBERS NEWS

### ESYS joins BARSC

Founded in 1990, ESYS plc is a consultancy company specialising in all areas of the satellite industry. ESYS business is divided between four consulting practices serving Space, Telecoms, Defence, and Education and Research. In each of these practices we offer a portfolio of consulting services, namely strategy

and policy, business assessment, project management, technology evaluations and system engineering.

ESYS is well known within the European Earth observation sector, mainly through our work in market research/forecasting and strategic business consulting. ESYS has undertaken high-profile projects for UK Government, EC, ESA and

## Space Festival

### Remote Sensing Debate

A short debate on the future of remote sensing was held as part of the Space Festival at the University of Surrey on 10<sup>th</sup> July. Panellists included Ian Downey (BNSC), Alan Haskell (QinetiQ), John Harries (UCL) and Richard Saull (BARSC/SciSys). After short presentations the debate ranged from the setting of policy to how to improve the usefulness of EO. Major conclusions included:

- EO provides unique data on the status of the planet that does not have a simple economic value. Governments need to take a greater interest and define responsibility for the provision and continuity of key data sets.
- Much greater care needs to be taken to make sure that missions are designed to meet a particular user's needs, including the ground segment and information dissemination. Without this we will continue to use public money to fund poorly targeted missions where only the 'cream' of the data is used.

many of the major European industrial players. Currently, ESYS is involved in several GMES studies for both ESA and the EC looking particularly at socio-economic benefits of proposed GMES services.

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