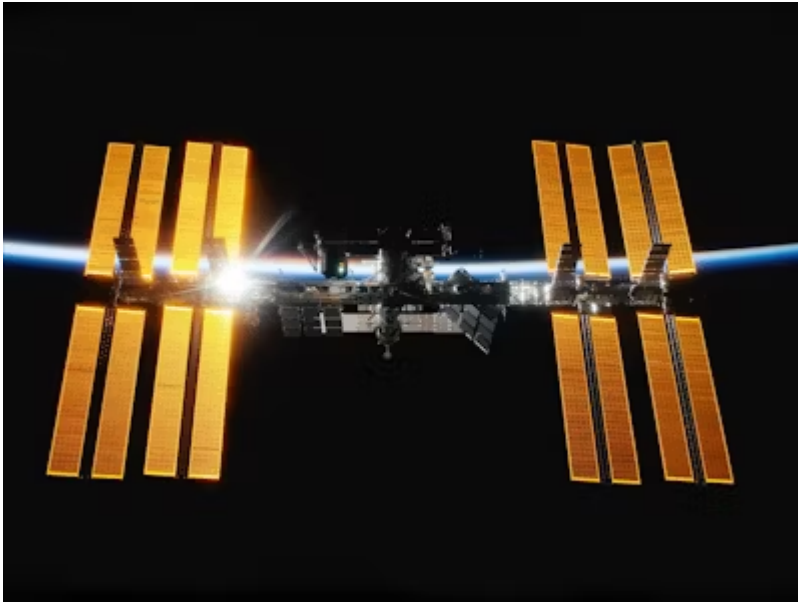


European Commission Awards €10 Billion for Satellite Communication project

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The European Commission has taken a significant step towards European digital sovereignty by awarding a €10 billion contract to build a satellite internet constellation, directly challenging SpaceX's Starlink. Announced on October 31, 2024, the project dubbed IRIS² marks Europe's most significant investment in space-based communications.

The SpaceRISE consortium, a powerhouse alliance formed by European satellite giants SES, Eutelsat, and Hispasat, will lead the development and launch of over 290 satellites by 2030. This network will provide secure and reliable internet connectivity for both government and commercial users across the continent. To further strengthen its capabilities, SpaceRISE has enlisted leading aerospace companies like Thales Alenia Space, OHB, and Airbus Defence and Space, alongside prominent telecommunication providers Deutsche Telekom and Orange.

The 12-year concession contract underscores the EU's commitment to establishing its own robust and secure connectivity infrastructure. Through a public-private partnership model, the IRIS² project aims to deliver robust governmental and commercial internet services by 2030.

Beyond its technical advancements, IRIS² represents a strategic move towards European digital independence. As the global race for space-based internet infrastructure intensifies, the EU's investment demonstrates its commitment to maintaining technological autonomy and a secure communication framework.

The project also prioritizes innovation and inclusivity. SpaceRISE's selection process emphasizes competitive subcontracting, paving the way for greater SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprise)

participation. This focus on fostering a diverse and dynamic European space sector aligns with the Commission's broader vision for the future of the industry.