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**EUTELSAT'S W3A SATELLITE LOFTED INTO SPACE BY A PROTON
ROCKET FROM THE BAIKONUR COSMODROME**
**Unique technology mix equips W3A for serving Europe, North Africa
and the Middle East, and increases Eutelsat's capacity over
sub-Saharan Africa by 43 per cent**

Paris, 16 March 2004

Eutelsat today announced that its W3A communications satellite has been successfully launched by a Proton rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome.

Lift-off of the Proton launch vehicle carrying Eutelsat's 4.2-ton satellite took place at 04:06 local time (23:06 GMT monday). In less than 10 minutes, the three-stage Proton vehicle supplied by International Launch Services (ILS) finished its climb into space, leaving the Breeze M upper stage to continue the mission for the next nine hours. The Breeze M's engine underwent five burns to place the EADS Astrium-built W3A satellite into a transfer orbit. The satellite was separated from the launch vehicle at 08:16 GMT. Signal acquisition of the satellite including reception of telemetry after separation was established immediately by Fucino earth station (Italy). W3A's on-board apogee motors will enable the satellite to reach its location in geostationary orbit where it will undergo in-orbit tests.

Eutelsat will bring its new satellite into service at 7 degrees East in May. It will replace W3 and substantially increase the business potential at a strategic orbital location in Eutelsat's system, able to serve Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"W3A has been designed to optimise the business potential at one of our longstanding orbital locations that already serves blue chip clients such as the EBU, Reuters, Digiturk and Hughes Network Systems," said Giuliano Berretta, Eutelsat CEO. "In addition to supporting delivery of a full range of services to

Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, this new satellite almost doubles our capacity over sub-Saharan Africa, thereby increasing our ability to serve users for business networks and for broadband services such as voice over IP, Internet access and distance-learning services.”

W3A’s full payload of 58 transponders (of which 50 can be simultaneously operated) is divided into four missions:

- 35 Ku-band transponders for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, which will assume the full range of services currently carried by W3. This capacity can also be used in conjunction with Eutelsat’s Skyplex on-board processing facility which enables individual digital carriers to be uplinked to the satellite and multiplexed on-board. Up to eleven of the 35 transponders can be connected on the downlink into the widebeam over Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, or into a high-power beam optimised for south-east Europe and Turkey and reaching south into Ethiopia and Somalia.
- Up to 12 new Ku-band transponders over Europe, the Middle East and North Africa that will provide additional capacity for broadband services and can also be used with Eutelsat’s Skyplex on-board processing facility.
- Up to eight transponders for two-way communications between Europe and Africa. Six are forward-link transponders providing communications from Europe to Africa and two are return link transponders for communications from Africa to Europe. Communications over Africa are in the Ku-band and over Europe in Ka-band, with switching managed by the satellite. This is ideally suited for access networks with hub stations in Europe and terminals in Africa. Applications for this capacity include broadband Internet access, WAN/LAN interconnection, voice over IP, distance-learning and other videoconferencing services for businesses, government and aid agencies.
- Up to 3 Ku-band transponders for regional telecommunications in sub-Saharan Africa, also with possible access to Skyplex.

W3A Vital Statistics

Spacecraft:	Eurostar E3000
Main body dimensions:	
Height :	5.8 m
Length :	2.4 m
Width :	2.9 m
Solar Array Span deployed:	35 m
Launch mass :	4,250 kg
DC Power / End of life:	9 600 W
Operational lifetime:	15 years +
Orbital position:	7 degrees East
Frequency bands	Ku and Ka
Number of transponders:	Full payload of 58 Ku-and Ka-band transponders (50 operational simultaneously)
Coverage:	Europe, Africa, Middle East

About Eutelsat

With capacity commercialised on satellites that provide coverage from the Americas to Far East Asia, Eutelsat is one of the world's leading satellite operators. This satellite infrastructure gives the company the flexibility to offer direct-to-home broadcasting, video distribution and contribution services, corporate network solutions, positioning and communications services for mobile users and a portfolio of IP applications which include broadband Internet access and Internet backbone connections. Eutelsat has developed a range of turnkey broadband products (D-STAR, D-SAT, OPENSKY™) for local communities, SMEs, SoHos and consumers beyond ADSL access. It has also set up a subsidiary called Skylogic Italia to market and operate broadband services through its multimedia platform in Turin (Italy). Eutelsat's satellites broadcast more than 1,400 television and 700 radio stations to an audience of 110 million cable and satellite homes.

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