

Norway joins EU's Galileo satnav project

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Workmen prepare the Galileo satellite of the European Space Agency (ESA) on its launch pad at Kazakhstan's Baikonur cosmodrome in 2008. Norway said it will stump up close to 70 million euros in funding for the European Union's satellite navigation project Galileo.

Norway said Friday it will stump up close to 70 million euros in funding for the European Union's satellite navigation project Galileo.

The Norwegian government will give a boost by providing 68.9 million euros (92.5 million dollars) towards the 3.4 billion euro project.

While Norway is not a member of the 27-member bloc, the country's economy and business minister Sylvia Brustad said it was important that Oslo took part in Galileo's development.

"The project will be of huge importance for the development of the

European space industry and it is therefore important that Norwegian businesses are now able to compete," Brustad said in a statement.

The EU has previously struggled to secure financing for [Galileo](#), which is expected to be launched in 2013 as a rival to the US [Global Positioning System](#) (GPS), and had to release unused funds from the bloc's massive agricultural budget.

In September, the European Commission and the [European Space Agency](#), which includes Norway as a member, shortlisted 11 European firms which are bidding for future contracts connected to Galileo.

Two test satellites, Giove-A and Giove-B, were launched in December 2005 and April 2008.

When fully operational, Galileo will use as many as 30 satellites.

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