

Eyes on our Sun: ESA opens new space weather centre in Brussels

April 8 2013



Ribbon cutting at the Royal Observatory.

This week, ESA opened a new Space Weather Coordination Centre to gather up-to-date information on our Sun. It is the first such data coordination centre opened under the Agency's Space Situational Awareness Programme.

The new Space Situational Awareness (SSA) Space Weather

Coordination Centre (SSCC) will serve as the central access point to a portfolio of European space-weather expertise for customers, including [satellite operators](#), industrial sectors including telecommunications and navigation, and government agencies and research institutes.

Located at the 'Space Pole' in Brussels, the centre was formally inaugurated on 3 April by Philippe Mettens, Chairman of the Belgian Science Policy Office, and Thomas Reiter, ESA Director of [Human Spaceflight](#) and Operations.

The two were joined by Ronald Van der Linden, Director General of the Royal Observatory of Belgium, Nicolas Bobrinsky, Head of ESA's SSA Programme Office, and Michel Kruglanski, manager of the SSCC from the Solar–Terrestrial Centre of Excellence.

Europe's first operational space weather centre

The SSCC includes the first European space weather helpdesk and, through this, rapid access to expert support on [solar weather](#), ionospheric weather, the geomagnetic environment and the orbital [radiation environment](#).

"With the SSCC inauguration, our SSA Programme is taking concrete steps to develop a European capability to operationally monitor [space weather](#), enhance international cooperation and establish the effective distribution of information, warnings and alerts to users in economically vital sectors," said Thomas Reiter.

"The SSCC will help to get the right information to the right people at the right time."

The inauguration took place at the Royal Observatory Belgium (ROB), one of the four members of the consortium that will operate and develop

the SSCC on ESA's behalf. The others are the Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy and two industrial partners, Space Applications Services SA/NV and Spacebel SA/NV.

Provided by European Space Agency

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