

## PRESS RELEASE

**Airbus Netherlands and TNO partner for development of next-generation gigabit optical ground station**

*Oegstgeest, 9 November 2018* – At the inaugural event of the new Airbus production facility for space technology, Airbus Netherlands and TNO announced their cooperation for the development of a next-generation optical ground stations in the gigabit range. This is an important step towards the realisation of optical satellite communication. Almost all the data connections in space are based on radio-frequency electromagnetic waves. The new systems for optical satellite communication use laser light to make communications faster, more secure and cheaper.

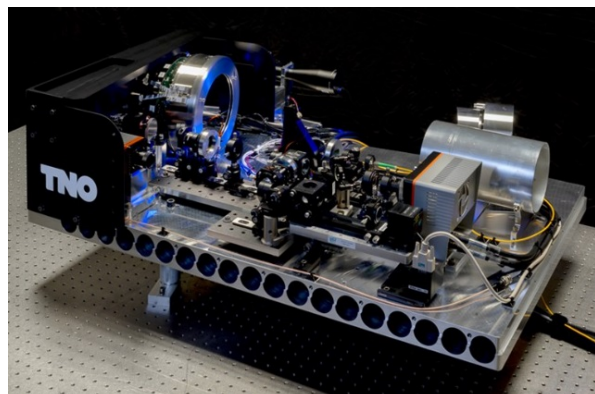
**Optical communication ground station**

Airbus Netherlands and TNO, the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, both recognise the large potential that this new market for fast and safe optical satellite communication offers. Based on its heritage in space instrumentation and semiconductor equipment, TNO develops technologies for optical communications terminals. Airbus Netherlands will industrialise this technology towards an optical communication ground station.

As a first step Airbus Netherlands and TNO sign a contract to jointly develop and build a prototype of a gigabit optical terminal in the next year. “Optical communication via satellites will further enable the ever increasing, worldwide data flows. With this partnership we take a lead in the development of cutting-edge communication terminals”, says Arnaud de Jong, CEO of Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands.

**Business opportunity for Dutch high-tech industry**

By combining the unique technological knowledge of TNO with the industrial expertise of Airbus Netherlands and that of the Dutch high-tech supplier industry, the partners believe to be able to seize the opportunity the exponentially growing demand for connectivity and secure communications provides. “Optical satellite communication is a next major business opportunity for the Dutch high-tech industry, building further on the rich heritage of space and optical knowhow present in The Netherlands”, says Arnold Stokking, Managing Director Industry at TNO.



*Experimental laser communication set-up (© TNO)*

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**About TNO**

The Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research ([TNO](https://www.tno.nl)) is an independent research organization. We connect people and knowledge to create innovations that boost the sustainable competitive strength of industry and well-being of society. Now and in the future. This is our mission and it is what drives us, the over 3.000 professionals at TNO, in our work every day. We work in collaboration with partners and focus on transitions or changes in nine social themes that we have identified together with our stakeholders.

**About Airbus**

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2017, it generated revenues of €67 billion and employed a workforce of around 134,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners from 100 to more than 600 seats. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as Europe's number one space enterprise and the world's second largest space business. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide. [www.airbusds.nl](http://www.airbusds.nl)

**About Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands**

Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands B.V. is a supplier of high-tech products and services for the international aerospace industry. Since its founding in 1968, the company contributes to noteworthy space programs and has build-up broad expertise in space technology in areas such as Earth observation, telecommunications and science. The portfolio of Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands B.V. includes solar arrays, launcher structures and instruments & systems. The Leiden-based company employs more than 250 experienced professionals.