

August 2008 – Successful launch of third INMARSAT IV flight model.

Various boards for the third Astrium-built Inmarsat-4 satellite, launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan by Proton M rocket on 18 August 2008, were manufactured here at Spur's facilities. Following full deployment of its 45m solar array and 80m² antenna reflector the spacecraft adopted its final Earth-pointing control mode.

François Auque, CEO of Astrium, stressed that "Inmarsat-4 is undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated communications satellites ever built, demonstrating Astrium's ability to construct advanced and highly flexible payloads".

The satellite is the third in the I-4 constellation, concluding a decade of development and a US\$1.5 billion investment. The current constellation of two Inmarsat-4 satellites delivers mobile broadband services to 85 percent of the world's landmass, covering 98 percent of the world's population. The third I-4 will complete the global coverage for Inmarsat's broadband services which deliver unprecedented voice and broadband data connectivity, at speeds of up to half-a-megabit per second, to mobile users on land, at sea and in the air. The three satellites are identical and interchangeable - their coverage is programmable and can be reconfigured whilst in orbit.

