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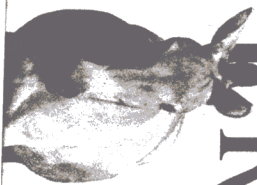
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Iguassu Software to help guide ESA

Czech company
assists satellite-
navigation projects

By FRANTIŠEK BOUC
STAFF WRITER

A small company hopes to prove that the sky may not be the limit for technology companies here.

The Prague-based Iguassu Software Systems is currently developing technology for Galileo and for the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) — two major satellite navigation projects for the European Space Agency (ESA).

The projects aim to reduce European dependence on the U.S. Global Positioning System (GPS).

Iguassu won the bid to work on the prestigious project along with renowned space technology companies Thales, Alcatel and CAP Gemini in late July. It will focus on developing new systems that allow for more accurate and reliable navigation when the EGNOS satellite signal is not available. One of its tasks will also be to design and develop a new server to increase user capacity.

The company will also help develop satellite search and rescue capabilities under the Galileo system.

Iguassu Director Petr Bareš said the assignment proves that even small Czech technology

companies without specific experience in space projects can successfully bid in major international space-industry projects by first building their reputations.

"We earned recognition through cooperating with [international companies] such as Hewlett-Packard and Ingersoll-Rand, even though it was in other high-tech fields," Bareš said.

Iguassu launched its business branch on the Czech market in 1994 as a branch of a British technology company.

Following a buyout five years later, the company became fully independent from the UK headquarters.

It is now focusing on the development of software for the high-tech sector, satellite navigation and data-processing applica-

tions. It also provides marketing consultancy services for West European companies that are trying to sell space technology to South America.

Clear skies

"We stand as an example to Western companies that Czech engineers and companies can be quite competitive," Bareš said.

Apart from the actual technical work, Bareš added, he hopes Iguassu's participation in the Galileo project will encourage more Czech companies to get involved in the space industry.

"We want to make sure that space projects are not perceived as merely 'rocket technology' projects or exploring new galaxies, but rather as the development of new technologies in which a

larger amount of Czech companies can participate," Bareš said. Iguassu and other Czech companies' access to international space industry assignments was made possible by the Czech Republic's accession to ESA's Plan for European Cooperating States.

The Czech Republic subsidizes the space industry with only about 1 million euros (\$1.28 million/28 million Kč) per year. ESA's annual budget stands at some 9 billion euros.

Last year, the Czech Space Agency, which coordinates the country's cooperation with ESA, helped facilitate nine projects for space technology.