

Beat: Technology

Spain and USA extend agreement on Robledo de Chavela space tracking station

Forms part of a global network of NASA

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USPA NEWS - Spain and the United States have decided to extend and amend their Scientific Cooperation Agreement on the Tracking Station with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) signed on 28 January 2003.

To achieve this, the Council of Ministers authorised an exchange of letters on 28 August to formalise the extension and amendment to this agreement, and hence its provisional application. This exchange of letters will take place in the coming days. Cooperation on space issues between Spain and the United States dates back to 1964 with the installation in Spain of a satellite tracking station to boost space science with peaceful aims.

The Madrid Deep Space Communications Complex, located in the towns of Robledo de Chavela and Villar del Rey, forms part of a global network of NASA stations known as the "Deep Space Network" (DSN), which carries on activities to monitor satellites, spaceships and orbital telescopes such as the Hubble, and also to collaborate on different programmes to seek out exoplanets and take part in new missions to explore the solar system, such as "Mars Odyssey" and "Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter".

In its five decades of operation, the station has contributed to strengthening the links between Spain and the United States in the field of space science, and constitutes an example of how bilateral relations have been stepped up in new areas, such as science, aeronautics and new technologies. Spain and the United States seek to extend and enhance this fruitful partnership. Hence, on the one hand, the two countries propose to extend the 2003 agreement by an exchange of letters until 2024.

On the other hand, they consider that the text of the agreement should be renewed in order to adapt it to prevailing legislation in Spain and in the European Union, and to this end, Spain will grant the tracking station the status of an international body. The authorised extension to the 2003 agreement will pave the way for the shoring up of the major investments that NASA plans to make to the station in the near future, which could amount to some 100 million euros.

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