

# **GROUND SUPPORT NETWORK OPERATIONS FOR THE GRAS RADIO OCCULTATION MISSION**

R. Zandbergen\*(1)

(1) European Space Operations Centre, Darmstadt, Germany

Among recent Radio Occultation missions, the Metop/EPS GRAS mission stands out for its operational nature. From the beginning, EUMETSAT decided also to rely on an operational system for provision of auxiliary GPS products needed in the occultation processing. This system is the GRAS Ground Support Network (GSN) operated in the Navigation Facility of ESOC in Darmstadt. The GRAS GSN is driven primarily by timeliness, availability and accuracy requirements, the latter being the less stringent of the three. These requirements have been consistently met since the start of operations, shortly prior to the launch of Metop-A. After some years without significant changes, it was decided to bring the GSN to the state of the art in GNSS orbit and clock determination, by introducing the Napeos software. This transition took place in July 2010. This paper will present the GRAS GSN in its new configuration, and demonstrate its excellent performance in terms of accuracy, availability and timeliness. The impact of the recent upgrade on the radio occultation products of GRAS will be shown. Some further evolution perspectives of the GRAS GSN will also be addressed. It will appear that the GRAS GSN has the potential of serving also other present and future radio occultation missions.