

## Igor Kot, Deputy Director-General, Gazprom Space Systems

**O**ne satellite company that is aggressively pursuing expansion plans is Russia-based operator Gazprom Space Systems (GSS). At the recent IBC show in Amsterdam, GSS announced that it entered into a strategic partnership with global satellite operator SES to provide additional satellite capacity to serve the Russian market. Under the terms of a multi-year agreement, SES has re-located its ASTRA 1F satellite previously located at 51 degrees East to the orbital location 55 degrees East. GSS will utilize 16 Ku-band FSS transponders on the ASTRA 1F satellite to provide communication services for Western Russia prior to the launch of GSS' Yamal-402 satellite in 2012. In return, SES will use capacity on GSS' Yamal-402 once it becomes operational at 55 degrees East. Yamal-402 is currently under construction and scheduled for launch in October 2012. To shed light on this agreement and their future plans, Satellite Executive Briefing spoke to GSS' Deputy Director-General Igor Kot. Excerpts of the interview follows:



Igor Kot

*What is the significance of your recent strategic partnership with SES? How will this improve your company's position in the market?*

This is the first time we have entered into such a strategic agreement with another operator. Our main purpose was to start our business development activities for our new orbital slot 55E before the launch of the Yamal-402 satellite at this position at the end of 2012. The idea behind this scenario is to provide for the continuity of services between the temporary and permanent satellites, allowing our clients smooth transition from ASTRA 1F to Yamal-402. Once it becomes operational, Yamal-402 will have higher power and wider service coverage over Russia. We hope ASTRA 1F will relieve the acute situation of scarcity in terms of domestic satellite capacity in the Russian market.

To be honest, SES was not the only international satellite operator we had similar discussions in the past. It turned out that in this case our interests met, they definitely had what we needed, so the deal was concluded in a very short time. Also we hope to extend our partnership in the future. We see this part-

nership as benefiting both parties in the mutual promotion of new satellite capacity in different markets.

To develop satellite services provision for the Russian market we are building a new modern teleport facility. We hope to leverage the extensive experience of SES ASTRA in their core competency and expertise in the TV broadcasting and broadband services for the consumer market.

A new satellite always presents new opportunities for all players involved. For the operator/service provider, it represents a new asset that can generate revenues, and a new base to develop business in line with technical developments to meet the growing expectations of customers. For end users, it is a new offering that ensures new services and makes existing ones more affordable. The introduction of new capacity is always a driver for new service developments and expansion. New capacity for the market is like fresh air in a closed space. It enhances the market's level of health. All that improves an operator's economic position and overall image in the market. For example when we announced the ASTRA 1F deal at the IBC we immediately felt the

increased interest from the satellite community. And hopefully this is only the beginning...

*What can we expect from Gazprom Space Systems in 2012? What are your targets for next year?*

We are hopeful and we will do our best in order that 2012 will become one of the most significant years in the history of our company. We expect two satellites to be launched next year. The first will be Yamal-300K aimed at strengthening our Russian business at 90E in May 2012 and then in October 2012 Yamal-402 will be launched in the 55E slot to support ASTRA 1F in the Russian market and increase our coverage and capabilities for the international market. The importance of these long-awaited events is obvious and so all our main activities will revolve around them.

*What markets segments or regions will you be focusing in the next few months?*

The regions and market segments that

