International Satellite System for Search and Rescue
Système international de satellites pour les recherches et le sauvetage
Международная Спутниковая Система Поиска и Спасания

CS26/131
Montréal, 2nd of November 2026

TO: All Cospas-Sarsat Participants and Observers, All National/Territorial Administrations, Cospas-Sarsat Mission Control Centers, Rescue Coordination Centers and other search-and-rescue authorities, Aircraft Manufacturers, and Cospas-Sarsat Beacon Manufacturers and Ground-Segment Equipment Manufacturers.

SUBJECT: Declaration of the Cospas-Sarsat System at Initial Operational Capability for Second-Generation Beacons, based on the MEOSAR system.

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to advise you that the Cospas-Sarsat Council, at its seventy-fifth session (CSC-75), held from 12 to 15 October 2026, declared the Cospas-Sarsat System at initial operational capability (IOC) for second-generation beacons (SGB) based on the MEOSAR system, effective as of 2 November 2026.

This important milestone achievement for the Programme is the result of several years of close cooperation among the Administrations and organizations that develop, maintain and operate the Cospas-Sarsat Space and Ground segments, together with industrial partners and continued cooperation with ICAO, IMO and ITU.

This declaration follows the earlier declaration of Full Operational Capability (FOC) for the detection and processing of messages from ELT(DT)s based on SGB specifications, effective from 1 January 2024, which was communicated to Cospas-Sarsat stakeholders by letter CS24/005 of 12 January 2024.

Administrations and Cospas-Sarsat Mission Control Centres (MCCs) are requested to bring this declaration to the attention of rescue coordination centres and other relevant search-and-rescue authorities, noting that from 2 November 2026:

- Cospas-Sarsat distress-alert messages originating from SGBs will be routed to them (in addition to ELT(DT) alerts),

- independently calculated location information associated with SGB distress alerts determined by the MEOSAR system will be provided, whenever available[1].

The Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat will reissue Type-Approval Certificates for previously type-approved SGB models, as appropriate, to reflect the beacon operational transmission and message-encoding options that were previously evaluated during type-approval testing.

Ground Segment Providers are invited to continue augmenting their Ground Segment equipment with upgraded software and receivers for SGB processing. Continued expansion of SGB-capable Ground Segment assets is essential to ensuring the expected robustness of the System and to strengthening operational coverage and data distribution.

The Council wishes to express its appreciation to all Cospas-Sarsat Participants and organizations, space- and ground-segment providers, beacon and ground segment manufacturers, test facilities, and other stakeholders whose sustained technical work and cooperation have made the achievement of this important operational milestone possible.

We would be pleased to provide you with any further information that you may require.

Yours sincerely,

Andryey Kuropyatnikov
Chairman of the Cospas-Sarsat Council

[1] Note that the independent location capability is still to be implemented for fast-moving beacons, such as ELT(DT)s activated in flight.